

Disability Modification to Dwelling

Policy

Community Housing Limited (CHL) will modify its capital dwellings to suit people with disabilities if it is economically viable to do so.

We aim to assist applicants and tenants with disabilities to live safely and comfortably.

Modifications to capital dwellings managed by CHL are done at no cost to the applicant or tenant.

Unfortunately, we cannot modify dwellings that we lease from private owners or agents however, if the modifications required are only minor (see below for description of minor modifications) we will advocate to the agent or owner to enable us to carry out these modifications.

If major modifications are required to a leased property, tenants may be transferred to another more suitable dwelling or to a property that can be modified.

Entitlement

Tenants who have an identified need may have their home modified. They are usually tenants who:

- Are elderly
- Have a disability, or
- Care for someone who is elderly or who has a disability.

If it is not economically viable for the home to be modified, tenants may be transferred to another dwelling.

CHL will also identify properties that have been modified, or properties that can be suitably modified for applicants who require disability modifications.

Background

Helping people to live safely and independently in their home, with or without support, improves their quality of life. It gives them the option of staying at home rather than living in a nursing home or other care institution.

An important factor in the decision to modify a home is the need for the client to demonstrate that they are able to sustain a successful tenancy.

As CHL acquires new properties we will endeavour to obtain some that are suitable for people with disabilities or can be easily modified if required.

Modifications to a tenant's CHL dwelling

Modifications will be in response to an approved applicant or tenant's need. An Occupational Therapist will need to visit the tenant's home and to provide a report.

We will review the therapist's recommendations report and consider how much work is involved in making the modifications.

If only minor modifications are required, we will authorise the work. Minor modifications involve non-structural changes. For example:

- Installing a handheld shower set, and
- Changing to lever style taps.

Major modifications involve structural changes, for example:

- Widening doorways
- Providing ramp access, and
- Modifying the kitchen, bathroom or laundry.

If major modifications are needed, we will meet with the tenant in their home. The Occupational Therapist, Asset Manager, Area Manager and the client will discuss the needs and the options available.

Tenant is used as a general term and includes Renter in Victoria, in line with Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) as amended.

If modifications to the property are economically viable, we will organise for the work to be done. Factors that will be considered will be:

- Long term value of the property
- Costs of alternative approaches
- Cost/benefit of relocating the tenant
- Funding being obtained from the government

We will make sure the modifications meet both the current and the likely future requirements of the tenant.

If the modifications are not economically viable, we will try to transfer the tenant to another dwelling that either has the required features or is suitable for modification.

Once a dwelling has been modified, it is normally only made available to future tenants with disabilities. If the person with a disability moves out, we may relocate the other occupants. This makes the modified dwelling available to another person with a similar disability.

Modifying a CHL dwelling for an applicant

CHL will actively endeavour to identify a property that may be suitably modified for an approved highly ranked applicant requiring disability modifications if we are unable to find a property that has already been modified within the target timeframe.

An Occupational Therapist Report must be provided before we are able to identify a suitable property or determine the most appropriate urgent housing option for the applicant.

Relocating tenants for management purposes

Tenants who are relocated for management purposes will have their needs and property requirements assessed before they move.

Clients who believe that they require a dwelling that is modified due to a disability or medical condition will need to demonstrate and substantiate their need (such as through an Occupational Therapist's report).

CHL will try to match them to a suitably modified property or undertake the necessary modifications.

Appealing decisions or actions

If a client disagrees with a decision CHL has made, they should first discuss their concerns with their Housing Officer.

The next step if they still believe we made the wrong decision is to ask for a formal review of the decision.

For information on how reviews work, the client can ask the Housing Officer for an appeals form. Applicants cannot appeal a decision not to modify a particular CHL dwelling.

Any questions

If you have any questions about the information on this Information Sheet or on any other housing related matter, please:

- contact your nearest CHL Office
- phone 1300 245 468 or
- visit our website www.chl.org.au.