

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2ND OCTOBER 2018

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR DELIVERY OF DISABLED FACILITIES

GRANTS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide members with an update on performance, in relation to the delivery of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The report also highlights the challenges that have affected the delivery of these adaptations during 2017/18.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides members with an overview of performance in relation to the delivery of mandatory DFGs during 2017/18.
- 2.2 The report also sets out details of changes that have been implemented in 2017/18 to deliver service improvements and identifies outstanding challenges and service priorities that will continue to affect the delivery of disabled facilities grants in the future.
- 2.3 The performance of the Private Sector Housing Adaptations Team in delivery of DFGs during 2017/18 has shown continuous improvement, although there are some aspects of the service which would benefit from further improvement. The main challenge moving forward relates to the continued ability to provide a high quality service that meets the needs and aspirations of our service users, while satisfying medium term financial plan priorities. This Team is well placed to respond to the challenge.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The provision of DFGs to disabled persons living in private sector properties is a mandatory function within the provisions of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. In addition the provision of DFGs supports:
 - Caerphilly County Borough Council, Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, Key Priority 4 - "Providing Adaptations for Disabled Persons". This policy is the strategic document upon which the Authority's private sector housing activities are based.
 - The Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014— provides the legal framework for improving the well being of people who need care and support, including carers.
 - Improving Lives and Communities; Homes in Wales (WG 2010) which sets out the national context on improving homes and communities.
 - ENABLE Support for Independent Living (WG 2017).

- The Corporate Plan 2018-2023 Well-being Objective 3 addresses the supply, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the County Borough and the provision of advice, assistance or support to help improve people's health and well-being.
- The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013-2023 ensures that older people in Wales have the resources they need to deal with the challenges and opportunities they face for the future.
- Caerphilly Well-Being Plan (2018-2023): Positive Places Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable.
- 3.2 The delivery of DFGs contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A globally responsible Wales.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Private Sector Housing Adaptations Team currently consists of 1 Team Leader, 4 Technical Officers, 1 Clerk of Works, 1 Liaison Officer and 1.6 FTE Adaptation Assistants. In addition to these permanent staff members, the team is currently supported by a fixed term agency officer until March 2019. In 2017/18 they delivered 4 streams of adaptations in partnership with Social Services and Care & Repair, namely:
 - 1200 Minor Works of Adaptations valued at £234,887
 - 192 mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, valued at £1,034,370
 - 12 discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants, valued at £51,268
 - 163 public sector adaptations valued at £689.799
 - Management of 328 ENABLE funded adaptations valued at £230,000.
- 4.2 ENABLE funding was introduced by Welsh Government in 2016/17 and has resulted in significant additional capital spend utilising existing staff resources
- 4.3 The provision of DFGs is mandatory and in this respect the Authority will continue to ensure the availability of such grants is given the highest priority. Disabled Facilities Grants are means tested grants (with the exception of disabled children under the age of 18 years) which can help towards the cost of adapting a person's home to enable them to continue to live there as independently as possible. The grant is awarded when the Council considers that adaptations are necessary to meet the particular needs of the disabled person or their carer, as determined by an Occupational Therapist and that it is reasonable and practical to do so. Typical works include the provision of suitable bathing facilities such as level access showers and improving access around the home via widening of doors or installing stair lifts. The maximum grant payable is £36,000 inclusive of fees.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

4.4 The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facility Grant, from first enquiry to completion of works, is a performance indicator. It includes the time taken by Social Services to consider an applicant's needs and provide the Adaptations Team with a recommendation for adaptations, in addition to the time taken by the Adaptations Team to process the DFG application. Social Services prioritise assessments to ensure resources are targeted to those in the greatest need and at greatest risk. In 17/18 the average time taken by

Social Services from first contact to the Adaptations team receiving a Recommendation was 45 days. It should be noted that those in greatest need are prioritised accordingly by the Occupational Therapy (OT) service and will usually be assessed within 7 days from first contact however any future increase in waiting times for the OT service could have a negative impact on this figure. The associated DFG applications are then prioritised by the Adaptations Team.

