

2017

Tasmanian Home and Community  
Care (HACC) Program

# Home Modifications Service Delivery Guidelines

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# I Home Modifications Service Delivery Guidelines

This document is to guide the delivery of home modifications and related services (Home Modification Services) to eligible clients under the Tasmanian HACC Program (the Program) and has been endorsed application by the Acting Director of Community Planning and Strategy.

Service Providers must, in delivering Home Modification Services, adhere to these Guidelines, the Program Manual, the Service Provider's Funding Agreement with the Department and the Tasmanian building regulatory framework (collectively referred to in these Guidelines as the "Service Delivery Framework").

If an inconsistency or conflict arises in relation to any part of the Service Delivery Framework, the guidance of the Program should be sought in the first instance. Any conflicts or inconsistencies will be resolved in the following order of precedence with the obligations in the higher documents taking precedence:

1. the Tasmanian building regulatory framework
2. the Service Provider's Funding Agreement with the Department
3. the Program Manual and
4. these Guidelines.

For further information on the Tasmanian building regulatory framework see paragraph 1.5.2 of these guidelines. Further information is also available at [www.justice.tas.gov.au/building/building2016](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/building/building2016).

## 1.1 Definition

In these Guidelines, unless the contrary intention is expressed:

**"Client"** includes a client's advocate and/or carer.

**"Department"** means the Crown in Right of Tasmania represented by the Department of Health and Human Services.

**"Building Act"** means the *Building Act 2016* (Tas).

**"Building Work"** has the same meaning as in the *Building Act 2016* (Tas).

**"Funding Agreement"** means the funding agreement entered into between the Service Provider and the Department.

**"Home Modifications"** refer to approved or prescribed changes to a client's home (including Building Work) so that the client can continue to live and move safely about their home while maintaining a maximum degree of independence.

**"Home Modification Services"** means the delivery of Home Modification Building Works and related services by the Service Provider pursuant to the Funding Agreement.

**"Service Delivery Framework"** includes the Funding Agreement between the relevant Service Provider and the Department, the Tasmanian building regulatory framework, the Program Manual and these Guidelines.

**"Service Provider"** includes directors, officers, employees, authorised sub-organisations and agents of the Service Provider;

**"Tasmanian building regulatory framework"** includes the regulatory framework referred to in paragraph 1.6.2.

“the Program” means the Tasmanian Home and Community Care Program.

## **1.2 Aims of Home Modification Services**

The Program recognises that the ability of people to remain living in their own home is a major factor contributing to their quality of life. The aim of the Home Modification Service is to provide financial and project management assistance to clients to enable modifications to their homes to improve access and safety for either the client or their carer and to assist the client to maintain their independence.

## **1.3 Who can be assisted?**

Home Modifications Services are available to clients who meet the Program Eligibility Criteria (see the Program Manual) and who require some modification to their home to enable them to remain living at home. A Service Provider must not undertake a Home Modifications project without first obtaining an assessment of client need by an Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapist will prescribe the modification required to meet the independence needs of the client. In some cases, the Occupational Therapist may determine that a phone assessment is adequate for low risk modifications such as requests for tap ware and showerheads.

## **1.4 What Home Modifications services can be provided?**

In addition to undertaking Home Modifications, the Service Provider may also be required to provide information to potential clients about the Program, to assess client eligibility for assistance, to project manage the delivery and completion of approved Home Modifications and to facilitate financial assistance from the Department with a Home Modification project; ranging from minor work such as hand and grab rails, through to larger projects such as ramps and bathrooms.

Service Providers may be required to provide the following services to clients as part of a Home Modifications project under the Program:

- determining eligibility
- arranging an assessment by an Occupational Therapist
- performing an initial home assessment
- arranging building plans and specifications, including advice from a building surveyor
- obtaining a project cost estimation
- project coordination
- post modification assessment
- financial assistance and
- referral and information.

## **1.5 Home Modifications Service Categories**

These Guidelines have been developed to ensure that Home Modifications Services provided by Service Providers are delivered equitably, are accessible, of a high quality and standard and meet the requirements of the Tasmanian Building Regulatory Framework.

