



**ABERDEEN**  
CITY COUNCIL

# SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE

Quick guide

Amended 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010



## Scheme of Assistance 2008/09

### The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (s.72)

#### Purpose:

Housing legislation places a statutory duty on local authorities to inspect housing stock and prepare a strategy for improving stock condition by providing or arranging any assistance for home owners under Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006<sup>1</sup>.

The 2006 Act introduces radical reforms to the way in which local authorities engage with homeowners in order to manage the housing stock within its area of responsibility. The main aims of the legislation are to educate and encourage owners to plan and care for their own properties and remove the requirement for local authorities to offer financial assistance to carry out repair and maintenance works.

The Act does, however, place a mandatory duty on local authorities to provide assistance to households seeking to adapt the home to suit the needs of a disabled occupant. It is compulsory to provide grant assistance where these works fall within agreed guidelines.

#### Method of delivery:

The Scheme of Assistance is the statement which details how local authorities will deliver that assistance. It aims to raise homeowners' awareness of their duty to take responsibility to repair and maintain their own properties and remove the reliance on grant funding for repair works.

Publication of the Scheme of Assistance is a legal requirement placed on local authorities under section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

#### The 'Scheme of Assistance' explains:

- How to get assistance from the council.
- What assistance is available.
- What grant assistance is available to help homeowners adapt their homes to meet the needs of a disabled occupant.
- What additional assistance is available for older homeowners.
- The type of assistance we can offer to reduce energy use in the home.
- How the quality of private water supplies can be improved.
- The enforcement powers available to the council to make sure that works are carried out.

Currently Aberdeen City Council is only able to offer limited assistance to homeowners, mainly in the form of grant provision. This has tended to be targeted at tenement properties in order to tackle issues around common repairs.

The major change in policy is that local authorities can intervene in housing repairs at a much earlier stage. The idea behind this thinking is that it is more beneficial to the homeowner and a better use of public funding to take care of a minor repair than wait for it

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/pdf/asp\\_20060001\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/pdf/asp_20060001_en.pdf)

to deteriorate into a much larger project and consequential cost. The Council can therefore become more proactive in its engagement with homeowners.

Aberdeen City Council's scheme of assistance may:

- Offer assistance in the form of mandatory grant funding to assist disabled homeowners to provide or adapt the standard amenities within the home to suit their needs.
- Offer assistance in the form of discretionary grant funding to assist disabled homeowners carry out adaptations such as door widening, provision of ramps, hoists and in certain circumstances extend their home to suit their particular needs.
- Provide free advice about how to carry out repair and maintenance to property.
- Assist in gaining co-operation amongst co-owners to carry out communal works in tenement properties.
- Offer practical assistance that identifies and prioritises any works required to property and assist in the process of obtaining good quality quotations from reputable contractors.
- Where appropriate, refer on to the National Lending Unit for a Home Appreciation Loan, to carry out essential repair works.
- Where necessary use enforcement powers to have essential repair and maintenance work completed.

The Private Sector Housing Unit is the main contact point for all property repairs, maintenance, and adaptation works for home owners and private tenants, or for rental issues in the private sector. Contact details for this new service are: -

### **Private Sector Housing Unit**

Private Sector Housing Unit  
St Nicholas House  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1BY

Telephone: - (01224) 522134

Fax. (01224) 647333

Email: - [privatehousing@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:privatehousing@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

A full copy of the current Scheme of Assistance can be found on Aberdeen City Council's website: - [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk)