

Major Adaptations

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Adult Social Care, September 2022

The council is committed to:

- Assisting people who are registered, or eligible for registration as a disabled person, to help them in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling to help them remain in their own home whenever it is practicable to do so
- Improving people's lives by giving people more choice and control in the services they use. Wherever possible, and to ensure that public money is properly spent the council will be seeking to carry out the most cost-effective adaptation to the property which adequately meets an applicant's assessed needs. Usually this means that an adaptation is carried out within the existing structure of a dwelling.

Disabled Facilities Grants fall under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The principles of the Act are:

- To ensure that all residents have access to accommodation that enables independent living, privacy and dignity for the individual and their families. This may include offers of alternative accommodation or modifying disabling environments;
- To provide a service that seeks to best meet the needs experienced and identified by the disabled person;
- To ensure that constraints on independent living are not imposed on disabled people by virtue of the construction, layout or design of their homes;
- The process utilises the skills and experience of a wide range of disciplines and includes consultation and choice for the disabled person;
- The appropriateness and acceptability of the adaptation is measured by the extent to which it meets the needs of the individual; and
- To examine all the options available to the individual before embarking on plans to adapt the current property where major adaptations are required

If a resident resides in a council owned property they are also eligible for major adaptations and the process is the same regardless of tenure.

As a council we have developed a new DFG policy that gives us more flexibility and improves accessibility to the DFG for our residents in need of adaptations to their home.

This is current and in line with the Regulatory Reform Act 2012 which gave local authorities the ability to be more flexible with how the DFG is provided. We are one of a few councils who have taken this approach.

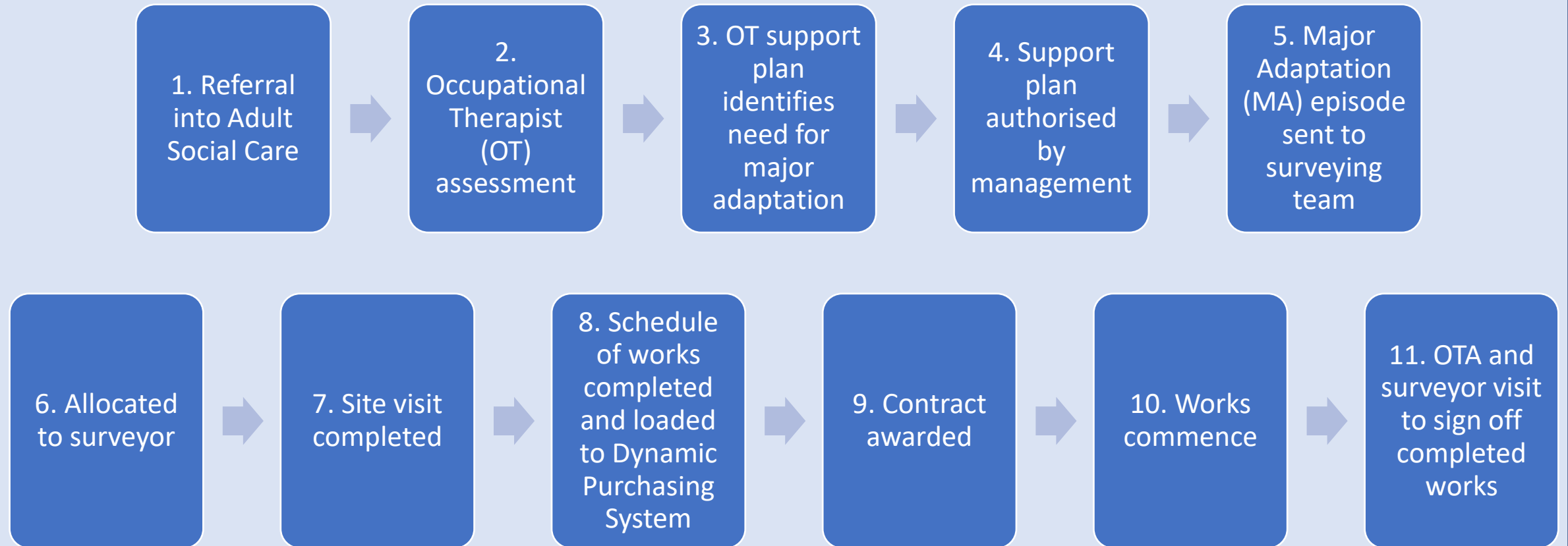
The key changes we were able to make following the implementation of the policy were:

