

West Lothian Council – Scheme of Assistance Section 72 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

1 Introduction

Homeowners have the main responsibility for maintaining and improving their homes. The Council will provide advice and assistance to owners to help them with this responsibility. This statement sets out the ways in which the Council will provide assistance to home owners to help them maintain, repair and improve their own homes and help older people and people with disabilities to continue to live independently.

2 Grants for Adaptations

Grants will generally only be available for the provision of internal adaptations and works to meet the needs of people with disabilities. These works may also include standard amenities i.e. toilet and washing facilities and to provide access to and from a property. Adaptations will be carried out where reasonably practical. To assess eligibility an initial assessment will be carried out by the Council's Occupational Therapy Service, (see Appendix 1).

3 Information and Advice

The Council will provide information and advice to enable owners to organise the work themselves. The Council provides a variety of leaflets to assist owners:

Information on sources of advice and practical assistance to help owners with repair and maintenance of property. Leaflets include:-

- Checking your building,
- Paying for Building Repairs and Maintenance,
- Organising Common Repairs,
- Building Maintenance, its your responsibility,
- Identifying and Preventing Dampness and Condensation,
- How to read your Title Deeds,
- The role and remit of property managers,
- Home Security for Pensioners

If an owner feels their home may require an adaptation or the installation of equipment, they should contact Social Work (see Appendix A). The process for this is outlined in the leaflet "Disability Adaptations for Homeowners"

The leaflets are available in CIS offices, libraries, Partnership Centres, housing offices and Social Work Centres. A list of websites providing information is given in Appendix 1

Information

The Council provides general housing advice, advice on benefits and energy efficiency at the Advice Shop (see Appendix 1). Environmental Health can provide information on common repairs and addressing housing disrepair.

Advice

The Council cannot give financial or legal advice but can signpost people to where this advice is available (see Appendix 1)

4 Disabled Equipment and Adaptations

West Lothian Council is committed to helping people remain in their own homes and in their own communities for as long as possible. For people with disabilities the Council can offer the following assistance;

- **Small Adaptations**

Some small adaptations can be provided free without an assessment e.g. handrails and banisters. This is provided through the Occupational Therapy (OT) self selection service for small adaptations (see Appendix 1).

- **Assessment Process for Larger Adaptations**

A detailed assessment will be carried out by a member of the Occupational Therapy staff. Options and alternatives will be considered to meet the clients' needs. This will be governed by the West Lothian Council's Occupational Therapy criteria and practice guidelines. The Client will receive a copy of this assessment. If the adaptation requires grant funding the OT will seek authorisation for this request and make a recommendation to the Grants section. The client will be given a copy of this letter of recommendation.

5 Grant Process

The Grant section will process the application. They will require documentation to prove ownership of the property together with an Occupational Therapist's letter of recommendation. If the Occupational Therapist recommends an adaptation, the Council will fund 80% of the costs of the adaptation or provision of a standard amenity. Income or savings will not be taken into consideration. If you are in receipt of any of the income replacement benefits, noted below and where this is the only income, then the Council will fund 100% of the costs of the adaptation.

Relevant Income;

- Income Support
- Income based jobseeker's allowance
- Pension credit (Guarantee element)

- Employment support allowance (income related)
(from November 2008)

The grant assistance will therefore be either 80% or 100% of the cost of the recommended adaptation depending on an individual's circumstances.

Further advice may be available from Citizens Advice Bureau or the Council's Advice Shop. If the client is over 60 years old Care & Repair West Lothian can manage the grant application on their behalf. (see Appendix 1). The Grants section can also provide advice and assistance.

On completion of the agreed work the Grants department will advise the Occupational Therapist who will check that the work meets the client's assessed need and may provide additional equipment to use with the adaptation.

6 Private Tenants

People living in private rented property that require an adaptation to the property should contact Occupational Therapy in the first instance for advice and an assessment as necessary. Thereafter the tenant should contact their landlord to seek formal permission for the adaptation. The Landlord cannot unreasonably withhold permission for the adaptation. Information and advice will be provided to private tenants or their landlords to assist in the reinstatement of any property that has previously been adapted. Tenants of Housing Associations should contact their landlord if they require adaptation to their home.

7 Additional Living Accommodation

There is no generally no grant available to provide additional living accommodation e.g. to provide an additional downstairs bedroom. If it is agreed that the best way to meet assessed needs of the disabled person is to provide additional living accommodation, the Council will provide information, advice and practical assistance to help the applicant carry out the work themselves or to try and find suitable alternative accommodation. The Head of Social Policy may in exceptional cases where it can be clearly established that the cost of providing additional living space is clearly more economic than all other options agree to offer limited assistance with funding.

8 Alternative Accommodation

Families may feel that it is preferable to move to accommodation which is more suitable for their needs. For home owners, Ownership Options (see Appendix 1) can provide advice and information on the choices available to people and help with the practical arrangements. The Council's Housing Options guide also provides information on what may be available with Council Housing and Housing Association properties in West Lothian.

