

ADAPTATIONS POLICY

Status: Approved

Policy Lead :	Director of Assets & Sustainability
Owned By :	Repairs Lead
Date Approved:	January 2026
Approved By :	Operations Committee
Review Date:	January 2029
Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References	<p>Whilst the provision of adaptations is not a statutory obligation on Housing Associations in Scotland we wish to support this to enable our customers to realise the Power of Home and live as independently as possible for as long as possible. The policy therefore reflects our vision and values and aims of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 • Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 • Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 • Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 • Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 • Disability Discrimination Act 2005 • The Equality Act 2010 • The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990 • Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2004 • Tenements Scotland Act 2004 • Procurement Regulations • Right To Repair
Other Documents to be read in conjunction with this policy :	<p>This document should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHA's vision and values • BHA's complaints policy • Reactive Repairs Policy • <u>Scottish Social Housing Charter</u> • <u>SHR Regulatory Framework</u> • <u>Housing (Scotland) Act 2010</u> • <u>UK General Data Protection Regulation</u>

Policy Title:	Adaptation Policy
Purpose / Aim of policy:	To ensure BHA delivers an efficient, effective, prompt, and cost-effective adaptations service.
Scope of Policy:	<p>This Policy will set out ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under what circumstances BHA will undertake adaptations • how these will be funded • how this will link to our tenancy sustainment objectives • how this will relate to a wider housing options approach • will ensure BHA makes the best use of our stock
Definitions:	All terms are defined within the Policy document
Approval Source:	Operations Committee
Equality Impact Assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of our overall provision of suitable housing to meet the needs of our applicants and customers, and to comply with our Equality & Diversity policy, Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) carries out adaptations to its stock. • BHA is committed to tenancy sustainment by providing support to those tenants/prospective customers who require it wherever possible, including those who require their home to be adapted to cope with age or disability.
Sustainability Assessment:	There are no major sustainability implications linked to the contents of this policy.
Partnership Assessment:	There are no partnership implications linked to the contents of this policy.
Risk Implications:	The most significant risk to BHA related to adaptations is reputational. Many customers expect BHA to be able to make suitable adaptations to their homes.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 BHA recognises that being able to access appropriate housing or to adapt a current home can have a positive impact on health whilst contributing to independence, privacy and dignity.
- 1.2 However, there are constraints on the ability of BHA to undertake adaptations to its stock, be that for technical, funding reasons or where this does not constitute the best use of our stock or best outcome for the customer. BHA will take a long term perspective on all adaptations.

2. POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 BHA key aims and objectives are to:

- In line with our vision, to realise the power of home, facilitate adaptations work to our homes where this enables our customers to thrive and leave independent lives.
- Ensure Adaptations are carried out effectively and efficiently within a reasonable timescale.
- Involve customers and their carers' in decision making around their adaptations and ensure their views are taken into account.
- Ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and equity in the delivery of the Adaptations service.
- Ensure effective joint working with Borders Care & Repair, the contractors and other relevant agencies in the delivery of the Adaptations service.
- Establish adequate funding arrangements with Border Care & Repair and HARP to ensure that Adaptations need is met.
- Explore a proactive approach to assess our stock and identify properties that are adaptable to meet a range of needs and demand.
- Consider the sustainability of adaptations as improvements that can remain in the property long-term to the widest number of potential Tenants at relet.
- Ensure that BHA achieves a stock profile which meets the needs of all our customers, present and future and provides a range of accommodation.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Stage 1** Adaptations are general and not tailored to any specific condition or individual. They are integrated into the property's initial specifications before construction or renovations commence.
- 3.2 **Stage 2** Adaptations are modifications typically completed by the original contractor to the property either before or around the time the property is practically complete.
- 3.3 **Stage 3** Medical Adaptations are physical, permanent works to a property that accommodates the changing needs of the tenant, assisting independent living e.g. installation of a wet floor shower room
- 3.4 **Stage 3** Adaptations are funded by General Adaptations Grant from the Scottish Government. Borders Care and Repair will provide advice on the estimated level of funding required to allow BHA to place their bid for Stage 3 funding as part of its annual Strategy and Development Funding Plan. (SDFP).

- 3.5 Moveable or non-permanent equipment, such as stair lifts, should be funded by Local Authority Housing Strategy Teams. BHA cannot use Housing Association Grant (HAG) to fund this type of non-permanent requirement.
- 3.6 Adaptations that cost less than £300 are classed as minor adaptations and BHA may decide to fund these directly should grand funding be restricted and BHA can make budget available.

4. DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 BHA has entered into a service agreement with Borders Care & Repair to manage and undertake a proportion of our adaptations. Border Care & Repair are part of the Eildon Group and provide the complete adaptation service to all the local Social Landlords within the area. Major adaptations such as extensions will be undertaken in house by the Asset Team.
- 4.2 Border Care & Repair, working on behalf of BHA will work closely with Scottish Borders Council's Housing Strategy Team and Social Care and Health Team around the prioritizing of referrals to ensure that the funding is used wisely and where most needed.

5. PRIORITISING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In order to ensure that resources are targeted to those in the greatest need, Border Care and Repair prioritise applications for adaptations. Border Care and Repair will offer advice to Occupational Therapists (OT) on the technical feasibility of proposed adaptations.
- 5.2 Border Care and Repair will also take cognisance of any BHA's strategies relating to adaptations in place at the time of application receipt. This could include new designs and technology to enhance the sustainability of adaptations installed. BHA would not normally endorse the installation of wheelchair or level access shower trays in upper floor homes unless there are exceptional circumstances but we recognise that where alternative accommodation is not readily available that we may support this work in exceptional cases.

6. OPTIONS APPRAISALS/ MEETING HOUSING NEED

- 6.1 Where works are referred by Occupational Therapists such as extensions or significant remodeling to an existing property or even wet floor bathrooms or level access showers to an upper flat, this will be discussed with the Neighbourhood Services Lead to ensure that we make effective use of our homes and do not detrimentally impact future lettings as well as being the best outcome for the customer.
- 6.2 The referrals will be considered in light of the opportunity to adequately house the customer in a home which will meet their long term needs. Where rehousing is not pragmatic, for example due to a lack of suitable accommodation or support which can only be provided in that location, BHA will not withhold agreement to the adaptation and will accept that the works may need to be reversed at the next let.

7. TIMESCALES

- 7.1 Border Care and Repair undertakes to process applications within the timescales noted below:
- 7.2 Where the Association is unable to secure funding, Border Care & Repair will advise the applicant and the OT and will suggest alternative sources of funding where this is practicable.
- 7.3 Border Care and Repair will inform BHA and OT's as to the progress of applications on a monthly basis. This information will be part of BHA's monthly KPI's.
- 7.4 All applications will be acknowledged by Border Care and Repair in writing within 5 days and an indication provided to the applicant and the referring agency of the extent of any backlog of applications, the likely timescale for taking the application forward and that they will be regularly updated on the progress of their application.
- 7.5 Customers will be given at least 5 working days' notice of visits from Border Care and Repair employees and or their consultants.
- 7.6 Customers will be given at least 5 working days' notice prior to the commencement of work, and BHA will provide 15 working days' notice in cases where the works will cause significant disruption.

8. PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Planned Maintenance Programme to upgrade existing BHA stock will take the needs of disabled people into account. BHA has already enhanced its specifications for bathrooms to include over-bath showers, as this is one of the most commonly requested adaptations. However, as part of the planning process for investment, particularly in the provision of kitchens and bathroom and electrical rewiring, colleagues will seek to establish whether there are people living in the household who require an Adaptation.
- 8.2 Where such households are identified, colleagues will take steps so that the improvements can meet the requirements of such households, using the Adaptations Budget where necessary to fund additional costs. Where high-cost Adaptations are required a holistic option appraisal should be carried out to ensure that the eventual solution not only meets the needs of the disabled person(s) but also delivers value for money for BHA.

9. NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

- 9.1 Design standards will be contained in BHA's Design Brief and will comply with Building Regulations and current good practice guidance. BHA will ensure that all new build properties are built to Housing for Varying Needs standard. Where a specific need is identified to satisfy an identified customer, or having regard to the Local Housing Strategy, a number of new build properties will be built to fully wheelchair accessible standard.
- 9.2 Customers and applicants with particular housing needs have priority for new housing which will meet their needs. Where possible, properties will be pre-allocated to enable customers to participate in the design of their homes. Where there are particular needs, colleagues should request advice from the Occupational Therapists, and follow other relevant procedures detailed in this policy, so that the work will meet the needs of the household.

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING & REPORTING

10.1 Border Care and Repair will provide monthly performance information to the Repairs Lead who is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and reporting quarterly to the Operations Committee on performance and outcomes.

10.2 Performance will be measured against defined targets set annually, including:

- Number of households awaiting adaptations
- Average time and days to complete approved applications for medical adaptations
- Percentage of approved applications for medical adaptations completed.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All applicants will be dealt with in accordance with BHA's published Equal Opportunities Policy statement. This Policy will not be used to discriminate against any individual or household on grounds of race, religion, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, political opinion, pregnancy, or maternity. BHA aims to promote equal opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

12. COMPLAINTS

If a customer is unhappy with any aspect of the reactive repairs service, a complaint can be made in accordance with our Complaints Policy in order to have their concerns investigated.

13. POLICY REVIEW

The Association will review the Adaptation Policy every three years or following significant legislative or regulatory change.