- ✓ **Removed the financial means testing** for all applicants so provision of adaptations for our residents is based on need.
- ✓ **Removed the mandatory grant ceiling**, which allowed us to provide adaptations that met the assessed level of need without grant restriction, therefore removing the need for people to pay the difference
- ✓ Used the grant funding to facilitate and meet *Better Care Fund* outcomes around prevention, hospital discharge and equipment provision
- ✓ Used the grant to make properties safe and appropriate for residents with complex behavioural need
- ✓ Utilised the money to pay for essential services such as OT assessment

- A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is available to pay for alterations to a disabled person's main residence. It is possible for a disabled person to apply for a DFG if they are a tenant, either private or RSL in which case the landlord can also apply for a DFG on the disabled person's behalf. The disabled person must have lived, or be intending to live, in the property in question for at least five years, or for such a shorter period as their health and other relevant circumstances permit.
- It is a requirement that any alterations must be reasonable and practicable, necessary and appropriate.
- An assessment is required by an Occupational Therapist (OT)/ or Trusted Assessor (TA) before an application for a DFG or council adaptation is granted.
- Following the OT/ TA assessment where the outcome is major adaptation, a specification is completed outlining what the resident requires.
- This is then sent to the Surveying Team in ASC to undertake a site visit and complete a schedule of works.
- This is then allocated to one of our approved contractors on the adaptations DPS Framework to complete.

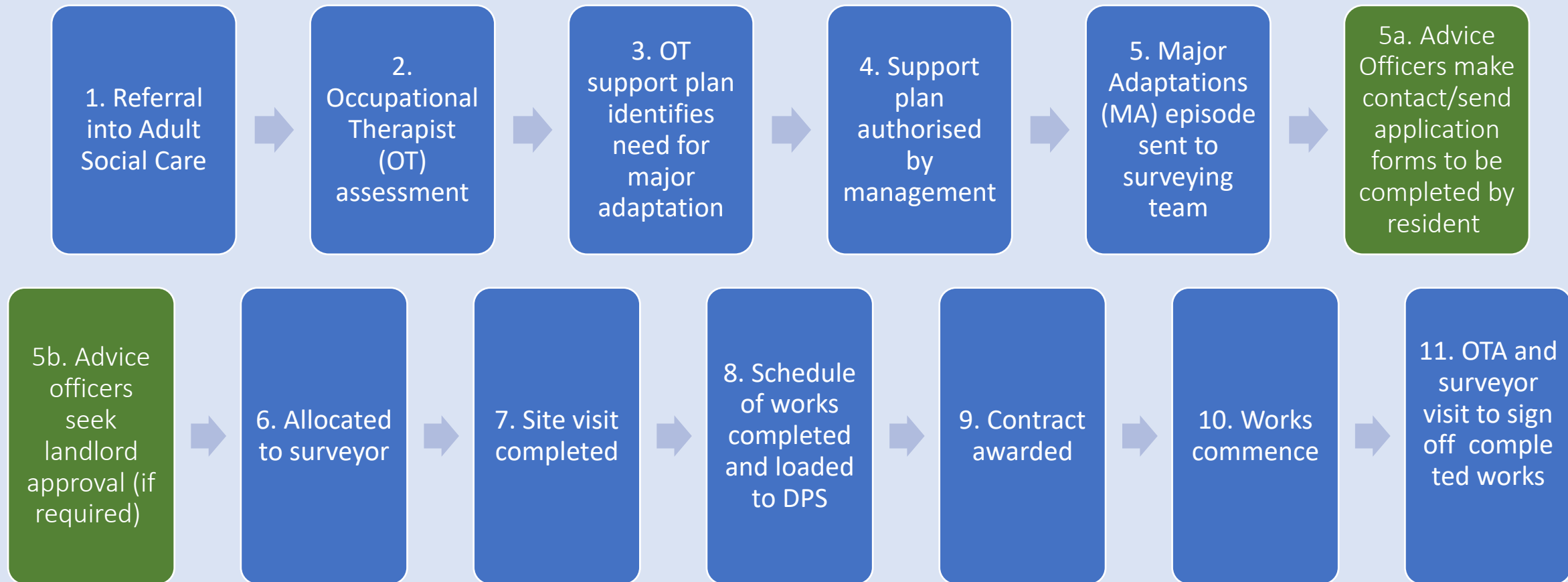
N.B. If a resident resides in a council owned property, they are also eligible for major adaptations and the process described is the same regardless of tenure.

