

LETTING ADAPTED HOUSES

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND AWARD OF PRIORITY

The registration form records basic details about the applicant and their household, their housing circumstances and their housing preferences. The registration form also indicates if the applicant (or any member of their household) requires accommodation with specific adaptations such as low/level access shower or wet room, ramp or level access, adapted kitchen.

1.2 ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS' NEEDS

Where the applicant has indicated that they require accommodation with adaptations, their priority for adapted housing is assessed as set out below.

If the applicant is already known to Social Work or Health Services, a Single Shared Assessment is available. A Single Shared Assessment (SSA) is a person-centred approach which takes a holistic view of a person's health, social and care needs. The assessment involves the applicant and may involve family, carers or other professionals. SSAs are shared across health, social work and housing services to facilitate partnership working and provision of services.

The SSA assesses needs across a wide range of situations including the applicant's ability to manage daily activities, the extent of support required and provided, and information on any accommodation needs that they may have. Eligibility criteria are also applied to assess the severity of any risks to the applicant's independent living and well-being and the urgency with which a response is required to address their needs.

The SSA may indicate which adaptations are required by the applicant and establish their priority for adapted housing according to the national eligibility criteria. Where more detailed information is required about the applicant's functional ability and difficulties in and around their home, a visit will be carried out to undertake a specialist assessment. The specialist assessment will identify the adaptations and type of housing required by the applicant (see Annex A). During the home visit, the applicant will also be given advice about their housing options.

Where the applicant is assessed as not requiring an adapted house, they will be advised of this and their application will be assessed in accordance with the Allocations Policy for mainstream housing e.g where the assessment has indicated that the applicant does not need an adapted house but would benefit from being nearer a carer for support, Band 2 priority will be awarded for mainstream housing.

If the applicant lives out with the Falkirk Council area, information about the applicant's needs will be sought from their current Social Work or Health Service.

1.3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In addition to setting out the adaptations required by the applicant, the SSA indicates the urgency of the need to move to adapted housing through the award of a priority based on eligibility criteria. There are three levels of priority as set out below:

Priority 1

Applicants are awarded Priority 1 for adapted housing where they are assessed to be at critical risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 1 is awarded to applicants with one or more of the following:

- who are at major risk in their existing environment
- who are delayed in being discharged from hospital
- who have health problems which cause life-threatening harm or danger to the applicant or others
- whose existing care or support arrangements have broken down
- who are unable to carry out most aspects of domestic routines or personal care in their existing home

Priority 2

Applicants are awarded Priority 2 for adapted housing where they are assessed to be at significant risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 2 is awarded to applicants with one or more of the following:

- who are at significant risk in their existing environment
- who have health problems which cause significant harm or danger to the applicant or others
- who have difficulty sustaining an existing package of care or support
- who have difficulty carrying out most aspects of domestic routines or personal care in their existing home

Priority 3

Applicants are awarded Priority 3 for adapted housing where they are assessed to be at moderate risk in terms of their physical or mental health; personal care/domestic routines and home environment; participation in community activities and existing care arrangements. Priority 3 is awarded to applicants with one or more of the following:

- who are at moderate risk in their existing environment
- who have health problems which cause moderate harm or danger to the applicant or other
- who have difficulty carrying out some aspects of domestic routines or personal care in their existing home:
- assist applicants access family or neighbourhood support and/or other care and support services
- assist applicants maintain or increase their independence

1.4 AWARD OF PRIORITY

Following assessment, applicants will be advised of their award of priority.

The following household size criteria will also apply to their application for housing.

Couples are expected to share a room. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where each individual requires a room of their own. Where the SSA indicates that an individual requires their own bedroom, this will be taken into account in determining the house size appropriate for the household's needs.

Couples and single applicants will be considered for 1 or 2 bedroom properties.

Each household member over 8 years of age is entitled to a bedroom of their own, however due to the lack of larger accommodation, a household requiring adapted housing may be considered for a move to adapted accommodation which does not satisfy this parameter.

In letting adapted houses, the Council will seek to select applicants whose household size makes best use of the property.

Applicants may appeal using the Appeals process set out in the Allocations Policy if they consider that the priority they have been awarded does not reflect their needs.

2. LETTING AN ADAPTED PROPERTY

2.1 Void Properties

When a house becomes void it is recorded on the allocations database which indicates if the property is:

- Housing with Care accommodation;
- adapted for applicants with a medical condition or disability;
- a mainstream house.

An adapted property is one that is suitable for a person with a medical condition or disability and has one or more of the following adaptations:

- A low/level access shower or wet room
- An external ramp or altered steps
- A fully adapted and accessible kitchen

Adapted properties will not be advertised through the Choice Based Letting scheme for mainstream houses. Adapted properties will be directly matched to applicants on the housing register who have been assessed as requiring adapted housing.

2.2 Matching an Adapted Property

When an adapted property becomes available for letting, a shortlist is prepared of applicants:

- whose needs are such that they require the adaptations available and
- whose family complement meets the household size criteria and
- whose housing preferences match the vacancy available.

The short-listed applicants are ranked in order of eligibility criteria Priority awarded. Where there is more than one applicant with the same level of eligibility criteria Priority, the applicant who has had the award of Priority longest will be offered the property.

Where there are no applicants on the housing list which can be matched to a particular adapted void property, it will be advertised through the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

2.3 Adaptable Property

Where there is no adapted housing available to meet the needs of a particular applicant with eligibility criteria Priority 1 or 2 for adapted housing, the applicant may be matched to a vacant mainstream property which meets the following criteria:

- the external access to the house is suitable or can be adapted for the practical and safe use by people with a disability or others
- the internal layout of the house is suitable and can be adapted for the practical and safe use by people with a disability or others
- there are no technical constraints which limit potential alterations/adaptations
- the household's requirement with regard to household size criteria
- the applicants housing preferences

2.4 Number of Offers

It is anticipated that the comprehensive process of assessment and matching applicants to available vacancies will result in successful offers of tenancies of adapted houses. However, in an effort to ensure that adapted housing is utilised to maximum potential in terms of addressing the particular needs of applicants and complementing community care services and to offer applicants the widest opportunity to move into suitable housing, there is no limit on the number of offers of adapted accommodation that an applicant can receive.

2.5 Nominations to RSLs including New Build Properties

Falkirk Council has nomination arrangements in place with RSLs providing adapted houses in the Council's area. Generally, the Council is able to make nominations to 50% of available adapted RSL properties.

Nominations for adapted houses are made using the matching process set out above.