Home Modifications Services have been structured across four categories of Home Modifications, to reflect the risk, complexity, cost and regulatory compliance associated with the modification.

Service Providers must manage Home Modifications in accordance with the requirements for the relevant service categories as detailed below.

These Categories are consistent with the Director of Building Control’s Determination “Categories of Building and Demolition Work” and in regards to Plumbing Risk Categories under the Building Act. Service

Providers should interpret these Guidelines with regards to the definitions and directions detailed in the Director's Determinations. In any situation where these Guidelines conflict with any building-related regulatory requirements, the regulatory requirements take precedence. Service Providers are responsible for complying with the Director's Determinations in carrying out the services under these Guidelines.

The Director's Determinations can be accessed from the Department of Justice's website at [www.justice.tas.gov.au](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au).

### **1.5.1 Category 1 Home Modification services**

Category 1 includes Home Modifications that are of low risk, low cost, low complexity and have been assessed by a Service Provider as not requiring a licensed builder for completion.

Category 1 projects can be completed by a "competent person" as defined in the Director's Determination "Categories of Building and Demolition Work".

Examples of Category 1 projects include:

- installation of grab rails in a bathroom or pathway rails and
- replacement of tap ware or showerheads.

Category 1 projects will require approval by the Service Provider following inspection with the "Competent Person" who completed the work.

### **1.5.2 Category 2 Home Modification services**

Category 2 projects include Home Modifications that have been assessed by the Service Provider as more complex than Category 1, are of low risk and require a licenced builder for completion or a "Competent Person" only where specified in the Director's Determinations.

Category 2 projects do not require a Building Permit, Plumbing Permit or include Notifiable Work (as defined in the Building Act).

If a Service Provider is unsure if a project is a Category 2 or 3 project, the Service Provider must obtain advice from a Building Surveyor. Examples of Category 2 projects include:

- widening of doorways to improve access in non-load bearing walls
- installation of ramps for occupant access and
- basic re-plumbing that is readily visible when complete and not upstream of a testable backflow prevention device.

Category 2 projects will require approval by the Service Provider following inspection with a licenced builder, or competent person where allowed under the Determinations, that work is completed as per quotation and has been completed in accordance with the Tasmanian building regulatory framework.

### **1.5.3 Level 3 Home Modifications services**

Category 3 projects include building work that is notifiable by a Building Surveyor to a Permit Authority under the Building Act and is generally the most complex work that would be undertaken by a Service Provider under the Program. Category 3 projects may require a development approval or planning permit under council planning schemes. Only licensed builders can complete these projects.

The Service Provider is required to obtain advice from a Building Surveyor prior to commencing a Category 3 project regarding regulatory requirements that need to be considered. If a Service Provider has any uncertainty as to whether a project is Category 2 or 3, the advice of a Building Surveyor must be obtained.

At least three written quotes should be sought by the Service Provider for all Category 3 and above projects if the works are being undertaken by a subcontractor. The Service Provider's quote selection may depend on a number of factors, including experience or availability, and it is the Service Provider's responsibility to ensure quote selection is appropriate to the expenditure of public funds.

Examples of Category 3 projects include:

- expanding the building envelope to enlarge a bathroom or kitchen
- changes, such as widening a front gate to increase access to a property which is located within a heritage zone and
- plumbing work that involves kitchen and bathroom alterations, additions or relocations.

Category 3 projects will require approval by the Service Provider following inspection with the licensed builder that work is completed as per quotation and has been completed in accordance with the Tasmanian building regulatory framework.

#### **1.5.4 Category 4 Home Modifications services**

Category 4 projects are those that require a Building or Plumbing permit from the council permit authority and lie outside what is listed under categories 1, 2 and 3 under the Director's Determinations. Category 4 projects will generally not be undertaken or funded under the Program, and Service Providers must obtain permission from the Department before proceeding with a Category 4 project.

## **1.6 Mandatory Requirements for Home Modification Services**

Service Providers must ensure that all Home Modification Services are carried out using proper care and due diligence and in accordance with any relevant standards, codes and laws (including the Tasmanian building regulatory framework) and the Service Provider's Funding Agreement (including any Quality and Safety Framework contained in the Service Provider's Funding agreement).