The following shows the end-to-end process for a major adaptation (MA)



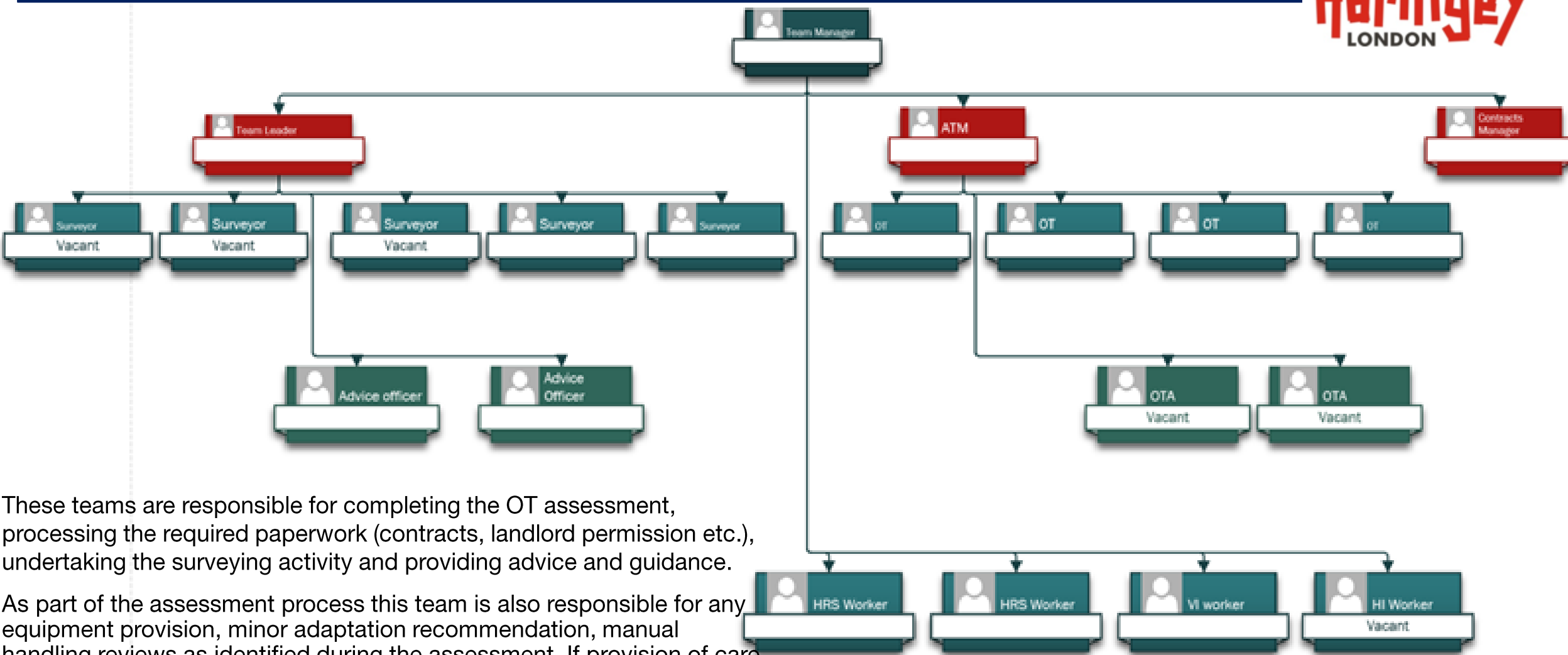
Process – major adaptation using the Disabled Facility Grant (if private tenure or RSL)

The following shows the end-to-end process for a major adaptation being done through the DFG process



The green boxes shows the additional processes for DFG's

Structure Chart (needs to be updated)



These teams are responsible for completing the OT assessment, processing the required paperwork (contracts, landlord permission etc.), undertaking the surveying activity and providing advice and guidance.

As part of the assessment process this team is also responsible for any equipment provision, minor adaptation recommendation, manual handling reviews as identified during the assessment. If provision of care is required, they will also complete the Adults Assessment and Support plan and present cases to Care Authorisation Panel as required.

