



Housing Adaptation – Topic Note



Introduction:

This topic note summarises key information for Housing, Health and Social Care professionals involved in the provision of housing adaptations.

The timely provision of appropriate housing adaptations can play an important role in supporting disabled people and those with mobility problems to remain in their own home and live independently. It is therefore an important activity in shifting the balance of care and preventing hospital delayed discharges.

Click [here](#) for complimentary information about equipment and independent living.

The role of Health and Social Care Partnerships:

Responsibility for delivery of functions relating to housing adaptations and equipment (aids) now lies with Health and Social Care partnerships (The Integration Authority) ¹. Key responsibilities delegated to the Integration Authority are:

- The duty to assess for an adaptation
- Planning for and resourcing adaptations.
- The duty to provide grants of 80% or 100% for those living in the private sector, who are assessed as needing adaptations.

Financial resources previously deployed for tenants of Councils have passed to the Integration Authority. Funds for adaptations undertaken by Housing Associations and Co-operatives (RSLs) etc have not been passed to the Integration Authority, but the IA has responsibility for ensuring that Occupational Therapy services are available to support adaptations for RSL tenants.

Whilst the responsibility for fulfilment of these duties now lies with the Integration Authority, it is open to IAs how services will be delivered and by whom. In many areas it is anticipated that, in the short to medium term, services will be delivered in much the same way as prior to Integration; for example, assessments for adaptations being undertaken by Occupational Therapists in Social Work Departments.

Although there have been significant changes in responsibilities, the generality of the Scottish Government's '[Guidance on the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations](#)', [1 December 2009](#) is still relevant.

Who is eligible for assistance and under what terms?

All tenants and homeowners are eligible for assistance with undertaking adaptations, but the level of assistance can be subject to variation by tenure and locality. For further information, click [here](#).

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¹ Adaptations, Aids and Equipment - Advice Note, Health and Social Care Integration, Scottish Government, April 2015. ISBN: 978-1-78544-304-5 (web only).

Improvement Priorities and Actions:

In 2012 the '[Adapting for Change](#)' report made a series of recommendations to Scottish Government to address weaknesses in the delivery of housing adaptations. This has led to Adapting for Change tests sites pursuing a number of Tests of Change aimed at addressing the current situation and achieving the following outcomes.

Characteristics of the current situation:

- inconsistent service across Scotland affected by tenure location
- multiple and fragmented responsibilities
- reactive and “downstream”, not proactive and “upstream”
- lack of data on the impact and effectiveness
- growing demand and constrained resources
- narrowness of scope and choice.

Intended Outcomes:

- Streamlined, integrated and person centred services
- Better design, leading to less waste and improved recycling
- Meeting a wider range of needs
- Improved prevention

Current developments:

Improvement work is currently ongoing in five 'Adapting for Change' demonstration sites: - Aberdeen, Scottish Borders, Falkirk, Fife, and Lochaber. Other areas are also undertaking their own improvement activities.

All five Adapting for Change tests sites, are undertaking Tests of Change in the following areas:

- Improving partnership arrangements; strategy, processes and governance.
- Service redesign to shorten timescales and enhance fast tracking
- Improving communication and choice and allied information and advice.

Work in The Borders has included embedding Occupational Therapist (OT) resources directly in the Care and Repair service and offering service users direct access to OT assessment. They have adopted a tenure neutral approach to assessment and provision and have a shared funding approach across the 4 local RSLs. The work has recently been positively evaluated and the report can be downloaded [here](#).

Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership can demonstrate improved communication, policy and practice. The appointment of a Housing Liaison Officer by Aberdeen City Council has been beneficial. A short video highlighting the impact this work has had on Hospital Delayed Discharges can be viewed at [Heathcare Improvement Scotland's ihub's Place, Home and Housing in the Support in Community section](#). Aberdeen are also integrating Technology Enabled Care (TEC) solutions into their overall approach and carrying out case-finding, specifically targeting hospital discharge patients.

Falkirk's work has initially focused on reviewing their pathways across Health, Social Care and Housing to produce a template for improved tenure neutral approach. They have redefined Adaptations to help clarify the assessing roles of a wider range of non-OT staff including Housing staff and other health professionals, and an Assessment tool to support staff effectively identify need and appropriate solutions. Work is also ongoing to establish a Joint Outcomes and Performance Framework which would be applied across the Partnership. Pending the employment of a joint project manager, the next stage of work (Oct) will be to implement the new pathways, utilising the finalised Assessment tool. This will be supported by training for multi-agency staff.

Lochaber Care and Repair Service has developed a menu of services called 'be@home' which offers local people access to adaptations, Technology enabled care, housing options advice and much more. People can come direct to Lochaber or through the NHS single point of contact. The intention is to improve the service and the experience for users.

Fife have been considering additional Tests of Change in respect of performance management improvements, self-assessment and personal 'top ups', as well as designing a new end to end process which will improve the person's experience and outcomes.

Two additional Tests of Change are being carried out to cover other AFC recommendations. One in partnership with Blackwood and the Centre for Innovation to look at innovation in adaptation design and one with East Ayrshire where they are offering SDS options for adaptation solutions.

Impact and evidence:

There has been only limited research at scale to assess the impact of adaptations and, what evidence there is can be dated. The Executive summary of ['Better outcomes, lower costs - Implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence'](#) provides a short and telling case.

A recent (2015) [randomised control trial study in New Zealand](#) found a 'convincing economic justification for undertaking relatively low-cost home repairs and installing safety features to prevent falls'.

The Borders Care and Repair evaluation (see above) found positive outcomes for people in respect of the pace of adaptations and satisfaction works. Access to OT assessment was successfully widened by self referral and increasing the range of agencies that could refer.

Here is a [Scottish Government briefing note](#), which although from 2008, is still relevant.

[Money Well Spent: The effectiveness and value of Housing Adaptations](#), (Heywood, 2001) assessed the impact of housing adaptations expenditure in seven English and Welsh council areas.

Resources:

In 2011 The Joint Improvement Team (JIT) produced a [good practice guide for the provision of Major Adaptations](#).

[Help to Adapt](#) is a Scottish Government initiative delivered by The Link Group in twelve Local Authority area.

[Equipment and adaptations – Providing information for service users \(A Guide for local authorities\).](#)

[Funding streams for housing adaptations - a guide for professionals.](#)

[Funding adaptations to the home: a guide for homeowners.](#)

[Funding adaptations the home: a guide for local authority tenants.](#)

[Funding adaptations the home: a guide for housing association tenants.](#)

[Funding adaptations to the home: a guide for private tenants.](#)

[Effective recycling of community equipment.](#)

Scottish Government Guidance

[Guidance on the provision of equipment and adaptations – 2009](#)

[Providing equipment to Children and Young People with Disabilities](#)

[Protocol for the provision of equipment in Care Homes](#)

[A Right to Speak: Supporting Individuals who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#)