The Department recognises that in certain situations, Service Providers may need to sub-contract or engage third parties to undertake and/or complete all or part of the Home Modification or to provide services related to the Home Modification.

Where the services of third parties are required, Service Providers must comply with the requirements in their Funding Agreement prior to engaging any third parties.

Service Providers should also note that irrespective of whether or not they (or a third party on the Service Provider's behalf) undertakes all or any part of the relevant Home Modification, they will retain ultimate responsibility, and will not be relieved from any of their obligations under the Funding Agreement for the Home Modification (including the rectification of any defects in the Home Modifications).

### **1.6.1 Occupational Therapist assessments**

An assessment by a suitably qualified Occupational Therapist must be obtained for all Home Modification projects. For low risk Category 1 projects, however, the Occupational Therapist may determine that an onsite in-person assessment is not required and a phone assessment is sufficient. Occupational Therapist roles and responsibilities in the Home Modifications program are outlined in Section 1.7.2. If a public Occupational Therapist is not available to provide a timely assessment, the services of a private Occupational Therapist may be sought and the cost charged to the project and the Program.

### **1.6.2 Standards of building work**

Home Modifications must meet the requirements of all applicable building regulation, including the National Construction Code of Australia, the Building Act, *Occupational Licensing Act 2005* (Tas), the *Residential*

*Building Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Act 2016 (Tas)* and the *Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008 (Tas)*.

Properties listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register may affect the regulatory requirements for, and ability to carry out, Home Modification projects on individual properties. It is the responsibility of Service Providers to obtain appropriate advice, and to comply with any relevant requirements in relation to the impact of any heritage listing on a Home Modification project.

### **1.6.3 Who can perform building work?**

Building Practitioners, Electricians, Plumbers and Gasfitters require licences in Tasmania.

There are several classes of accreditation for building practitioners, including those that intend to operate as builders, demolishers, architects, engineers, civil designer, building designers or building surveyors. For further information on whether an individual requires licensing or accreditation, or to check the licenses of tradespeople and building practitioners, call the:

**Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) Helpline on 1300 654 499.**

## **1.7 Roles and Responsibilities**

The Department's expectations as to the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in a Home Modifications project are detailed below.

### **1.7.1 Service Providers**

All Service Providers funded to provide Home Modification Services are responsible for:

- management of all Home Modification Services in accordance with their Funding Agreement, the Program Manual and these Guidelines
- determining client eligibility, priority and contribution according to these Guidelines
- seeking agreement of and monitoring client contributions
- ensuring that all consultants and contractors, whether in house or outsourced, are appropriately qualified and skilled and, where appropriate, credentialed and registered to deliver Home Modifications Services;
- liaison with the Client, Occupational Therapist, building surveyor, builder and/or contractor and local council as necessary
- project administration; including commissioning appropriate expertise (in house or through an accredited builder or subcontractor) to undertake projects, including obtaining quotes and costing projects and ensuring appropriate building permits and approval are obtained
- ensuring best practice is followed and compliance with any relevant requirements of the Tasmanian building regulatory framework
- ensuring completed projects obtain the required sign off or certification from any local government (including any relevant permit authority), occupational therapist and client as necessary
- maintain and complete documentation that demonstrates all requirements of projects are completed to meet the need of the clients and compliance with the Tasmanian building regulatory framework, and
- reporting as required under the Funding Agreement.

### **1.7.2 Occupational Therapists**

The Occupational Therapist is responsible for:

- undertaking assessment and determining the need for Home Modifications
- providing a post referral report including whether the recommended solution to the client's needs requires home modification, assistive technologies or relocation

- meeting with Service Provider, building surveyor and builder on site as necessary to determine project requirements, priority and schedule, and
- providing post completion reports to Service Provider.

