



Scheme of Assistance

Works to Meet the Needs of Disabled People

In April 2009 the Scottish Government introduced new legislation to assist people with disabilities living in private housing.

Section 73(2) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/406 – the Regulations) set out the duties of a local authority in relation to works required to meet the needs of a disabled person.

These duties are supported by Volume 6 of 'Implementing the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities', published by the Scottish Government on 29 January 2009.

The new duties came into effect on 1 April 2009 and the Comhairle comprehensively reviewed its policies and procedures to enable the best delivery of the service whilst ensuring the needs of disabled people living in private sector housing are met as far as practicably possible.

Traditionally, assistance was given through the award of discretionary Disabled or Adaptation Grants for adaptation works, both major and minor, to be carried out in the disabled person's home which enabled them to remain within their own community. However the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced a number of significant changes to the way grants are administered, some of which are mandatory and others which enable local authorities to exercise their discretion.

In close consultation with the Comhairle, the Occupational Therapy Service has updated their 'Joint Policy for Provision of Adaptations' to reflect the requirements of the 2006 Act and this supersedes the 'Policy and Practice on Provision of Equipment and Adaptations'. This document provides guidance to applicants on the eligibility criteria for the different types of assistance which may be available and is obtainable from the Comhairle and NHS Western Isles or online.

Request for Adaptations

A request for adaptations to be carried out to a house may be made in a number of ways. The most common methods of enquiry are:

- from the person requesting adaptations to their home or a member of their family;
- from healthcare professionals (including GPs and Hospital staff requests);
- from Department of Social and Community Services or home carer;

and can be made:

- direct to the **Department of Occupational Therapy:** (01851 822847 for Lewis & Harris) or (01870 604984 for Uist & Barra);

- through **Western Isles Care and Repair**: (01851 706121 (Option 2) for Lewis & Harris) or (01878 710200 for Uist & Barra or
- through the **Comhairle**: (01851 822692 for Lewis & Harris) or (01870 604990 for Uist & Barra);

and may be made:

- in person; by telephone; in writing; or by e-mail.

Therefore there are a number of possible routes for an enquiry to be received for adaptations but in all cases they must ultimately be directed to the Department of Occupational Therapy for a thorough assessment of need to be carried out.

Please note that once an enquiry has been made it does not mean that this constitutes an application. Every case must be supported by a detailed, written referral from the OT Department before any financial or other assistance can be given by the Comhairle.