

Ref	REPORT	RECOMMENDATION Reference	Recommendation	LEAD	Achievements to date	NEXT STEPS	Support Officer
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R1	There are many sources of funding and policies for adaptations, which results in disabled and older people receiving very different standards of service (paragraphs 1.5 to 1.9). To address these discrepancies <b>we recommend that the Welsh Government set standards for all adaptations to ensure disabled and older people receive the same standard of service irrespective of where they live, who their landlord is and whether they own their own home.</b>	Darren Williams	<b>Mar-19</b> Welsh Government issued consultation document for Housing Adaptation Service Standards in Sep 18 for public bodies response by Dec 18. Swansea Council submitted response to Welsh Government, providing feedback on viability of timescales proposed.	Await response by Welsh Government to results of consultation with public bodies to Adaptations Service standards proposed.	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R2	Most public bodies are clear on how their work on adaptations can positively impact on disabled and older people, and have set suitable aims that provide focus for action. For adaptations, having the right strategic goals also establishes a clear basis for decisionmaking on who should be prioritised for services and how and where to use resources. However, we found that current policy arrangements have a number of deficiencies and public bodies are not maximising the benefit of their investment (paragraphs 3.8 to 3.15).  <b>We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to strengthen their strategic focus for the provision of adaptations by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence;</b></li> <li>• <b>improving the quality of information on the demand for adaptations by using a wide range of data to assess need including drawing on and using information from partners who work in the local-authority area; and</b></li> <li>• <b>linking the system for managing and delivering adaptations with adapted housing policies and registers to make best use of already adapted homes.</b></li> </ul>	Darren Williams	The Council have a set policy to provide assistance for Disabled Adaptations, in the form of Disabled Facilities Grants and Council House Adaptations. This policy sets the standards and details of the assistance available, for example eligibility criteria, grants value limits. We are working strategically with local partners both internal within the organisation including Social Services, and externally including local Housing Associations and close links with Western Bay Care and Repair to improve the delivery of housing adaptations locally. Continue to work with other housing delivery organisations locally to support a local adapted housing register, the Adapt scheme managed and maintained by Coastal Housing Association.	Welsh Government have set up a National Adaptations Steering Group made up of multi-agency officers, with the im of implementing the recommendations of the WAO Housing Adaptations in Wales review. Working groups being set up to look at the following : <b>Collaboration / Integration</b> - remit to improve strategic focus locally and regionally through RPBs, streamline application process, use home improvement agency services, integrated delivery teams, maximising use of accessible housing registers. <b>Operational Delivery</b> - remit to fast track planning processes, use of trusted assessors, contractor accreditation scheme, accessible information. <b>Performance Monitoring</b> - remit to uniform Pls cross tenure and revise NPI <b>Policy</b> - remit to look at service standards, review DFG means test, streamline RSL PAGs. <b>Procurement / Contract Management</b> - remit to look at framework agreements, contractor performance management. Await further guidance from this group.	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R3	Ensuring that all those who might need an adaptation have all the information they need in order to apply for and receive an adaptation is important. Good-quality and accessible information is therefore essential for delivery organisations to demonstrate fair access and transparency. However, we identified weaknesses in the quality and coverage of public information relating to housing adaptations (paragraphs 2.6 to 2.15).  <b>We recommend that delivery organisations provide information on housing adaptations in both Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. Information should be promoted widely via a range of media including social media, websites and published information, and also through key partners. Preferably, information should be produced jointly and policies aligned between delivery bodies to improve coverage and usage.</b>	Darren Williams	The Housing Service provide information on housing adaptations in a variety of formats, and is advertised on a variety of media including websites, facebook, twitter, and published information leaflets and posters placed in a variety of public information areas such as civic centre reception, libraries, GP surgeries.	Information limited to services the Council provide including Disabled Facilities Grants, Council House Adaptations, and Care and Repair Mini Adaptation Grant handyperson scheme. Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on local and regional strategic focus to create streamlined and joined up applications and information.	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R4	Given the wide number of routes into services, delivery organisations need to ensure they have robust systems to deal effectively and quickly with applications. However, we found that the processes used by delivery organisations vary widely and often create difficulties for disabled and older people seeking assistance (paragraphs 2.16 to 2.19).  <b>We recommend that delivery organisations streamline applications by creating single comprehensive application forms covering all organisations within a local authority area that are available via partners and online.</b>	Darren Williams	The Housing Service look to deal with applications for Disabled Adaptations efficiently and quickly, with robust housekeeping systems in place, applications for Disabled Facilities Grants follow the prescribed processes detailed through current Housing legislation. In-house Caseworkers undertake home visits to complete applications quickly.	Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on local and regional strategic focus to create streamlined and joined up applications and information.	Steve King & Leanne John

