

# **Blackwood awarded record funding to adapt houses for independent living**

**Blackwood Homes & Care has received record funding which will allow them to undertake vital adaptations at around 200 Scottish properties.**

**The independent living specialist will make the changes to help people with disabilities live independently in their own homes.**

Overall, Blackwood has been awarded £710,000 in Stage 3 Adaptations funding for 2021-22, allowing it to install a range of supportive equipment including new accessible kitchens and accessible showering via wet rooms.

The funding includes a record £200,000 grant from the City of Edinburgh Council – up from the previous highest figure of £51,000 – of which £150,000 will fund a major kitchen adaptations for 15 properties in the capital, providing the latest in home automation to help people live more independently.

Blackwood will carry out a variety of adaptations across Scotland ranging from larger scale projects such as installing new accessible doors to allow garden access and lifts, through to smaller jobs that include installing hand or grab rails to

aid mobility around the home or additional high intensity LED sensor-managed lighting for visually impaired customers.

Blackwood Property Investment Manager Keith Abernethy said there is no job too small or large that the provider will not consider if it helps someone become more independent.

Keith said: "This additional investment is excellent news for both Blackwood and our customers as it allows us to install the innovative equipment and technology that people require to help them live independently.

"Blackwood is a housing leader in assistive technologies and equipment and it was great that the City of Edinburgh City Council, in particular, awarded this additional funding in recognition of the difference Blackwood makes to people's lives.

"Blackwood's focus is to make people's everyday lives easier. Simple things like reaching a can of soup from a cupboard for some can be very challenging, sometimes impossible or even painful. Using specialist equipment and technology to ease that burden is a simple way to give someone their independence back."

Funding is awarded where works are needed to adapt a property to suit the changing needs of the existing tenant, or of a new tenant, where these could not reasonably have been identified when the house was originally provided.

As well as the £200,000 from City of Edinburgh Council, £86,100 was received from Glasgow City Council with the remaining £424,000 from the £710,000 total, coming from Scottish Government to be used across the various other council areas across Scotland.

People who use Blackwood services are at the heart of shaping its future and with over 1500 properties across 29 local authorities, Blackwood uses technology and innovation to help

transform customers' lives on a daily basis.

Keith said each year they encourage customers to get in touch to see if an adaptation can help them and if they can be successful with an application for their own home.

He added: "Many adaptations do require an Occupational Therapist (OT) to assess and to provide us with a referral, however at Blackwood we are aware of the pressures on local Health and Social Care Partnerships so we can utilise independent OT's to avoid lengthy waiting times.

"Other smaller adaptations like a grab rail to assist someone getting in/out of bed, on/off the toilet can be completed via a self-referral form available on our website or available via our Housing and Asset teams allowing these to often be completed within a day or two."

The use of technology has been a component in the Blackwood philosophy to support independent living and healthy ageing – and has played a major part in enabling staff to connect with tenants and care customers, keeping the organisation stable and successful during the pandemic.

Blackwood – which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022 – exists to help people live life to the full and thanks to its investment in innovation is aiming to further roll out its Blackwood House modern standard for accessible housing combining technology, modern construction, and engagement with people who live with a disability to design and produce beautiful, easy to use homes.

To find out more about Blackwood, please visit:  
<https://www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk/>