9 Care and Repair West Lothian/Small Repairs Service

Care and Repair West Lothian is based at Horizon Housing Association. (see contact details below) It offers independent advice and assistance to help people repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety at home in their own community. Care and repair assist people over 60 and disabled people. The type of assistance Care and Repair provide includes:-

- Obtaining prices from approved contractors
- Applying for grants or loans which may be available for the works
- Organising the works through to completion
- Approaching other agencies who may be able to help
- Providing details of reputable contractors
- Provide a handyperson service for small repairs

This service is free but there may be a charge for materials.

10 Energy and Heating Advice

Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre

The Energy Saving Scotland advice centre can make it easier for you to use less energy. Funded by the Scottish Government, they can offer free impartial energy saving advice, including advice on:

- Energy advice on how to make homes as energy efficient as possible
- Grants and offers that are available to make it easier to install energy saving measures (such as cavity wall insulation and loft insulation)
- Sustainable transport and eco-driving
- Small scale renewables and the Energy Saving Scotland Home Renewables grants
- The new Energy Assistance Package

The new Energy Assistance Package offers a range of measures and advice to eligible people, including:

- Benefit and tax credit checks, to help applicants find out if they are entitled to more money through benefits or tax credits
- Access to the lowest-cost energy tariffs for those eligible
- Loft or cavity wall insulation from an energy supplier
- Enhanced energy efficiency measures – which may include central heating, renewable heating systems and insulation.

For more information call 0800 512 012 or visit: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Energy advice and information on energy conservation can also be obtained from the Council's Housing Advice Shop. Free advice can also be obtained from Changeworks and from Environmental Health (see Appendix 1)

11 Financial Assistance and Loans

Currently there are no special or subsidised loans available through West Lothian Council. People should contact their lenders, other financial institutions or a financial adviser for help and advice. A scheme to offer limited assistance to owners to in carrying out essential maintenance or improvement or repair work is being prepared by the Council and further detail will be available in due course.

12 Assistance for Common Repairs

In a situation where a group of owners has to carry out repairs the Council can help with advice. If a repair is a joint responsibility then it is simplest if the responsible owners can agree between themselves how to proceed. In certain circumstances the Council can offer to provide further practical help. This would be in relation to:

- Common works relating to the Council's own Investment Programme in relation to council houses and where an owners property would logically be part of a council proposed project.
- Common works where the property is in severe disrepair or presents a danger to the public or other immediate properties and where a Statutory Notice has been served.

Depending on the availability of funding, the Council may agree to contribute to an owner's share of the costs of communal repair work or pay a share of a "missing" owner. The Council will only contribute to the cost of the works where all other sources of funding have been explored and the owner does not have the means to meet their responsibilities. A financial assessment will be carried out to determine the owner's ability to pay. The Council may then meet the costs for the necessary works to be done, subject to the repairs being done to a standard acceptable to the Council. The Council will then recover all expenses incurred in carrying out this work from the owner. This may include the use of a repayment charge secured against the Title Deeds of the property. Charges will include an administration fee and will be at the council's standard rate of interest.

13 Enforcement Powers

The Council will only use enforcement powers when it is necessary and informal and voluntary approaches have failed to ensure the required improvements are made. Where a house is substandard, the Council will

contact the owners to make them aware of the condition of the house and remind them of their responsibilities in relation to repair and maintenance and try to reach agreement to have the work undertaken. If the owner does not take action to rectify and carry out the necessary repairs then enforcement action may be used and a Statutory Notice may be served. Owners can appeal against the serving of a Statutory Notice.

14 Monitoring Arrangements

Monitoring of the Scheme of Assistance will be carried out on a regular basis. All service requests and applications for assistance will be recorded and reports developed.

The key areas for monitoring will include

- Amount and Type of assistance required
- Private housing stock condition information
- Barriers to carrying out repair

15 Equal Opportunities and Service Standards

The Council is strongly committed to equal opportunities. Equality measures have been incorporated into the Scheme of Assistance, including:

- Providing advice and assistance to any homeowner who needs it, with particular sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable including those who are physically, mentally, culturally or financially disadvantaged
- Ensuring that literature is available when required in Braille, large print, on CD and in the main community languages spoken.
- Translation services are available when requested.
- Providing an interpreter when needed.
- Ensuring that our services are accessible to all communities by engaging with community groups and attending external events.
- Regularly reviewing, consulting upon and monitoring our services to ensure that they are non-discriminatory.

Information is available in Braille, on tape, in large print and community languages.

Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service on 0131 242 8181.

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 0131 242 8181

এই তথ্য আপনি ব্রেইল, টেপ, বড় অক্ষরে এবং কমিউনিটির বিভিন্ন ভাষাগুলিতেও পাবেন। অনুগ্রহ করে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশন অ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। টেলিঃ 0131 242 8181

這份資料是可以凸字、錄音帶、大字印刷及社區語言的式本提供。請聯絡傳譯及翻譯服務部，電話：0131 242 8181

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (ਬ੍ਰੇਲ) ਨੈਤੂਰੀਨ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਲਿਪੀ, ਟੈਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਕਰਕੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਟਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : 0131 242 8181

یہ معلومات بریل (اندھوں کے رسم الخط)، ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی طباعت اور کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔
براہ مہربانی انٹرپرائزنگ اینڈ ٹرانسلیٹنگ سروس سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 0131 242 8181 پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Informacje te mogą być przekazane na język Braille'a, dostępne na taśmie magnetofonowej

lub wydane dużym drukiem oraz przetłumaczone na języki mniejszości narodowych.

