

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for how Wentworth Community Housing meets the needs of tenants with additional needs or approved household member with a disability who require major or minor modifications to their property.

An additional purpose of this policy is to support tenants with additional needs or approved household member with a disability to remain in their homes where possible.

Scope

This policy applies to all Wentworth-managed properties. It does not apply to leased properties.

Policy

Wentworth Community Housing ('Wentworth') is committed to supporting the needs of clients and approved household members that require disability modifications to their home.

Types of Modifications

There are two types of modifications that are requested, minor and major.

Major Modifications

Major modifications are generally structural in nature. For all major modifications an occupational therapist report must be provided to Wentworth that specifies the requirements of the items that are being requested for modification.

A major modification could include:

- Access ramps
- Widening doors or hallways
- Major changes to kitchen, or bathroom

Minor Modifications

A minor modification would be:

- Quarter lever taps
- Grab rails

In general, minor modifications can be actioned by providing medical evidence from a qualified medical professional, such as for quarter level taps. For grab

rails, an Occupational Therapist Report is required to ensure they are customized for the height and thickness requirements of the applicant.

Application and request for modifications

For any modification to be assessed, a tenant must first apply in writing, using the Modifications Request Form.

In addition to the form, professional supporting documentation must be received such as an occupational therapists' report. For all major modification requests, Wentworth will require the applicant to initially provide an occupational therapist report outlining the details of the modification required. Once these are received, Wentworth will organise for a formal assessment.

This assessment involves:

- Consideration as to whether relocation to a more suitable property is the most viable option.
- The tenant or approved occupants ability to sustain a tenancy after the modification is completed.
- The financial viability of undertaking the modification required.
- A joint inspection with an allied health professional and Technical Officer to assess if the modification requested is practical for the particular property.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

For all major modifications that have been submitted and approved by Wentworth in writing, it is the client's responsibility to organise funding and coordination of the modification through their NDIS service provider.

Request for modifications to leased property

Wentworth is unable to process requests for modifications in leasehold properties. Wentworth may request modifications from the landlord of a leasehold property. If a modification is assessed as being required and is declined, Wentworth will assess the need and possibility of relocation, or transfer to a suitably modified property.

When modifications cannot occur

If a modification is declined, and assessed as either not financially viable or not assessed as increasing the tenant or household members' quality of life,

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Wentworth may offer a transfer to a suitable property dependent on individual circumstances.

Quality Control

All approved major modifications must be Building Code of Australia approved, have council consent if required and be carried out and monitored in accordance with relevant legislation and Work, health and Safety Policies.

Wentworth Community Housing will assess applications and carry out modifications in full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Residential Tenancies Act 2010.

Responsibility

- **Client Service Officers:** To receive and complete initial assessment to submit the modifications checklist to the technical officer. The CSO receives the initial request and is to provide the end outcome to the tenant as advised by the Technical Officer.
- **Technical Officers:** To effectively assess, report, manage or decline applications for major modifications according to their delegated authority.
- **Divisional Manager, Asset Services:** To monitor progress against targets and report to the CEO and Board and to report any identified risk or issue to the Senior Management Team.
- **Wentworth Staff:** To ensure adherence to the policy and procedures at all times.

Definitions

- **Applicant:** The person who submits a formal application for housing assistance.
- **Tenant:** The tenant is the person who signs the residential tenancy agreement and is responsible for meeting the tenancy obligations.
- **Household members:** All people living in the property, regardless of age or relationship to the tenant.
- **Approved household member:** An approved household member is a person listed on the tenancy agreement as an authorised additional occupant and who has not indicated that they have left the household.

- **Disability modifications:** Changes made to the property to meet tenant requirements, due to identified additional needs. Examples of this may be ageing in place, or modifications required for a person with a disability.

References

- Residential Tenancy Agreement
- Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)
- NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Modifications Request Form

Approvals

Signature:



Approved by:

Coralie Kelly, General
Manager Client Services

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January 2020

Effective date:

January 2020

Next review date:

July 2022