



## Housing assistance for people with a disability

The Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) aims to assist clients with a physical, intellectual, sensory or psychiatric disability which affects their housing need by:

- modifying housing
- providing additional bedrooms for a live-in carer or to store disability related equipment when required
- arranging individual tenancy agreements for people who are sharing social housing in order to share support funding
- conducting occupational therapist assessments of individual housing needs to help determine suitable housing, and
- considering other housing needs such as health and safety, independence and quality of life.

### Eligibility for housing assistance

You must meet the eligibility criteria to be given housing assistance. For more information, see the fact sheet *Eligibility for housing assistance*.

If you are eligible, your application is placed on the housing register according to your level of housing need, for the type of housing you are eligible for, in the areas you have chosen.

We will contact you at regular intervals to review your eligibility and housing need.

### Support when applying for housing assistance

If you need help with discussing your housing needs, you can bring a family member, friend, advocate or community worker to help you apply for housing assistance. The department can also provide an interpreter if you need one.

### How to apply

Contact your nearest Housing Services office to make an appointment for an interview to discuss your housing needs and eligibility. Some of the things we will discuss with you at the interview are:

- your residency status
- your household's weekly income
- your household's assets (e.g. money in the bank, investments and property that a household member may own)
- your current living situation
- the housing needs you or your household may have. We will consider the housing needs of all applicants or a household member with a disability if that need is for health and safety reasons, independence and quality of life
- where you want or need to live
- your bedroom entitlements. If you need an extra bedroom for a live-in carer or special equipment, or because of a health issue or other support needs, we will consider this when you apply
- your housing options and how we may be able to assist you.

We will tell you what documents you need to bring to the interview, for example, proof of identity, evidence of your household's income, evidence of citizenship or residency, evidence of any specific housing needs, supporting documentation to verify your urgent housing circumstances, evidence of how much rent your pay, etc.

If you are eligible for housing assistance, you may be contacted by an occupational therapist employed by the department to discuss your housing requirements.

## **Housing options**

There are many housing options that you can choose from depending on your housing needs, the type of household you have and what kind of housing is available in the areas where you have chosen to live. See the fact sheet *Housing entitlements* for more information.

## **Pets**

If you need a pet to assist with a disability or medical condition, please tell the department. You will need to supply evidence to support your request. See the fact sheet *Pets in departmental properties* for more information.

## **Changes in your household**

If your circumstances change after you have applied for housing assistance (e.g. your address, income, family situation, housing arrangement or the number of people who will be living with you) you must let us know. If you do not respond to our phone calls or letters within the required time, or move to a new address and cannot be contacted, your application will be cancelled. See the fact sheet *Waiting for housing assistance* for more information.

## **Home modifications for existing tenants**

Home modifications may be available to assist existing tenants or a household member with a disability, to care for a household member with a disability or because you are having difficulty with normal household activities (e.g. using your bath or reaching high cupboards). Home modifications assist people to live safely and independently.

The types of home modifications available include:

- changes to bathroom, toilets and kitchens
- installation of ramps, grab rails and hand rails
- other modifications to suit your needs based on Occupational Therapist assessment.

Talk to your nearest Housing Services office to discuss your housing needs. You may need to supply medical evidence detailing your needs. We will arrange for an Occupational Therapist to visit you at home and assess your current and future health, safety and independence needs and we will contact you to discuss the Occupational Therapist recommendations. If the modifications are approved, we will let you know when the work will start. If you need extensive modifications, we may consider temporarily re-housing you until the work is finished.

Some properties cannot be modified. If this happens, we will talk to you about other alternatives such as transferring to a property which better suits your housing needs.

## **Further information**

Please contact your nearest Housing Services office or the department's Disability Services Unit on 3227 6156. Also refer to the fact sheets:

- *Eligibility for housing assistance*
- *Applying for housing assistance*
- *Housing entitlements*
- *Waiting for housing assistance.*