### **1.7.3 Construction consultants and contractors**

In certain situations and subject to paragraph 1.6, it may be appropriate for the Service Provider to engage a consultant or contractor to provide certain services relating to a Home Modification project. This may be to:

- provide, where appropriate, cost estimates for Home Modifications projects
- provide technical advice and services to the client and Service Provider as to the relevant regulatory standards within the individual's licensed or accredited area of expertise
- obtain building permits and development approvals
- attend site visits with the occupational therapist, Service Provider and client to provide additional expertise with regard to project costs, practicality and to determine project requirements
- sign off completed projects as appropriate following approval from occupational therapist, client and any regulatory bodies (for example local council) and
- attaining practical completion of projects where relevant within cost estimate provided.

### **1.7.4 Clients**

The client (and/or any client advocates involved with the project) will be responsible for:

- working with the Occupational Therapist, Service Provider and subcontractors and consultants to create a job specification
- approving building quotes and negotiating a contribution with the Service Provider
- making the project site available
- approving the satisfactory completion of the project and
- reporting defects to the Service Provider.

While the Department will hold the Service Provider contractually responsible for works provided under the Funding Agreement, the Service Provider should ensure the client is aware that the owner of the building will be held responsible for compliance with Building Act requirements unless a licensed builder is engaged to conduct home modifications works.

## **1.8 Eligibility and Assessment for Home Modification Services**

Access to Home Modification Services is based on the assessed needs of the individual seeking assistance to remain at home in the community. Assessment is a systematic way of establishing the type and extent of the client's needs and identifying the most appropriate range of services to meet those needs<sup>1</sup>.

Service Providers must identify a client's needs for the service by undertaking a specific assessment of that need. All clients seeking a Home Modification are required to have an Occupational Therapist's assessment of their needs.

### **1.8.1 Restricted or excluded service requests**

The following outlines examples of specific exclusions for access to Home Modifications. If in doubt contact the Program for clarification.

#### **Long term neglect**

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health and Aging, National Program Guidelines for the Home and Community Care Program, p. 20



- Home Modification Services will not generally be provided to undertake repairs or modifications that are the result of long-term neglect by the owner, as determined by a qualified builder. General upkeep of the property remains the responsibility of the home owner.

### **Retrospective compensation**

- Compensation for Home Modifications carried out by non Program funded Home Modification services will not be provided.

### **Installation of aids and appliances**

- The Home Modification Service is not to provide aids or appliances. Where the most cost effective solution to a problem with a client's physical home environment is the installation of an aid or appliance, this should be pursued in preference to a Home Modification and the client referred to the appropriate Service Provider or program.

### **Post acute care situations**

- Program funded Home Modification Services cannot be provided to facilitate the completion of 'specialist' in-patient care in preparation for discharge.
- Home Modification Services can be provided for Program eligible clients following an acute episode of care that results in a long-term change in functional ability to assist the client to remain living at home.
- Low cost Category I Home Modifications, such as hand rails, may also be completed on a client's home to ensure timely discharge from acute care in cases where client recovery will be gradual.

### **Clients in supported accommodation**

- Home Modification Services are not provided to clients who live in supported accommodation; programs where the residence is provided, for example group homes, residential aged care facilities and hostels.

### **Duplication of services**

- Program funded Home Modification Services should not be provided to clients who are in receipt of or eligible for home modifications from other program areas. Service Providers are responsible for ensuring that the assessment of clients includes assessing access to other services.

### **Public and private rentals**

- Program eligible clients living in a public housing or social housing rental tenancy are not entitled to Home Modifications Services as they are not the owners of the property. The responsibility for modifications to these properties is the responsibility of the owner of the property.
- Program eligible clients living in private rental tenancy are eligible for Category I home modifications. These modifications may be undertaken in situations where the modification is critical for access safety and to avoid a hazardous living environment. This will depend on the individual circumstances, such as the terms and security of the tenancy and cost of the modification, appropriateness of alternatives to modification and the willingness of the landlord to allow the work to be done. It is the client's responsibility to obtain written consent from the landlord for the modification to occur.

### **Secondary residences**

- Home Modifications are only provided to the client's primary place of residence. Home Modifications are not available for secondary places of residence, including a holiday home, unless on a full cost recovery basis where no costs are charged to the Program.

## **1.8.2 The provision of new homes and additional accommodations**

When a client moves and sells a home that has been modified they would be expected to make provision for any necessary modifications to their new home from the sale proceeds of their modified home.

