

REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND
ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE -
25 JUNE 2007

REPORT ON: SHOWER INSTALLATION PROGRAMME

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 366-2007

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report brings forward proposals to introduce a shower installation option.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. Where the tenant requests the installation of a shower, this will be done where possible, subject to a rent increase of £5 per week for an overbath or cubicle or £10 per week for a level access shower.

2.2. Where tenants have requested a level access shower, but this is not supported by an Occupational Therapy Assessment, the tenant will be offered the opportunity to have an overbath shower or shower cubicle installed with the appropriate increase in rent charge, unless there is a particular medical/functional reason where the use of a shower is not recommended.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations will be cost neutral as tenants will be required to repay the cost of installation through their rent payments.

4. **SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. **MAIN TEXT**

6.1. The Housing Department receives requests for the installation of shower facilities on a regular basis from Council tenants. At the moment restricted finances means that only those individuals with a medical need and assessed suitable for a shower installation by the Council Occupational Therapists will be considered for free installation.

All other requests for showers are rejected unless the tenant seeks permission to install at their own expense. Such permission is not reasonably refused.

6.2. Recently a number of requests for shower installation have been received from tenants who would prefer to have a shower as replacement for a condemned bath.

Some consideration on how these aspirational or lifestyle based requests by tenants can be assisted has been requested.

6.3. **Shower Costs**

Currently, "one off" shower installations are provided by Dundee Contract Services and costs range from £1,800 to £2,200 per installation depending on the amount of remedial work required to the property. The cost of a level access shower is in the region of £3,500.

Where a shower is replaced during improvement/upgrade works the cost can be reduced to the region of £1,200, again depending on the amount of remedial work required to the bathroom in fitting the shower, and a similar reduction in the cost of a level access shower.

For comparison, a replacement bath, if required, costs around £400 installed.

The costs to the capital programme of a carte blanche approach to shower installation would prevent the Housing Department meeting the requirements of the SHQS.

6.4. **Installation Programme Options**

6.4.1. **Installation During Improvement/Upgrade Works**

The kitchen and bathroom upgrading programme has been underway since 2005/06. This work is undertaken as part of the heating replacement programme or separately under the kitchen and bathroom upgrading programme. Work is undertaken to approximately 1,300 houses per year.

Bathroom fitments are replaced if they are damaged to ensure compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard but generally the level of replacement has been low. To a large extent this has assisted with the need for more than our assumed level of kitchen upgrade.

Initially where baths were to be replaced we had considered offering mixer taps which would have given tenants a shower fitting – they would, however, have then been required to carry out their own tiling etc.. At the time this option was discounted as the cost of the thermostatic mixer valves was prohibitive.

In order to give tenants choice the possibility of offering a shower being installed where kitchens and bathrooms are to be upgraded should be considered.

Surveys for the kitchen programme are undertaken 15 weeks prior to work starting on site and these identify the extent of work required to comply with the SHQS. This offers the opportunity to identify those tenants who would like to have a shower installed.

Tenants who opt for a shower will be advised of the increased rental charge and be required to agree to pay this increased charge, prior to work being ordered.

Future maintenance of the shower installation will be carried out by the Housing Department.

Decoration allowances will be handled in line with the Tenants' Allowance Report.

6.4.2. **Installation Outwith Improvement/Upgrade Works**

An allowance will be made in the capital estimates for circumstances where a tenant

requests a shower installation but they are not part of the kitchen and bathroom programme and do not need an installation as a result of an occupational therapy assessment.

Tenants who opt for a shower will be advised of the increased rental charge and be required to agree to pay this increased charge.

6.5. **Shower Options**

The flowchart (Appendix 1) shows how tenants will be offered the appropriate shower. Tenants who wish the installation of a level access shower will be referred to the Occupational Therapy Department to determine the suitability of this type of installation.

If a level access shower is required on medical grounds this work will be undertaken free of charge under the existing Council protocols. If there is no medical need for a shower installation the tenant will be offered the installation of a shower at a cost of £5 or £10 dependent on the type.

If there is a medical need for a shower but the installation cannot be recommended under the current agreed policy the tenant will have the right to appeal to the Special Needs Committee for the Physically Disabled. Tenants whose appeals are unsuccessful will still have the right to request the installation of a shower at a cost of £5.00 or £10.00 dependent on type.

If the tenant will not be able to use a shower for medical or functional reasons the tenant will be advised that no work can be undertaken.

Requests for the installation of either an overbath shower or shower cubicle will be granted subject to a check on there being no previous medical request.

Future maintenance of the shower installation will be carried out by the Housing Department.

6.6. **How to Pay for the Showers**

Alternative funding arrangements have been considered and the only viable way of recharging for this work is by adding the cost of the work to the rent charge.

It is proposed to add £5.00/£10.00 per week to the rent charge of properties where the tenant requests a shower/level access shower installation. This cost can be met from Housing Benefit where tenants qualify.

We are now two years into the kitchen and bathroom programme and there appears to be demand from tenants, supported by elected members, for shower installations.

The option outlined will assist in meeting tenants and elected members' aspirations and can be met within the parameters of the SHQS.

7. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), the Director of Social Work and DFTA have been consulted.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

SHOWER INSTALLATION

