

Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 37

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	<i>Adaptations</i>		
Date of Meeting:	6 th November 2008		
Report of:	<i>The Director of Adult Social Care and Housing</i>		
Contact Officer:	Name:	<i>Joy Hollister</i>	Tel: 295030
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Key Decision:	Forward Plan No. (7 Digit Ref):		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1. This report sets out current practice and performance with regard to the council's duty to provide minor and major adaptations.
- 1.2. The NHS and Community Care Act (1990) and the Children's Act (1989) place a duty on local authorities to provide assessment and assistance to vulnerable adults and children. This includes aids and adaptations to enable disabled people to remain in the community.
- 1.3. The assistance available covers private sector housing, owner/occupied and the council's own housing stock. With regard to the latter the funding for this is contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Assistance covers assessment and advice as well as financial provision through means tested Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and Disabled Facilities Assistance (DFA's).
- 1.4. In Brighton and Hove minor adaptations are those costing under £1000 whilst major adaptations are those over £1000.
- 1.5. Lifetime homes, the government's strategy for housing in an ageing society sets out a commitment to increase levels of DFG funding and the capacity of the Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny committee note the report and the current initiatives underway to improve the service.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1. Minor Adaptations.

- 3.1.1 Assessments for minor adaptations are made by Health Occupational Therapists in hospital or intermediate care settings or by Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTAs) within the Adult Social Care Access point, the Initial Response Service (IRS) and the Occupational Therapy Assessment Team (OTAT). For children, access to minor adaptations is through the Children's Disability Team (CDT); this report does not consider children's services. People may also access adaptations through referral from a private Occupational Therapist.
- 3.1.2. For properties owned by the council a prescription is submitted to the Home Improvement Officer (HIO) following assessment. This HIO then places an order with the contractor using the schedule of rates. There is a target of 4 weeks for works to be completed. The works are then checked and signed off by the HIO. The budget for public sector adaptation is £750K per year; however this covers both minor and major adaptations. There are approximately 150 cases awaiting orders to be placed by the HIO and 95 cases are awaiting completion of works.
- 3.1.3. For owner/occupiers and private rented properties the process differs slightly in that the prescription is faxed to the Integrated Community Equipment Store (ICES) who then place the order with their contractor. The target is to complete works within 7 working days. The budget for minor adaptations is £342,760.

3.2 Major adaptations.

- 3.2.1 Properties requiring major adaptation fall into 2 main categories; those that are relatively simple such as stair lifts and level access showers and those that are complex. Within the council's own stock simple major adaptations follow the same process as minor adaptations. Where they are complex the Home Improvement Officer (HIO) works with the Housing Adaptations Occupational therapist (HAOT) to produce plans and costing. If considered feasible, the plans are then agreed with the client. If the costings are under £10k the HIO places the order as above; if over this ceiling the case is considered by the adaptations panel which meets bi-monthly.
- 3.2.2. As stated, the budget for these works sits within the HRA and is a total of £750k per annum to include minor adaptations. Main issues are waiting times for initial assessment within Occupational Therapy and the capacity within the HAOT team to provide support and assistance to the HIO.
- 3.2.3. For Housing Association (HA) properties, if simple, the prescription is forwarded directly to the HA with a request to fund; if agreed the HA will organise the works and the prescriber will merely undertake a check visit on completion. Should the HA

wish, they can submit a landlord's DFG application setting out the technical detail and if funding is approved they will organise the delivery of the works. Alternatively should the HA refuse to submit the landlord's application the tenant would have to be financially assessed in their own right and the HIO would then complete the specification and either they or the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) assist the tenant in ordering works. If the works are complex the process is the same but there would be the additional involvement of the HAOT. The financial issues remain the same as council-owned stock, with works over £10k being considered by the adaptations panel to ensure equitable use of resources.

- 3.2.4. In the private rented or owner-occupied sector, simple major adaptations are assessed and the prescriber passes to the HIO or HIA for financial assessment and DFG application and works are ordered. For complex adaptations the process is as for Housing Associations. Approximately 30% of all referrals require the involvement of the HAOT team due to their complexity.
- 3.2.5. The funding for all minor adaptations apart from those within council-owned stock is made up of £1.1m DFG and Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance ?? (PSHRA), £2.76m PSHRA to support Disabled Facilities Assistance (DFA's) of up to £50K per application and Minor Adaptations Grant (MAG) of up to £5k per application. There is also £100k Adult Social Care top up fund: this is almost completely committed.
- 3.2.6. The budget for private rented and owner-occupied properties is believed to be sufficient to meet demand; the budget within the HRA is unlikely to be sufficient to cover all demand should the waiting list be cleared.

3.3 Waiting Times.

- 3.3.1. There are currently 385 people waiting assessment by the Occupational Therapy Assessment Team (OTAT) and there are 137 cases awaiting completion of plans or schedule of works with the Home Improvement Agency (HIA).
- 3.3.2. Within HAOT there are 120 cases awaiting allocation. Approximately 30 cases per month are added to the waiting list, but with 40 per month allocated the waiting list should be cleared within 12 months.

3.4. Current initiatives

- 3.4.1. New information packs are being developed to be sent out from the Adult Social Care access point; these packs are designed to give people better information on housing options and choice.
- 3.4.2. Proposals are under development to offer a direct access route for people requiring adaptations but not wishing to have a full Community Care Assessment. This is a key part of the Self Directed Support work to enable people to receive timely support and signposting.
- 3.4.3. Development of a simpler process for straightforward adaptations such as level access showers and stair lifts to enable access to funding through the simpler MAG route (up to £5k) rather than the more complex DFG route.

- 3.4.4. The use of Direct Payments to enable clients to source their own contractors and manage their own works is being considered.
- 3.4.5 The adapted housing register is helping the council ensure adapted properties are allocated to best match people's needs and avoid the wasteful practice of taking out expensive adaptations.

3.5. Conclusion

Timely and appropriate adaptations are an essential part of enabling disabled and older people to live within their communities. They are a key part of the personalisation of Adult Social Care enabling people to have increased choice and control. Work is underway to improve the process and enable more people to have timely access to adapted properties through the various work streams of the modernisation programme.

4. CONSULTATION

None

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

The total adaptations budget for 2008/2009 is £1,231,200 which is split between Housing Revenue Account (Disabled adaptations £888,440) and Adult Social Care (Adaptations to homes of disabled people £342,760).

The forecast for 2008/2009 is for a balanced budget.

The financial impact of the current initiatives set out in paragraph 3.4 have not yet been assessed.

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 04/11/2008

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising directly from the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Gherbre-Ghiorghis

Date: 4.11.08

5.3 Equalities Implications

Adaptations are a key part of ensuring people have equal access to their homes and communities.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

None arising

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

There are no implication for crime and disorder in this report

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

None

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

None other than already referred to in the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: None

Documents In Members' Rooms: None

Background Documents: None

