

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DELEGATED DECISION

Portfolio Holder for Property, Buildings and Housing Cllr Rosemarie Harris
May 2017

REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Inkson - Head of Housing

SUBJECT: Housing Service - Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants

REPORT FOR: Decision

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for an Adaptations to Council Housing Policy which will apply to all homes owned and managed by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:
 - A The proposed policy
 - B Consultation response summary
 - C Impact Assessment (IA)

2 Background

- 2.1 This policy describes how the Service helps long-term sick, frail and disabled tenants to remain in their homes and carry out essential daily activities.

The policy provides tenants with a service that assesses their needs. Depending on the individual's need the Service will carry out adaptation works to the property. Common adaptations are for example grab rails or a level access shower. If following assessment, it is not possible or cost effective to carry out an adaptation, the Service will assist the tenant to move to more suitable accommodation, for example on the ground floor to avoid the use of stairs.

If the Service decides that adaptations are carried out to Council homes, the Council will be responsible for the costs of any such adaptations deemed appropriate and/or necessary.. Council leaseholders will receive the same support as other home-owners and might be entitled to Disabled Facilities Grant to help with funding of the adaptation.

The policy enables tenants to exercise their rights as Council tenants. It provides Housing Staff with a reference on which they can base their decisions.

The policy is based on the previous policy from 2012 and no significant changes are proposed.

In practice the Service will also use the policy to shift emphasis from simply adapting a current home to considering and assessing a tenant's future needs.. It is anticipated that this will result in fewer adaptations requiring removal after the tenant has vacated the property. Where accommodation is inherently unsuitable to the tenant's needs, the tenant will be supported to move to suitable accommodation. This will prevent adapting inherently unsuitable accommodation. There are

safeguards in the policy to ensure that the best outcome for the tenant and the Council is achieved. People that choose not to move, might have minimal adaptations carried out to their home.

Secondly the Social Services and Well-being Act will change the way Occupational Therapists assess needs. It is unclear if this new way of assessing will lead to different recommendations to achieve the desired outcome for the tenant. A continuing dialogue with OTs will remain necessary to ensure future compliance with relevant legislation.

2.2 The policy's contents are as follows:

- 1 Allocating homes
- 2 Adapting and improving accommodation
- 3 Eligibility
- 4 Assessment
- 5 Adaptation process
- 6 Alternative suitable accommodation
- 7 After adapting the home
- 8 Adaptations by tenants and freestanding equipment
- 9 Equalities
- 10 Reviewing decisions, complaints and compliments
- 11 Review of adaptations policy

2.3 Draft versions of the policy have been discussed with:

- Policies subgroup of the Tenants' Liaison Forum
- Legal Services
- Relevant Housing staff
- Occupational Therapists

2.4 A public consultation was carried out. The key findings are attached to this report.

3 Proposal

3.13.1 This report seeks approval for an Adaptations to Council Housing Policy which will apply to all homes owned and managed by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

4 One Powys Plan

4.1 Although the policy follows current practice, it is anticipated it will lead to a more resource efficient service and better outcomes for tenants to remain independent in their homes or move to accommodation that better suits their needs.

5 Preferred Choice and Reasons

5.1 The preferred choice is to approve the policy to ensure consistency across the County and to continue to provide an efficient adaptations service.

5.2 The second choice is not to approve the policy. This would mean that the current policy remains in place and an increased risk Officers will use different approaches throughout the County.

6 Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

6.1 The policy formalises current practice. .

7 Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

7.1 The policy formalises current practice. .

8 Local Member(s)

8.1 This policy applies to all Council property in Powys.

9 Other Front Line Services

9.1 There will be no changes to other front line services. This policy confirms existing practice.

10 Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

10.1 Legal – The Professional Lead – Legal recognises that it is important to have a policy in place to support this issue and for the sake of a consistent equalities approach and confirms that the legal services will advise and assist where required.

10.2 Finance – The Finance Business Partner notes the content of the report and if the policy is adapted will ensure consistency in Powys. This will need to be undertaken within the current financial envelope.
The Capital and Financial Planning Accountant confirms that there is an Adaptations Budget in the HRA Capital Programme for large schemes and a revenue budget for small schemes.

10.3 Depending on demand there might be an additional need for Occupational Therapist capacity. People live longer healthy, but when a health condition develops, people live longer with that condition. The Service will keep monitoring and reporting monthly on the adaptations service.

11 Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

11.1. The following stakeholders have been invited to read the policy and provide comments as part of the public consultation.

- all Housing staff
- Heads of Service
- Team Manager Reablement Service
- Occupational Therapists
- Tenants' Liaison Forum members
- Housing Services Group 100
- Powys Teaching Health Board

- PAVO
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Disability Powys
- Age Cymru Powys
- Shelter Cymru
- Tai Pawb
- Care & Repair in Powys
- Chartered Institute of Housing

11.2. Consultation responses are detailed in the consultation report, appendix B. This has not resulted in significant changes. Respondents support the policy and find it easy to read.

12 Communications

12.1 The new policy will be published on the corporate website. Individual Council tenants and leaseholders will be informed of the policy through Open House Magazine and the Tenant Engagement Facebook page. The Tenants' Liaison Forum Members will be informed. There will be a link on the Council's Housing Service intranet page to the corporate website.

13 Statutory Officers

13.1 The Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report.

13.2 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comment made by Finance that the policy will be delivered within the current revenue financial envelope and Capital budgets.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants.	The policy formalises current good practice and ensures consistency across Powys.

Relevant Policy (ies):	
Within Policy:	Y
Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Dafydd Evans
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	1 February 2017

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

- CIH practice online
- Powys County Council Housing Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants, October 2011 (revised September 2012)

- Criteria for recommending adaptations for people with disabilities (up-dated and approved November 2012), Powys County Council Occupational Therapy Service

Appendices

Appendix A: Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants

Appendix B: Key findings from consultation

Appendix C: Impact assessment

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