## **1.9 Prioritising Eligible Clients for Home Modification Services**

There is no simple guide that Service Providers can use to determine the allocation of resources. Such decisions should be based on the assessment of each client's situation.

Because the Home Modifications required can vary enormously from client to client it is necessary to assess each client on an individual basis, taking into account a number of factors such as:

- Program eligibility as part of a generic assessment
- determination of the priority of the need
- the Category and cost of modifications required
- the capacity of the client to obtain long term benefits (generally could be expected to be more than five years) and
- the cost effectiveness of the home modification.

The cost effectiveness of the home modification over other options must be established before prioritisation of the referral.

Prioritisation of access to the Home Modifications service must not be based on:

- the service Category of the particular project, or
- the ability or inability of the client to pay for the service

Service Providers should give consideration to the following in determining priority policies for home modification services.

### **Level of independence and quality of life**

Priority may be given to home modifications that:

- will provide a high level of independence for the client
- improve the safety of the client, carer or Service Providers by providing a safe home environment
- prevent or reduce the risk of admission to residential care
- reduce the need for ongoing service provision to the client, and
- improve the quality of life of the client and/or their carer.

### **Availability of alternatives**

A client who has access to cost effective alternatives to a Home Modification to meet their needs may be given a lower priority than someone who does not have access to such alternatives, for example:

- a person requesting the service being in a position to move to a more suitable home, for example being eligible for modified public housing
- an available aid or appliance being just as effective in meeting the needs of the person, and
- the availability of other Program services being more cost effective in meeting the person's needs than a modification, over the medium term (e.g. five years).

### **Clients in Palliative Care**

- While Home Modifications should only be provided to clients with the capacity to obtain long term benefits, Service Providers may provide Category 1 and Category 2 Home Modifications to clients in palliative care for whom an Occupational Therapist has determined that the modification is necessary for the client to remain living in the home.

## **2 Funding, Accountability and Management of Service Provision**

### **2.1 Minimum Data Set (MDS) Reporting Requirements**

Program Service Providers funded to provide Home Modifications Services should be familiar with the instructions for reporting HACC MDS data and ensure that they submit their data in a timely and accurate manner into the HACC Data Repository.

For the purposes of MDS reporting:

- Home Modifications are measured in total funded cost (dollars) of the work completed per client (not in a unit of time) i.e. total work cost less client contribution = total funded cost.
- Home Modification services must record MDS data only for the services that they are funded to provide.
- Work undertaken for non-Program clients should not be counted in the HACC MDS reports.

### **2.2 Fees structure and client contributions**

#### **2.2.1 Determining Fees for Home Modification Services**

Client contribution fees for Home Modifications Services are to be 40 per cent of the build cost of the modification, which includes labour and materials.

If the client is living on a low income, demonstrated by a pension or other transfer payment from the Australian Government as a primary source of income; the client contribution is to be reduced to 10 per cent.

Service Providers are to charge the remaining percentage of the cost of the build to the Program, plus an additional 20 per cent, to account for the cost of managing the project. Project management costs are to account for the time spent by the Service Provider in obtaining reports and quotes, liaising with clients and occupational therapists and in undertaking assessments.

For example, if a builder provides a quote for a Home Modification for a new access ramp for \$1 000, the client contribution is to be \$400. \$800 is charged to the Department; \$600 for the remainder of the build cost, plus \$200 (20 per cent) in project management fees.

If the client can demonstrate that they are subsisting on a low income, the client contribution would be \$100 in this instance, with \$1 100 charged to the Department.

When first seeking information regarding a potential Home Modification, clients should be advised by Service Providers of the Home Modifications fee structure. Depending on the nature of the Home Modification and the client's financial position, client contribution fees could be substantial, and it is in the client and Service Provider's interest that clients can determine as early as possible if the client contribution is acceptable to them.

Clients in financial hardship can apply to Service Providers to have the client contribution fee waived. Service Providers are to require proof of hardship and are to consider client applications for fee waivers in line with the procedures described in the Program Manual.

A Service Provider may establish a standardised set of fees for low risk Category I Home Modifications that reflects the fee model above to improve administrative efficiency. The standardised fees should absorb

the generally expected variables in providing simple modifications, i.e. minor variations in materials, travel and labour time.

### **2.2.2 Full cost recovery work**

Program funded Home Modification Service Providers may from time to time be asked to provide a modification service to a non-Program-eligible client or to provide a service to a client who receives assistance for home modification under other Commonwealth and State Programs.

Home modification work undertaken for the following clients and/or agencies should be performed on a full cost recovery basis:

- compensable clients
- Department of Veteran's Affairs clients
- supported accommodation funded by Disability or Mental Health Services
- Housing Tasmania, social or community housing tenants, and
- younger disabled clients with a specific disability eligible for home modifications from other funding sources such as the Community Equipment Scheme, Spinal Account or National Disability Insurance Scheme.

## **2.3 Employment Practices**

Service Providers must adhere to the requirements of their Funding Agreement with the Department and the Program Manual in regards to the engagement of fit and proper persons to deliver Home Modification Services. Service Providers should refer to their Funding Agreement and the Program Manual for further information.

### **2.3.1 Use of volunteers**

Volunteers can be a valuable resource in the provision of Program Services.

Volunteers must not undertake Home Modifications work that requires a qualified tradesperson or builder to complete and must be appropriately qualified and skilled, and where appropriate, credentialed and registered.

In addition, volunteers must be provided with adequate support, training, debriefings and directions to enable them to effectively perform any duties allocated to them.

### **2.3.2 Use of subcontractors for Home Modifications**

Under the terms of the Funding Agreement, the Crown holds Service Providers ultimately responsible for the quality of any Home Modifications work, including work undertaken by subcontractors of the Service Provider. Service Providers should therefore ensure they have processes in place to monitor the quality of work.

In addition, Service Providers are reminded that, pursuant to the Funding Agreement, they are required to obtain the written approval of the Secretary of the Department before utilising any subcontractor to deliver any part of the Home Modification Services. Service Providers must also ensure that any subcontractor is appropriately qualified and skilled and otherwise satisfy all of relevant requirements applicable to the Service Provider's employees detailed in the Service Provider's Funding Agreement.

Consequently, Service Providers must have policies in place to appropriately select subcontractors who have the necessary training, skills and experience to undertake the home modification works. This should include ensuring that subcontractors hold appropriate qualifications, accreditation, licenses and insurances.

Service Providers must ensure they sight and retain up to date copies of the insurances, qualifications, accreditation and licenses of sub-contractors. Service Providers wishing to subcontract any of their home modification obligations must comply with the requirements of the Program Manual in regards to subcontracting.

## **2.4 Work Health and Safety**

All Service Providers are required to have a Work Health and Safety Policy that complies with the *Tasmanian Work Health and Safety Act 2012*. Home Modifications Service Providers should understand how to manage Work Health and Safety issues common to building sites, such as the requirement for an Asbestos Management Policy and dealing with lead in old paint finishes.

Details of the Act and other supporting information about Work Health and Safety can be accessed at the Work Safe Tasmania website at [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) , by calling 1300 366 322 or by emailing [wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au) .

## **2.5 Consumer Protections and Responsibility for Faulty Works**

It is the Department's expectation that Program clients should be able to expect assistance from Service Providers in relation to reasonable concerns that they may have with the quality or nature of building work undertaken by the Service Provider as a Home Modification under the Program.

As the Department holds the Service Provider contractually responsible for the quality of work undertaken as part of the Home Modifications service under the Program, the Department considers the cost, management and rectification of faulty, sub-standard or not-fit-for-purpose building works to be the Service Provider's responsibility under the Program. The costs of rectifying faulty works are not to be charged back to the funding provided to Service Providers under the Program.

If there is any doubt in regards to whether the works are faulty or not-fit-for-purpose following the receipt of a complaint, the Service Provider must seek the opinion of a qualified independent building surveyor and Occupational Therapist (if applicable). Service Providers should have clear policies and procedures for responding to complaints in regards to home modifications, the actions that will be taken to ascertain the veracity of the complaint and the steps that will be taken to rectify faulty and not-fit-for-purpose works.

