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## Modifications

### Overview

This policy explains what disability modifications are and how we will respond to requests for modifications.

### Scope

This policy applies to all properties owned by St George Community Housing and its subsidiaries (the SGCH Group).

This policy does not apply to properties that we manage that are owned by Homes NSW or Aboriginal Housing Office. When we receive modifications requests for these properties, we will apply the Homes NSW Disability Modifications Policy and/or any other applicable contractual requirements as appropriate.

This policy does not apply to properties that we lease from the private rental market. We do not modify these properties but may assist by negotiating with the landlord to make modifications.

This policy does not deal with alteration requests. Alterations are different to modifications. Alterations are improvements carried out by tenants, at their own cost, with our approval. Refer to our Alterations Policy for more information about alterations.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Meet the needs of people with disabilities/special needs and assist people to remain in their current property where possible.
- Comply with our legal, regulatory and contractual requirements.

### What are modifications?

Modifications are changes we make to a property because a property is not suitable to meet a customer or household member's medical needs. Modifications can improve quality of life and may give our customers the option of staying in their current property.

Customers or household members who need modifications are usually people who:

- are elderly, and/or
- have a disability or medical need.

### Types of modifications

Modifications are grouped into two categories: minor and major modifications.

Minor modifications involve non-structural work and works where critical measurements are not required. Examples of minor modifications include:

- Installing a handheld shower set
- Changing to lever style tap handles

Major modifications usually require critical measurements to be provided or involve structural changes. Examples of major modifications include:

- Installing handrails
- Widening doorways



- Providing ramp access
- Modifying the kitchen, bathroom, or laundry
- Replacing floor coverings
- Modifications that require Development Application approval

## How we respond to modification requests

Generally, we will modify properties where the modifications:

- are assessed to be affordable
- will help the tenant to remain in their home
- comply with any program, regulatory, or contractual requirements as well as any environmental standards, restrictions or covenants that apply to the property (for example, we may not be allowed to install air conditioning or heating at the premises)
- are approved by other relevant parties such as council, the owner of the property or the Owners Corporation for strata properties.

Things we consider when deciding whether work is affordable include:

- Long term value of the property and the modifications requested
- Cost and benefits of other options including relocating the household to another property
- Available funding sources
- Whether the modifications meet both the current and the likely future needs of the household.

## What if modifications cannot be undertaken?

If modifications are not considered affordable, will not resolve the problem or we cannot obtain the required approvals, we will consider other options such as relocating the household to another property that meets their needs when one becomes available. Refer to our Housing Transfer Policy for more information.

## Requests for modifications

If a tenant or household member has a disability or medical need that means their current property doesn't meet their needs, they can ask us to modify the property.

The tenant must complete a Modification Request form and supply appropriate supporting documentation as outlined on the form. For minor modifications a written recommendation from a doctor or other health care professional must be provided. For major modifications an Occupational Therapist report must be provided that includes details of the medical need, the modifications required, and drawings (including exact measurements and location of the modifications).

## Assessing requests for modifications

Once the completed form and supporting documentation is received, our Asset Officers or Assistant Asset Officers will assess and consider the request and consult with the relevant Tenancy Manager.

If more information is required, we will request more information and may arrange an in-home meeting.



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## Our standards in responding to requests for modifications

We will advise the tenant of our decision in writing within 28 days of receiving the request. If a decision cannot be made within 28 days, we will advise the tenant why there is a delay and when they can expect a decision.

If the request is approved, we will arrange the modifications.

### Related documents/resources

- [Homes NSW Policy – Disability Modifications](#)
- [SGCH Policy – Housing Transfer](#)
- [SGCH Policy - Alterations](#)
- [SGCH Form – Modification Request](#)

### Policy information

<b>Version:</b>	5
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<b>Responsible team/position:</b>	Customers, Homes and Places and Customers, Services