- 4.5 In 2016/17 the average number of calendar days taken by this Authority to deliver a DFG was 282 with 149 completions. In 2017/18 the figure increased to 292 days. However in 2017/18 192 DFGs were completed with no additional staff resource. This equated to an increase in capital expenditure of £124,818. Across Wales it took an average of 213 calendar days to deliver 3,641 DFGs. 12 Local Authorities failed to meet this average number of calendar days.
- 4.6 In 2016/17 the Local Government Data Unit (LGDU) reported Caerphilly County Borough Council ranked 17th out of the 22 Local Authorities in relation to the time taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant. In 2017/18 the Council is ranked 21st. However it should be noted that CCBC delivered the 6th highest number of DFGs with limited staff resources (see paragraph 4.12). Due to concerns regarding how the performance indicator data is gathered nationally resulting in an inaccurate comparison of true delivery times between different Local Authorities, Welsh Government has withdrawn the performance indicator as a mandatory national performance indicator. Instead the performance indicator is a Public Accountability Measure (PAM).
- 4.7 The Wales Audit Office has recently undertaken a review of Housing Adaptations in Wales (February 2018). Their report makes 9 recommendations for improvement. Recommendation 9 relates to having the right performance indicators and regularly reporting against them to enable public bodies to manage operational performance and identify areas for improvement. The report states that the current range of performance indicator data is extremely limited and not sufficient to enable a full evaluation of performance. The report calls for Welsh Government and delivery organisations to set appropriate measures to judge both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the different systems for delivering adaptations and the impact on wellbeing and independence of those who receive adaptations.
- 4.8 Welsh Government is currently in the process of developing a new suite of performance indicators linked to the ENABLE system. These will consider delivery of all types of adaptations, not just DFGs. Information will also be provided as to how the data must be collated to ensure a uniform approach across Wales.
- 4.9 When reviewing performance in 2017/18, the picture is one of improvement. Following the introduction of improvements detailed in 4.16 below the average number of days to deliver a DFG has decreased each quarter, meeting the target in quarter 3 and exceeding the target in quarter 4. This improvement has continued into quarter 1 of 2018/19 (266 days). It is hoped that following consideration of the matters stated in 4.17 over 2018/19 continued improvements will be achieved.

2017/18 Quarter1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
315 days	296 days	280 days	268 days

4.10 Extensive adaptations to private sector properties are very difficult to achieve in short timescales as they include engaging the services of an architect to determine the design of the works and require planning permission. During 2017/18 the Team dealt with 17 large scale disabled facilities grants, with 15 of these grants costing between £10,000 and £20,000 as well as 2 grants for the maximum £36,000.

4.11 A national customer satisfaction questionnaire (attached appendix 1) is sent out to the disabled person following the delivery of every adaptation. The results of these surveys are provided to Welsh Government on a quarterly basis. The Council reports 3 key elements of customer satisfaction as a local performance indicator via Fynnon, the results of which are reported below for 2017/18 and demonstrate that grant recipients are satisfied with the overall service they received despite the extended period that may have been required to provide the adaptations.

Key Performance Indicators	2017/18 Target	2017/18 Actual
Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the length of time it took to provide the adaptation	92%	95%
Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the appointed contractor (e.g. quality of work, tidiness, timekeeping)	96%	97%
Percentage of persons receiving adaptations who stated they were satisfied with the service received overall	96%	98%

- 4.12 Over the past 3 years there have been significant staffing issues within the Private Sector Housing Service with 2 technical officers not replaced whilst on long term sickness absence prior to ending their employment. There were subsequently significant difficulties recruiting suitable replacements and the newly appointed officers required extensive training and support to be able to undertake their roles effectively. Additional resources were not, therefore, available to support the role of the Adaptations Team. The last all Wales bench marking exercise undertaken in 2013/14 noted that Caerphilly County Borough has the 4th highest ratio of Disabled Facilities Grants to full time equivalent staff in Wales at a ratio of 44 to 1 even taking into account the enhanced service offered through the in house Agency that is not mirrored elsewhere. The average is 25 to 1. Unlike in many other local authorities these staff also process works of adaptation in public sector properties and manage Minor Works of Adaptation on behalf of Social Services.
- 4.13 The Authority recognises the significant contribution the in house Agency makes in supporting grant applicants, many of whom may be disadvantaged and unfamiliar with the demands of grant administration, works supervision and often the substantial financial management involved. The need to secure the installation of a quality adaptation is paramount. The comprehensive Agency Service provided offers professional, technical and administrative services to clients, so as to remove the responsibility and worry of arranging and supervising the works themselves. Whilst intensive support and intervention is required this service ensures that all disabled applicants can benefit from the financial assistance to which they are entitled.
- 4.14 The management and operational structure of the Private Sector Housing Service has been subject to ongoing review which has impacted on elements of service provision, as senior Technical Officers now undertake additional operational management responsibilities, thereby impacting on their capacity for operational case workload.

