

# Housing Options and Housing Allocations

## Achievements

### Specialist housing options advice routinely included in discharge hub meetings at the city hospitals

A Housing Liaison Officer from Aberdeen City Council routinely attends meetings to provide specialist input, liaise with housing colleagues to source appropriate accommodation, and to oversee all complex cases.

Independent advice and advocacy is also available from the Disabled Persons Housing Service (DPHS) for people unable to return to their existing accommodation. A simple [housing options fact-sheet](#) produced jointly by DPHS and a hospital-based occupational therapist is available to help patients to be more aware of the options and assistance available before being faced with discharge.

### Revisions to the Council's housing allocation policy to reduce the risk of housing related delays

The Scheme of Allocations for Aberdeen City's housing has been revised to increase rehousing options for individuals with complex adaptation needs, introduce more flexibility and facilitate the provision of temporary or interim housing solutions.

Aberdeen's person-centred [service redesign](#) has linked housing, hospital care and community occupational therapist services, leading to improved [hospital discharge](#), a more accessible [housing options advice & housing allocations](#) policy, increased use of [technology enabled care](#), and [better design](#) outcomes.

How they did it

**A history of partnership working**

In Aberdeen City, the contribution that the social housing sector can make has long been recognised by strategic health and social care partners. The relationship has developed over several years as a result of direct involvement in hospital re-provisioning and through the provision of housing options advice for people with disabilities. There are strong networks and connections, with all partners being aware of the benefits that can be provided by appropriate housing outcomes.

Project Group members have therefore been very well placed to develop a range of housing solutions to improve hospital discharges, and to increase the range of options for people with complex needs waiting for adaptations.

Members have ‘championed’ the service improvements and benefits within their respective services and this has helped to pave the way for broader organisational change. It has also supported attitude shifts towards a more proactive and joined up use of resources, away from silo based ‘gatekeeping’ of limited resources.

**Revising the City’s allocation policy**

An **Evaluation Report** of housing issues on hospital discharge delays identified difficulties in accessing or returning to appropriate accommodation. (See Practice Note on Housing Related Delayed Discharges.)

Recommendations in the Group’s report included introducing greater flexibility to the Council’s housing allocations policy. The Scheme of Allocations for Aberdeen City Council homes has now been amended so that:

- Priority points are awarded at an earlier stage, when it is identified that a person in hospital will not be able to return to their existing accommodation
- Priority points can now be retained by people who return to ‘make do’ accommodation (for example by moving a bed downstairs into a living area or using portable commode facilities) until a permanent solution becomes available.
- Priority is now more readily awarded for non-physical needs.

**A wider and more flexible use of social housing**

The provision of a pool of temporary ‘step-down’ properties across the city is being explored by Aberdeen City Council and their housing association partners. The availability of temporary ‘step-down’ accommodation will provide an interim facility for patients who are medically fit to leave hospital but are unable to return home. This may be because they are still too frail to manage independently, are awaiting a care home place, require adaptations to their own home, or because of individual family circumstances.

The types of properties being considered are mostly linked to sheltered housing schemes where a level of support is already available, backed up by use of **Technology Enabled Care**. Rental and set-up costs are picked up by a local NHS Delayed Discharge Fund. Up to 10 properties are being identified on a pilot basis. To make best use of the accommodation and make sure they do not lie empty for long periods, the properties may also be available for people referred from the social housing providers or from Care and Repair for people in either the social or private sectors needing a temporary move whilst major adaptations are carried out to their permanent home. Links are also being made with homeless services so that properties are still used even if not required for step down care or adaptation decant purposes.



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**Useful Documents and Links**

- Adaptations Service User Report (November 2015)
- Delayed Discharge Project Evaluation Report (2015)
- Telecare in Aberdeen Poster & Storyboard (November 2015)
- Telecare Screening Tool
- Aberdeen City Council: Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee; Extreme Need for Medical Housing (May 2016)
- Kinbank Productions Video: Hospital Delayed Discharges; The Aberdeen Experience (August 2016)
- Housing Options Fact Sheet (2016)
- Ideal Pathway for Major Adaptations

**The following Advice Notes are available:**

- Person Centred Service Redesign
- Housing-Related Hospital Discharges
- Housing Options and Housing Allocations
- Promoting Technology Enabled Care
- Individual Case Examples

All Adapting for Change Practice Notes are available from **The Improvement Hub** and **Scotland’s Housing Network**

The Improvement Hub (ihub) is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland



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