

# Appendix B

## Key findings report

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Housing Services  
Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants  
Public Consultation

Date of report : 4 November 2016  
Report author : Henk Jan Kuipers  
Housing Service Improvement Officer

## **1. Key Findings and conclusion**

The respondents give support to the policy. They find it easy to read and no one indicates that any part of the policy discriminates. Comments and suggestions have led to one minor improvement of the policy.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1. Background to the policy and purpose of consultation**

The Council's Housing Service (the Service) is landlord of 5,400 Council homes and 110 leasehold flats. 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 aims to provide tenants with a service that assesses their needs. Depending on the individual's need the Service will carry out an adaptation to the property. Common adaptations are for example grab rails or a level access shower.

If it is not possible or not cost effective to carry out an adaptation, the Council will assist the tenant to move to more suitable accommodation, for example on the ground floor to avoid the use of stairs.

If the Council decides that adaptations are carried out, the Council will pay for them.

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

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 consultation enabled Housing staff, tenant representatives and external stakeholders to provide comments.

### **2.2. Background to the consultation and engagement**

A draft policy was discussed with members of the Tenants' Liaison Forum's Housing Policies Sub-Group prior to the public consultation. The members are experienced in giving feedback on policies and recommendations on improving Housing services.

The proposed policy and a survey response form were sent to:

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

The following external stakeholders have been sent the proposed policy and response form:

- 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 Cymru.

In addition the consultation was advertised on the Powys County Council Tenant Engagement Facebook page.

There was a four week response period.

The consultation process was agreed with the Corporate Consultation Officer.

The Housing Service consults with Tenants Service Monitors and Tenants' Liaison Policies Sub Group to improve the consultation process.

Feed back has been that it should be considered to offer the option to fill in a questionnaire on line. Previously, an on line survey was used for the WHQS compliance policy. The WHQS compliance consultation was published on the Council's "Have your say" page. Developing this facility required additional staff resource, including staff from other services than the Housing Service. The response rates were very low and it was considered not worth the extra effort to have an on line survey in addition to the e-mailed questionnaire. People can opt for questionnaires on paper instead of e-mail.

### **2.3. Response rate**

Fifteen completed questionnaires have been received. Fourteen are from Council tenants and one from someone working for the Council. In addition a response was received from an occupational therapist. None of the external stakeholders have responded.

Although the response numbers are relatively small, there is no indication additional responses would have highlighted any additional issues.

### **2.4. Profile data**

#### *Sex*

Female	12
Male	3

#### *Age*

Under 18	0
18-35 years	0

35-59 years	3
60 or over	12

### *Disability*

day-to-day activities limited a lot	4
day-to-day activities limited a little	5
day-to-day activities not limited	6

### *Welsh*

Speak Welsh	1
Speak, read and write Welsh	2
No Welsh skills	12

The response numbers are small, but it stands out no people under the age of 35 have responded.

## **2.5. A note about market research and consultations**

When conducting market research companies use a margin of error and confidence level to ensure that their results are robust and representative of the population they are seeking views from. (I.e. the population of interest).

A consultation however isn't market research as people choose to respond and are not contacted using a sampling methodology. People self-select so sometimes when conducting a consultation you only hear the views of the people who are either strongly in favour or strongly object to a proposal. The silent majority may not have given a view. However when we analyse any consultation results we do consider how robust they are in terms of the population of interest.

When conducting consultation exercise Powys County Council works to the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales.

<http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles>

## **3. Question by question analysis**

**Question 1: Do you find the policy easy or difficult to understand?**

### **Answers**

easy	15
difficult	0

**Question 2: Please tell us if you find anything unclear.**

No responses were recorded.

**Question 3: Do you feel there is something missing in the policy? Does anything needs changing?**

The following comments were received. Below each comment are the Council's Housing Service responses.

- A. Policy regarding mix of Council / privately owned property. Private property may impact on access of Council property.

Response: Where necessary to provide an adaptation, Housing staff will engage and consult with neighbours, both occupier and property owner. This does not lead to changing the policy.

- B. (4.5.c) consider adding 'psychotherapist' as the thought of moving to alternative accommodation can cause stress to people with mental health issues, so might need to be gently brought round to the idea.

Response: Housing and Social Services staff are professionals. They are aware of potential sensitivities and needs of tenants, where it is considered moving to a different home would be in the interest of the tenant and/or cost efficient for the Council. Carrying out building works when providing an adaptation can also be sensitive and disrupt people's lives. If an additional support need is identified, this should be taken into account. This is not limited to a psychotherapist.

The following is now included: "Individual support needs from tenants should be taken into account when taking a decision."

- C. Why is there a long list of numbers down the side of the document starting at 39 by section 1 end ending 636 by section 11?

Response: for ease of reference; this will be removed.

- D. I have recently received your surveys and in fully agreement with them. However I think these policies need stricter enforcement. One only has to walk round the estate in (blanked).... Look at the gardens, then dread to think what inside the property is like. (....) Council checks should be made every 12 to 18 months both inside and out. I appreciate this would cost but probably less than refurbishment when a property is abused. Most of the properties I am aware of that look so untidy are tenancies of people capable of good maintenance. If however they are old or disabled, ten help should be given by the Council to assist them. I hope in some small way my grumbling will help.

Response: The comments do not relate to this policy. The tenancy sets out responsibilities and rights for tenants. Where tenants are in breach of their tenancy agreement, the Housing Management & Options Officer may take enforcement action. Estate inspections and tenant visits should take place during regular intervals, but it is acknowledged in certain areas other priorities prevent this happening on a structural basis.

**Question 4: If you think our policy does discriminate or puts a person at a disadvantage compared to another person we would like to hear your views.**

The Housing Service wants to be fair to everyone and not discriminate anyone. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

No responses were recorded, other than that there would be no discrimination.