

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- To assist Tenants to remain in their current Property where possible;
- To comply with the legal requirements of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) and the *Disability Act 2006* (Vic)

POLICY REFERENCE	VHS018.1
POLICY OWNER	General Manager, Resident Services
APPROVED BY	Evolve Housing Ltd CEO
APPROVAL DATE	1 Mar 2022
REVIEW DATE	1 Mar 2025

INDEPENDENT LIVING MODIFICATIONS POLICY

1. SCOPE

This policy relates to Tenant requests to Evolve Housing Vic Limited (EHVL) to carry out modifications to the Property they live in. Modifications can be requested by the Tenant for themselves or for another Resident of the Property.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Assisting people to live independently in their current home by providing modifications, gives them the opportunity to stay at home rather than living in a nursing home or other care facility. EHVL is committed to responding to requests for property modifications to accommodate Residents with particular needs.

Modifications are changes that EHVL makes to a Property because a Resident has a particular requirement which means their Property in its current state, no longer suits their specific needs.

An assessment will be made to identify the necessary and reasonable modifications required to the Property to allow the Resident to continue to live in the Property. EHVL will discuss the circumstances with an occupational therapist and the Tenant to determine the modifications that could be made within the meaning and requirements of relevant legislation and Housing Vic guidance.

2.1 Types of modifications

Modifications are grouped into two categories: Minor and Major.

Minor Modifications – involve non-structural work, such as:

- Fitting grab rails;
- Lowering a towel rail;
- Removing cupboard doors;
- Air conditioning for 2 rooms only where medical cooling is required;
- Fitting a hand-held shower; or
- Installing lever taps.

Major Modifications – usually involve structural changes, such as:

- Widening doorways;
- Installing access ramps;
- Full modification / replacement of the kitchen, bathroom or laundry;

- Replacement of flooring / floor coverings; or
- Work that requires a Development Application (DA) approval.

Prior to modifications being approved, EHVL will undertake a review the options available to cater for the Resident's needs, including assessing:

- the request to ensure modifications meet both the current and likely future needs of the Resident who requires the modifications;
- the reasons for the requested modifications;
- the financial resources required and available to complete the requested work;
- the long term capital value of the Property;
- the cost of alternative options; and
- the cost and possible benefits of relocating the Tenant and other Residents.

2.2 Requests for Modifications

The Tenant must complete a Modifications to Home Resident Request Form and supply supporting documentation. For minor modifications, supporting documentation includes medical certificates or a written report from a doctor or licensed health care professional. For major modifications, the Tenant must provide an Occupational Therapist or other Specialist report which specifically identifies the modifications required and confirms that the modifications are essential to the tenant's ongoing health.

Any personal information received in relation to a request for modification will be confidential and will only be used and stored in accordance with the EHVL Privacy Policy.

2.3 Requests for modifications to a Leasehold property

EHVL will not undertake modifications to leasehold properties. EHVL may negotiate with the landlord on behalf of the Tenant to undertake modifications. If a need for a major modification has been identified and the landlord has declined the request EHVL will consider alternative options such as rehousing when a suitable property becomes available.

2.4 Assessing requests for modifications

Once an application for modifications and the supporting documentation has been received, EHVL's property management team and tenancy support officers will assess the application. They will:

- Consider the Tenant's ability to sustain their tenancy;
- Consider whether it is economically viable to undertake the modifications; and
- Inspect the Property with a suitably qualified support person to ensure the Property is modifiable.

Once the application has been assessed and a decision has been made, the Tenant will be advised in writing within twenty (20) working days. If a decision cannot be achieved within this timeframe the Tenant will be provided with an update of the assessment in writing.

If the Tenant required the modifications for their own use and they subsequently move out of the Property, EHVL's policy is to make every effort to match another suitable client to the modified Property. If the Resident who required the modifications moves out of the Property, EHVL may discuss with the Tenant the possibility of the Tenant and any remaining occupants of the Property relocating to a different Property, so that another suitable client can be matched to the modified Property.

2.5 If modifications cannot be undertaken

Modifications are sometimes not economically viable or may not improve the quality of life of the Resident for whom the modifications have been requested. In these cases, EHVL may make the decision to transfer the Tenant to another Property that matches their needs when one becomes available (see EHVL's Transfer Policy).

2.6 Appealing decisions

If a Resident does not agree with a decision EHVL has made, they can request a formal review. To do this, the Resident needs to complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. EHVL's Appeals Policy, Appeals Fact Sheet and the Appeals Form are all available from EHVL staff.

3. DEFINITIONS

- Appeal - a disagreement by a Tenant or Applicant with a decision made by EHVL that affects their tenancy, and which the individual has requested be reviewed.
- Leasehold Property – for the purposes of this Policy, a property leased from a private landlord and/or real- estate agent
- Property – the property or residential premises as described in the Residential Tenancy Agreement between EHVL and the Tenant.
- Resident - a person who resides on a permanent basis in a property which is owned or managed by EHVL under a Residential Tenancy Agreement (includes a Tenant)
- Tenant – a person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with EHVL and who has certain rights and obligations under that Agreement.

4. RELATED RESOURCES

- EHVL Appeals Policy
- EHVL Privacy Policy
- EHVL Transfer Policy
- EHVL Modifications to Home Resident Request Form
- *Disability Act 1992* (Vic)
- *Housing Act 1983* (Vic)
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic)
- <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/social-housing>

This policy is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of EHVL. Any approvals required under this policy will be granted in accordance with the Evolve Housing group Delegations of Authority Policy. If you have any specific questions regarding this policy, please contact EHVL on 1800 693 865 or email your enquiry to myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au

5. VERSION CONTROL

VERSION	Date Approved	Author	Key Changes
1.0	1/03/2022	GAL	Policy adopted