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	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R5	<p>Delivery of adaptations can be delayed by a variety of factors (paragraphs 2.20 to 2.33).</p> <p><b>To improve timeliness in delivery we recommend that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Welsh Government reviews whether local authorities should continue to use the means test for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs);</li> <li>• local authorities provide or use home improvement agency services to support disabled and older people to progress their DFG applications efficiently;</li> <li>• delivery organisations work with planning authorities to fast track and streamline adaptations that require approvals;</li> <li>• delivery organisations use Trusted Assessors to undertake less complex adaptation assessments; and</li> <li>• the Welsh Government streamlines its approval processes for Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs).</li> </ul>	Darren Williams	<p>The Housing service have a mandatory obligation to means test all Disabled Facilities Grants applications as prescribed through current Housing legislation. The Housing Service have operated successfully for a number of years an in-house home improvement grant agency service to manage housing adaptations applications from commencement through to completion, with the majority of applicants opting to use this service, and provide a Caseworker service to visit applicants to help them complete their application and give welfare benefits advice. The Housing Service also employ in-house Occupational therapists to deliver assessments quickly, effectively and efficiently. Continue our current dialogue with planners and utilities to process applications quicker to prevent delays and improve timescales on delivering larger extension type adaptations.</p>	<p>Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on continued use of DFG means test, use of trusted assessors, fast tracking planning applications and developing home improvement agency services.</p>	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R6	<p>Most local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies have established processes to appoint, oversee and manage builder and/or contractor performance. However, we found wide variations in how delivery organisations arrange, contract and deliver building works (paragraphs 2.37 to 2.44).</p> <p>We recommend that delivery organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduce formal systems for accrediting contractors to undertake adaptations. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, keeping the site tidy, controlling noise etc;</li> <li>— vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status;</li> <li>— promoting good health and safety practices;</li> <li>— requiring the use of warranty schemes;</li> <li>— ensuring that adequate insurance is held; and</li> <li>— requiring references.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• use framework agreements and partnered contracts to deliver adaptations.</li> <li>• address weaknesses in the contracting of adaptations, updating Schedule of Rates used to tender work and undertaking competitive tendering to support value for money in contracting.</li> <li>• develop effective systems to manage and evaluate contractor performance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— setting an appropriate range of information to judge performance and delivery of works covering timeliness of work; quality of work; applicant/tenant feedback; cost of work (including variations); health and safety record; and customer feedback;</li> <li>— regularly reporting and evaluating performance to identify opportunities to improve services; and</li> <li>— providing formal feedback to contractors on their performance covering key issues such as client satisfaction, level and acceptability of variations, right first-time work, post-inspection assessment and completion within budget and on time.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Darren Williams	<p>We have operated a Contractor Framework for delivery of housing adaptation works for a number of years. Contractors selected for this framework are subject to a robust application, evaluation and vetting assessment prior to selection. The framework includes detailed customer care obligations for contractors to follow on matters such as courtesy, health and safety, housekeeping and customer satisfaction. Contractors performance is monitored and scored, and feedback provided. The Housing Service operate a schedule of rates for housing adaptation works to ensure value for money, the rates to be updated on an annual basis. Evaluate service performance by provision of Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires, look to review and improve services from feedback provided.</p>	<p>Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on use of contractor frameworks and monitoring performance.</p>	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R7	<p>Maximising impact and value for money in provision of adaptations requires effective joint working between housing organisations and health and social care services to ensure the needs of often very vulnerable people can be met, and their quality of life improved. However, our findings highlight that delivery organisations continue to have a limited strategic focus on adaptations, concentrating on organisational specific responses rather than how best collectively to meet the needs of disabled or older people (paragraphs 3.16 to 3.21).</p> <p><b>We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to develop and improve joint working to maximise both take-up and the benefits of adaptations in supporting independence by pooling of resources, co-locating staff and creating integrated delivery teams.</b></p>	Darren Williams	<p>The Housing Service employ in-house Occupational Therapists to undertake assessments quickly and effectively. The Housing service also work closely with Western Bay Care and Repair, funding the Mini Adaptation Grant Handyperson scheme that provides lower value minor adaptations.</p>	<p>Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on local and regional strategic collaboration and integration of public bodies providing adaptations..</p>	Steve King & Leanne John

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	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R8	<p>Most public bodies recognise the value of adaptations in reducing the risk of falls, preventing hospital admissions and speeding up discharge from hospital. However, the importance of adaptations is not always reflected in local partnership arrangements and outside of Occupational Therapists, health professionals noted that the different local-authority and housing-association systems for administering, approving and delivering adaptations are difficult to navigate (paragraphs 3.22 to 3.24).</p> <p><b>To enhance take-up and usage of adaptations with health bodies we recommend that delivery organisations jointly agree and publish joint service standards for delivery of adaptations within each local-authority area. The service standards should clearly set out how each agency approaches delivery of adaptations and how they will provide services to ensure people know what they are entitled to receive. Service Standards should:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be written in plain accessible language;</li> <li>• be precise about what people can and cannot expect to receive;</li> <li>• be produced collaboratively to cover all adaptations services within an area;</li> <li>• set out the eligibility for the different funding streams, application and assessment processes, timescales and review processes; and</li> <li>• offer the viable options and alternatives for adaptations including linking with adapted housing registers to maximise use of already adapted homes.</li> </ul>	Darren Williams	Housing service policy to provide assistance for Disabled Adaptations sets the standards and details of the assistance available from the Council, with published information leaflets and posters placed in a variety of public information areas such as civic centre reception, libraries, GP surgeries.	Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group on adaptation service standards.	Steve King & Leanne John
	Housing Adaptations - Feb 18	R9	<p>Having the right performance indicators and regularly reporting performance against these are important for public bodies to manage operational performance, identify areas of improvement and evaluating the positive impact of services. We found that the current range of performance indicator data is extremely limited and not sufficient to enable a full evaluation of performance (paragraphs 4.5 to 4.20).</p> <p><b>To effectively manage performance and be able to judge the impact of adaptations, we recommend that the Welsh Government and delivery organisations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set appropriate measures to judge both the effectiveness and efficiency of the different systems for delivering adaptations and the impact on wellbeing and independence of those who receive adaptations;</li> <li>• ensure delivery organisations report against their responsibilities in respect of the Equalities Act 2010;</li> <li>• ensure performance information captures the work of all delivery organisations – local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies; and</li> <li>• annually publish performance for all delivery organisations to enable a whole systems view of delivery and impact to support improvement to be taken.</li> </ul>	Darren Williams	Housing Service report to WG on the current Disabled Facilities national performance indicator.	Await guidance from National Adaptations Steering Group and working groups on development of performance standards and indicators..	Steve King & Leanne John