- 4.15 In an effort to improve service delivery one such officer has also been given responsibility for the processing of all complex adaptations such as requiring extensions or other works that need planning permission, with the aim of freeing up other officers time for processing more straight forward adaptation requests. This officer has also been working to develop a new procurement framework for delivery of both minor works (cross tenure) and major works of adaptations in council housing, together with production of a framework for service and maintenance of lifting equipment, including stair lifts, vertical lifts and hoists. Both frameworks are key to maintaining and improving future service delivery for tenants and clients.
- 4.16 During 2017/18 the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants has been reviewed from a procedural point of view within Private Sector Housing and the following items addressed to improve delivery times for adaptations.
 - The Liaison officer arranges to visit the disabled applicant or their representative within 5 working days of receiving the 'Recommendation for Works of Adaptation' from Social Services.
 - 'Test of Financial Resources' assessments relating to Disabled Facilities Grants are prioritised over all other types of grant assistance.
 - A formal review of officer workloads has been undertaken with a review of district areas and introduction of target times.
 - Removal of postal tendering and implementation on the 1st of February 2018 of an etendering system on a pilot basis, in relation to stair lifts and hoists, using a new procurement system called 'Quick Quotes'.
 - Update of the Local Authority schedule of rates, to offer a fair price for the undertaking of the works, which should result in less tenders being withdrawn by successful contractors and consequently the need for a further tendering exercise to be required.
 - Implementation of an electronic system for the signing of contracts.
 - Implementation of a monitoring system relating to contractor start dates and a follow up process if issues arise.
 - The appointment of an additional Technical Officer on a fixed term contract to assist with the processing of public sector adaptations, which will free up officer time to address the outstanding backlog of Disabled Facilities Grants, has been extremely difficult, with repeated efforts to recruit. An Agency Officer was eventually recruited on the 26th March 2018, but the impact of the appointment cannot yet be fully assessed, as the performance indicator relates to completed DFGs within the financial year. However it is noted that the outstanding backlog of DFGs awaiting initial processing by a technical officer has been substantially reduced since this appointment.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION DURING 2018/19

- 4.17 Client or performance focused service:
 - Overcoming difficulties experienced in the delivery of multiple adaptations within one DFG. Due to the specialist nature of certain works of adaptation, Recommendations from Social Services which require multiple adaptations often necessitate multiple contracts and specialist contractors. These may involve significantly different lead in times e.g. a straight stair lift and a large external ramp. Also, in many instances it is not practical to have two contracts running concurrently on site with sometimes complex programming required for the benefit of the disabled client. In addition, due to the evolving needs of vulnerable clients, recommendations are regularly received from Social Services for additional adaptations for clients whose initial Recommendations for adaptations are already being processed through the DFG route.

Many Local Authorities treat each subsequent Recommendation as a separate DFG, thereby minimising the time taken to complete each one (reflecting positively in the PI) however, this requires that applicants have to repeat the full application process each time a Recommendation is received. Officers in this Authority take an alternative approach, routinely adding these additional works to the pre-existing DFG application, thereby providing an enhanced service to the applicant but often substantially adding to the total delivery time for the Disabled Facilities Grant. Amending this process would improve performance figures but it is not the best process from the point of view of the disabled person and is therefore not supported by officers. The time period currently required to be reported for the PI relates only to the date when all of the recommended works are completed in full rather than each individual adaptation being reported separately.