NB – the council is committed to having staff work in and with communities, and all team functions and locations will be reviewed in due course to align with this

Informed by ongoing **Service Review**, and learning points from:

- High profile adaptation cases
- LGO complaints
- Other measures, monitoring and tracking

The current Major Adaptation process can be lengthy and outside the guidance on best practice. We have taken significant steps to improve the end-to-end process for residents and their families by creating a robust **Service Improvement Plan** in response.

Unfortunately, delivery has been impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic, having all major adaptations put on hold for a period in 2020 due to lockdown, and legacy from these events.

It is an essential part of the Councils Recovery and Renewal Plans to deliver improved completion times for adaptations.

In 2020/21 we triggered an **Internal Audit** to identify any procedural issues not picked up through the qualitative information we had collated through other channels. The audit confirmed substantial assurance for the areas they audited but this is very process driven, looking at the formal procedures, for example, approval processes / sign off, and compliance with legislation.

Outside the audit process, we have also identified areas for improvement through our analysis of qualitative information, such as complaints and feedback, and these areas for improvement are outlined in our service improvement plan.

Themes

Our service improvement work is grouped around five themes, which reflect issues highlighted through performance management of the service and other routes, including the complaints process:

1. **Delays** - significant delays from the point of initial assessment work to strengthen coordination between teams and liaison with clients required.
2. **Communication issues** – expectations (want vs need) have not been managed effectively and consistency of communication has been an issue. Consequently, the complaints process has been pursued.
3. **Progress tracking and monitoring** – systems for tracking, monitoring and recording the progress of major adaptations needs to be strengthened.
4. **Performance management** – currently performance of internal teams and contractors is not monitored in a systematic way.
5. **Dispute resolution** – de-escalation and improved management of potential complaints will improve the customer experience and communication with clients.

A summary of the themes and progress against the Service Improvement Plan follows.

Primary Challenge - Communication



An overarching issue for the service is communications. This is an area that required a major overhaul within the service. Issues included:

- Level and frequency of communications (through all modes) is inconsistent.
- Clarity and ease of understanding of written communications.
- Clarity about the whole process and how any interim measures/changes/equipment can support people to stay safe while the adaptation is designed and delivered (not as an alternative but as a 'for now' measure).
- Current culture within the team is focussed on the process so this needs to shift with greater ownership of the full journey for residents, understanding what this is like for them, and how we can help to ease that process for them, particularly around ensuring they are kept informed and up-to-date on what is happening with their application.

Changes implemented:

- Letters were reviewed with input from a resident, and have been updated and are in use currently.
- Previous and current service users were invited to share their reflections on their experiences and areas that could be improved. We will continue to seek feedback and engagement from residents to improve the experience for them.
- Monitoring and performance management has been reviewed and updated with system changes to support this.
- All residents who are currently in the adaptation service have been given a named contact for any enquiries and contacted to update them on the progress of the application and the next steps.
- Website reviewed for accuracy.

Changes planned:

- Review resident feedback mechanisms (work planned to initiate this residents).
- Website to be reviewed for resident experience.

Complaints analysis, learning and changes implemented



Theme	Lessons Learned	Implemented	Planned
Delay Management <i>(i.e. complainant dissatisfied with time taken to progress/ complete adaptation)</i> Tracking and Monitoring	<p>Early identification of potential delays by staff is key. Communication between teams and with residents on delays needs to be proactive and recorded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim solutions put in place in terms of monitoring and tracking process ‘end to end’ for existing applicants. New workflow implemented for new cases to enable improve tracking and reporting. This will flow into the new IT system when it comes online and is in place now in the current system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently designing new workflow for Liquid Logic when this replaces the existing system in 2023.
Communication	Covered in previous slide		
Performance <i>(i.e. complainant dissatisfied with quality of work)</i>	<p>Several strands – contract management, ensuring works are completed to standards expected and management of issues raised by clients.</p> <p>Each of these areas need to be reviewed when looking at a complaint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for tendering, increasing range of contractors – improving timeliness, capacity, and quality. Payment issues with DPS have been addressed corporately with changes introduced from 1 September 2022. NB now this has been resolved, cases can be completed on the system, making reporting more accurate and useful. 	
Dispute Decision <i>(i.e. disagreed with proposed adaptation)</i>	<p>Key learning point is the need for teams that have direct contact with clients to discuss and ‘problem solve’ wherever possible to minimize the proportion of decisions that result in a dispute.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced a Major Adaptations Panel to discuss complex or high cost adaptations to ensure the decision and reasoning is recorded and shared with family Residents / representatives are invited to attend the panel if they want to 	