Prosimy o kontakt z Usługami Tłumaczeniowymi pod numerem 0131 242 8181.

Published by West Lothian Council, Civic Centre, Howden Road
South Livingston EH54 6FF

Appendix 1 Contact Details

Service	Service Provided	Website	Contact Details
West Lothian Council Occupational Therapy Assessment	Referral process for Occupational Therapy Small Adaptations (OT self selection)	http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/social_health/1404/1429/924 Occupational Therapy Service Criteria for Provision http://webwest1.app.westlothian.gov.uk/socialwork/Occupational%20Therapy/Guide%20to%20Services%20document/services%20document.pdf	01506 777777 (under 65) 01506 776700 (over 65) 01506 775608
West Lothian Council Grants	Grant administration for disabled adaptations. Information and advice will be provided as appropriate.	http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/social_health/689/	John Lochhead Civic Centre Howden Road South Livingston 01506 281377
West Lothian Council Housing Options Guide	Housing Advice and information	http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloadaddoc/1799479/Housing_Options/1867390 http://webwest1/housinginfo/OrgList.asp	
West Lothian Council Environmental Health	Advice on house condition and dealing with issues of disrepair, Houses in Multiple Occupation, Private Rented Properties Pest Control Services	http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/1210/Environmentalhealth/tradingstandards/	County Buildings Linlithgow 01506 775400 environmental.health@westlothian.gov.uk
West Lothian Council Free Home Security for pensioners West Lothian Council	Free home security for pensioners in West Lothian Free installation of a variety of security equipment including phone entry system, window locks, spy hole and security light Free telephone link to council run monitoring service. Package of	http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/social_health/1456/920	Laura Waterson Civic Centre Howden Road South Livingston 01506 281382 Home Safety Service Team Strathbrock Partnership Centre

Home Safety	measures installed including fire and flood detectors, intruder alarm and fall detector etc.		189A West Main Street, Broxburn 01506 771770 HomeSafetyService@westlothian.gov.uk
West Lothian Council Housing Advice	Housing and energy efficiency advice for homeowners, private tenants	email: adviceshop@westlothian.gov.uk tel: 01506 776448).	Advice Shop (9-12 Waverly Industrial Estate Bathgate EH48 4HY
Care & Repair	Advice and assistance to help people repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety at home in their own community. Care and repair assist people over 60 and disabled people.	http://www.horizonhousing.org/main.cfm?Type=CARE&REP	Leving House Fairbairn Road Livingston EH54 6TN 01506 400052
Energy Savings Trust	The Energy Saving Trust can be contacted to provide free advice on how to improve the energy efficiency of a home particularly where peoples health may be affected by cold, damp or draughty houses. In addition the Energy Saving Trust operates the Energy Assistance Package on behalf of the Scottish Government. Funding may also be available through the Energy Assistance Package to make homes more comfortable or cheaper to heat for people on a qualifying benefit or who meet other criteria. Financial assistance may be available through Government schemes managed by the Energy Saving Trust.	http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk	0800 512 012 Energy Savings Trust Ocean Point1 94 Ocean Drive Edinburgh EH6 6JH

Financial Service Authority	Consumer information on financial matters	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/	0845 606 1234 Financial Services Authority 25 The North Colonnade Canary Wharf London E14 5HS
Changeworks	Energy conservation advice and information	http://www.changeworks.org.uk/	Changeworks 36 Newhaven Road Edinburgh EH6 5PY 0800 512 012
Historic Scotland	Information leaflets and advice on repair and maintenance of listed buildings and on building conservation matters.	http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/	0131 668 8600 Historic Scotland Longmore House Salisbury Place Edinburgh EH9 1SH
Ownership Options	Provision of advice on alternative living accommodation for home owners	http://www.ownershipoptions.org.uk/html/publications.php	Ownership Options The Tudbery Centre The Thistle Foundation Niddrie Mains Road Edinburgh EH16 4EA 0131 661 3400
Law Society	Legal advice and information	http://www.lawscot.org.uk/	26 Drumsheugh Gardens Edinburgh EH3 7YR 0131 226 7411
Shelter	Provision of housing advice and information	http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/	0808 800 4444 Shelter Edinburgh Advice Service 4 th floor Scotiabank

			6 South Charlotte Street Edinburgh EH2 4AW
Private Rented Housing Panel	Help to tenants and landlords to resolve their issues	admin@prhpscotland.gov.uk	Private Rented Housing Panel 3 rd Floor 140 West Campbell Street Glasgow G2 4TZ 0141 572 1170