It is the Service Provider's responsibility to ensure that works carried out by subcontractors are fit-for-purpose and meet building standards. Service Providers should seek resolution with subcontractors in regards to costs related to rectifying faulty works or materials. It is the Service Provider's responsibility to ensure its risk management practices in relation to exposure to faulty works, for example through staged payment for building works and in obtaining client sign-off for project completion are appropriate.

Service Providers should provide clients with information on their additional consumer protections under the *Residential Building Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Act 2016* (Tas) in relation to residential building work contracts entered into after the 1 January 2017 that are to the value of \$20,000 or more

The Department of Justice provides information on consumer rights in relation to building works at its website [www.justice.tas.gov.au/building/consumer\\_building\\_information](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/building/consumer_building_information) .

## 2.6 Client Feedback and Complaints

Home Modification Service Providers must develop processes to ensure that clients are kept informed of the work being undertaken such as project briefs, job sheets or invoices.

To ensure the quality of ongoing outcomes for clients who receive Home Modification Services, Service Providers should develop and engage in a follow up processes to review the outcomes of all modification work that has been undertaken. Service Providers must regularly review the outcomes of a sample of the work carried out including feedback on quality of work, timeliness of work completion, communication processes and whether the modifications met the needs of the client, as required under the reporting framework detailed in the Funding Agreement.

Service Providers must also, under their Funding Agreement obligations, develop and implement guidelines and procedures that allow clients to provide direct feedback on the quality and outcomes of Home Modification work undertaken.

These processes should include procedures for identifying issues and complaints with the work carried out and negotiating an appropriate resolution to the issues and complaints raised by the client or their advocate with the Service Provider. Clients should be informed of these processes when agreeing to have a Home Modification undertaken on their home and prior to work commencing.

A Client who is unhappy with a decision made by a Service Provider is entitled to seek a review. Service Providers must ensure they have a policy in place that informs staff and clients of the process for seeking a review of a decision made in respect of Home Modification services.

The process for reviewing such a decision is:

- The client, their legal guardian or their advocate will be required to contact the Coordinator or Manager of the service by phone or in writing to detail their concerns.
- The client should be informed of the availability of advocates and encouraged to use one if they so desire.
- The coordinator or manager of the service will be required to acknowledge those concerns in writing within seven days and to arrange a time to meet with the client to discuss and resolve those concerns.
- A client who seeks a review will receive a written statement of the outcome of their review within seven working days of a decision being made and will be advised about any further steps they may take.
- If a client is still not satisfied with the outcome of the review, the complaint can be referred to the Department. The Department will examine the Service Provider's handling of the original complaint and the review, determine if the complaint and review were handled appropriately and in accordance with the Service Provider's own policies and procedures in relation to complaints and reviews and consider if the Service Provider acted in accordance with the Funding Agreement.
- If a client is not satisfied with the Department's examination, an independent review can be sought from the Office of the Health Complaints Commission and should be presented in writing by the client, their carer or an advocate. The contact email address is [health.complaints@ombudsman.tas.gov.au](mailto:health.complaints@ombudsman.tas.gov.au).

## 2.7 Records Management

Appropriate documentation and client records must be developed and maintained by Service Providers. The following are required (if relevant to the particular project):

- Program Demographic and MDS demographic information

- referral/application documentation
- Program eligibility and prioritisation assessment
- Occupational Therapy assessment
- project brief for Home Modification
- cost estimates
- client contribution assessment and agreement
- an agreement between the property owner and Service Provider to undertake work
- an agreement between the owner and builder/tradesperson to undertake work
- notifications and building permit, planning approval and Tasmanian Heritage Register applications
- certificate of completion, including occupational therapist and client sign off, and
- record of complaint management and outcomes.

## **2.8 Information Provision to clients**

Service Providers must also develop or provide client information regarding:

- Home Modification services offered by the provider
- Home Modification fees structure
- Program information and client eligibility
- Program client rights and responsibilities
- Advocacy Tasmania information
- compliant or review processes and
- responsibility for works and consumer protection information in relation to the Building Industry.