- The Authority offers discretionary DFGs not routinely available elsewhere that enhance service provision to clients by providing works in a timely manner outside the scope of the mandatory DFG, but these are not included within the performance data. Due to the specialist nature of this work these grants are processed by those officers who process mandatory DFGs.
- The operation of an in house Agency service ensures that the Authority is able to provide a comprehensive service to support all applicants throughout the DFG process. It is evident that this intensive support helps to prevent vulnerable clients from dropping out of the DFG system, thereby missing out on the benefits that an adaptation would provide, and increasing dependence on social care. Such intensive support lengthens the average time taken for clients to receive a DFG, thereby impacting on overall performance but results in a positive outcome that may not otherwise have been achieved, particularly in relation to vulnerable clients and those without other means of support. It is considered that this element of the service has a significant positive impact on the levels of customer satisfaction obtained.
- The production and implementation of a procurement framework to deliver Disabled Facilities
 Grants is considered a potential opportunity to reduce lead in times for commencement of
 works on site. Whilst such an approach has been adopted in some local authorities there is
 some concern that such an arrangement may be contrary to tender requirements specified in
 relevant grant legislation so further investigation is required.
- Following the completion of the pilot period for 'Quick Quotes' detailed above in 4.16
 consideration will be given to rolling out the use of the tendering system for other forms of
 adaptations.
- There have been difficulties maintaining a sufficient number of contractors able to undertake works of adaptation, in a timely manner. As the Authority provides an Agency Service it is required to ensure that all contractors that it utilises are approved and the Agency operates a comprehensive list of approved contractors. At present there are significant difficulties in obtaining timely start dates from successful contractors, due to competing pressures, linked in part to their workloads external to Private Sector Housing, which may include WHQS, Housing Repair Operations as well as private contracts. Additional contractors are being actively sought to apply for inclusion on the approved list, which has already resulted in 6 additional approved contractors being added to the list since April 2018.
- Implementation of an IT system for monitoring of builders' performance.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that:

Long Term – Improving the accessibility of the housing stock to meet long term needs of current and future residents. The provision of adaptations to meet the needs of residents and their carers enables them to remain safe in their own homes, and supports independence.

Prevention – Reduces the likelihood of enforced moves to alternative accommodation, hospital admissions, delayed transfers of care and enforced admission to residential care.

Integration – Successful adaptations can have a significant positive impact on the goals and objectives of Health and Social Care Services.

Collaboration – There is extensive collaboration with Health and Social Care Services in determining whether adaptations are necessary and appropriate, reasonable and practicable in order to ensure that a positive outcome is achieved.

Involvement – The views of the disabled applicant and, where appropriate, their carers are taken into consideration when options are being considered and decisions taken in respect of adaptations.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Equality Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications to the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications to the report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members consider if the current level of performance is acceptable, whilst considering the recent improvements made and resources available.
- 10.2 Members offer views and suggestions as to how current performance can be improved, if deemed appropriate.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 To allow members the opportunity to review, question and comment upon the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants within Caerphilly County Borough.

12. STATUTORY POWER

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014.

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Consultees: Councillor Dave Poole, Leader of the Council

Councillor Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes and Places

Christina Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive

David Street, Corporate Director of Social Services and Housing Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer

Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer

Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager Mark Jennings, Housing Strategy Officer

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Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities and Welsh Language

Carl Spearman, Principal Housing Officer

Sean O'Brien, Team Manager, Occupational Therapy

Appendices:

Appendix 1 National customer satisfaction questionnaire (English and Welsh versions)

Housing Adaptations

Customer Survey and data collection form

Nar	me and Address (optional)		
Nar	me		
Ado	dress		
1.	. How did you first find out about	the	Housing Adaptation service?
Plea	ase choose one option only		
	Occupational therapist		Family member/friend
	Social worker		Local authority publicity
	Hospital/Discharge Team		Housing Association/landlord
	G.P./doctor		Local Councillor
	Voluntary agency		Other, please specify:
	Care & Repair		
2.	. How did you then first contact th	ne se	ervice?
Plea	ase choose one option only:		
	Referred by social worker / occupational therapist / housing off	ficer	☐ Online form
	In person		☐ Letter
	Hospital/Discharge Team		☐ Housing association/landlord
	Telephone		
	Care & Repair		☐ Other, please specify:
	Email		

3.	How e	easy or d	lifficult v	vas it to	make this i	initial co	ntact with	us?	
Plea	ase choo	se one o	ption on	ly					
	Very easy		Fairly easy		Fairly difficult		Very difficult		Not applicable
Plea	ase tell u	is more	about yo	ur respo	onse:				

4. We would like to find of the Housing Adapta			-		_
Please tick one option in each	h row				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
A)the support provided by officers (e.g. verbal advice, helpfulness, returning phone calls etc.)					
B)the length of time it took to provide your adaptation(s)					
C)the amount your views were taken into account during the process					
D)the appointed contractor (e.g. their quality of work, tidiness, timekeeping etc.)					
E) How would you rate the service received overall					
Please tell us any additional weren't very satisfied, pleas			s understand y	your responses	s, and if you
					

Please tick all that apply, cho	oosing one	option in e	each row		
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
A) My quality of life has improved					
B) I was able to return home from hospital					
C) I feel safer at home, including safer from risk of falling					
D) I am able to do things I couldn't before, and feel more confident and independent					
E) It is easier for my family/Carer to help with my daily needs					
F) I no longer need to consider moving home or going into a care home.					
Please tell us any additional information that can help us understand your responses:					

☐ Please tick this box if you would like us to contact you to discuss your adaptation.

Addasu Tai

Ffurflen Holi Cwsmeriaid a chasglu data

Env	v a Chyfeiriad (opsiynol)		
Env	<u> </u>		
Cyf	eiriad		
1.	Sut daethoch chi i wybod am y G	was	anaeth Addasu Tai?
Dev	viswch un opsiwn		
	Therapydd galwedigaethol		Aelod o'r teulu / ffrind
	Gweithiwr cymdeithasol		Awdurdod Lleol
	Tîm yr Ysbyty/Tîm Rhyddhau		Cymdeithas Dai / landlord
	Meddyg Teulu/ Meddyg		Cynghorydd lleol
	Mudiad gwirfoddol		Arall, manylwch:
	Gofal a Thrwsio		
_			
2.	Sut gwnaethoch chi wedyn gysyl	ltu â	'r gwasanaeth?
Dev	viswch un opsiwn:		
	Atgyfeiriad gan weithiwr cymdeitha / therapydd galwedigaethol / swydd tai		☐ Ffurflen ar-lein
	Yn bersonol		□ Llythyr
	Tîm yr Ysbyty / Tîm Rhyddhau		☐ Cymdeithas Dai / Landlord
	Ffôn		
	Gofal a Thrwsio		☐ Arall, manylwch:
	E-bost		

3.	Pa mor	hawd	d neu and	odd oed	d hi ichi gysyllt	tu â r	ni y tro cyntaf	hwn	nw?
Dev	viswch un	opsiw	n						
	Hawdd iawn		Eithaf hawdd		Eithaf anodd		Anodd iawn		Ddim yn gymwys
Dyv	wedwch fw	vy wrt	hym ni a	m eich a	ateb:				
-									

				eddau ar y
rhes				
Bodlon iawn	Bodlon	Anfodlon	Anfodlon iawn	Ddim yn gymwys
	pu ni i ddea	ll eich atebion	a, ac os nad oe	ddech yn
	ai. Pa mor	ai. Pa mor fodlon neu rhes Bodlon Bodlon iawn	ai. Pa mor fodlon neu anfodlon oed rhes Bodlon Bodlon Anfodlon iawn	Bodlon Bodlon Anfodlon iawn Anfodlon iawn Anfodlon iawn Anfodlon iawn

) Mae ansawdd fy mywyd edi gwella	Cytuno'n gryf	Tueddu i gytuno	Tueddu i	Anghytuno	Ddim yr
			anghytuno	yn gryf	gymwys
edi gwella					
Cefais ddod adre o'r ysbyty					
Rwy'n teimlo'n fwy sâff yn nghartref, gan gynnwys yn ff rhag cwympo					
Rwy'n gallu gwneud pethau d oeddwn yn gallu'u gwneud r blaen, ac yn teimlo'n fwy derus ac annibynnol					
Mae'n haws i heulu/gofalwr fy helpu â fy ghenion pob dydd					
Does dim angen imi feddwl wyach am symud tŷ neu mud i gartref gofal					
howch ragor o wybodaeth lai'n helpu i ddeall eich ebion:					

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