Challenge	Changes completed
<p>Disruptions due to COVID Lockdown 1 - ceased all major adaptations Mar–Aug 2020 The impact is reducing now but there has been ongoing disruption due to the pandemic, lockdowns, supply chain issues, and the overflow legacy of this (some families do not want people coming into their home)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted families and individuals to agree if we can now proceed. Reviewed our contact arrangements with them so they are informed and updated at a frequency that works for them.
<p>Workforce Capacity Country-wide shortage of occupational therapists and once recruited they require more specialist training for this area so additional capacity is extremely challenging to source. Shortage is also impacting acute hospitals and community health, particularly around rehabilitation. Surveyor capacity is also a significant concern. We benchmarked rates against neighbouring boroughs and identified we were an outlier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the process and procedures, to see if there are any functions that can be undertaken by other staff to relieve pressure on specialist staff and free them up for the functions that require a particular skill set • We reviewed the surveyor JD - this resulted in an increase in scale to a PO3 and in line with other local authorities – recruitment in progress. • Workforce planning – placed two Occupational Therapist assistants within the team, and are working with human resources and service development colleagues to scope out a surveyor apprenticeship – this will help build capacity within the team while also providing potential opportunities for Haringey residents into employment
<p>Communications (covered in slide 11)</p>	

Challenge	Changes completed
<p>Dynamic Purchase System Currently the back end payments and invoicing processes and links with SAP and accounts payable are not aligned and creating significant challenges and delays when paying contractors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolved and new system introduced from 1 September 2022
<p>Monitoring and Tracking At present Mosaic workflow in Adaptations does not allow the level of granularity required to effectively monitor and track automatically. This has resulted in the use of manual systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service worked with Mosaic support partners to build the required steps in the workflow. A protocol has been created and implemented We have review KPI's and adjusted where required. These are aligned with best practice, not minimum required standards, so this will form part of the service review.
<p>Service Capacity All services still managing COVID demands so increasing capacity in one area can impact elsewhere creating competing priorities and / or shifting high numbers of activity / demand into the next step. Added to this the workforce capacity issues mentioned above have created a pressure in the Major Adaptations Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilised short-term workforce funding from health to help with capacity, including use of external contractors where possible. Used the Disabled Facilities Grant to offset costs of increasing the establishment as this is allowed in the legislation. Undertook more analysis of workflows and demand tracking to assist with planning

Demand and Capacity

Demand / Average Number of referrals per month

- OT referrals: 20-25
- Adaptation Team referrals: 30

Capacity in Teams

OT Team

- 1 Team Manager
- 1 ATM
- 5 OT's
- 2 OTA's

Major Adaptation Team

- 5 Surveyors
- 2 Advice and Assessment Officers
- 1 Team Manager
- 2 OTA's

KPIs and measuring success

- Assessment target is 28 days for Occupational Therapists
- There are limited KPIs available at present for the Major Adaptation team however we are planning for additional tracking and monitoring to be available once Mosaic changes are made and within Liquid Logic
- Currently we are doing some tracking and monitoring manually pending updates to the system and Liquid Logic implementation.

Assessments/Major Adaptations - Complaints

The information below relates to complaints received in relation to **Assessments and Major Adaptations** for the year **2020/21**:

- **Complaints Recorded: 22**
- **Stage 1 Complaints: 19**
- **Stage 2 Complaints: 3**

Of the complaints received:

- **Upheld: 4**
- **Not Upheld: 12**
- **Partly Upheld: 6**

The information below relates to complaints received in relation to **Assessments and Major Adaptations** for the year to date for **2021/22**:

- **Complaints Recorded (to date): 26**
- **Stage 1 Complaints (to date): 24**
- **Stage 2 Complaints (to date): 2**

• Of the complaints received:

- **Upheld: 5**
- **Not Upheld: 14**
- **Partly Upheld: 6**

Current activity by stage

Stage	Number of Assessments or adaptations	
	21/22	22/23
Awaiting Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment	44	66
Currently open and allocated in the OT service	189	174
Transferred to Major Adaptations team and awaiting allocation to a surveyor	232*	70*
Works on site	28	51
Works waiting to start	48	108
Works completed Q1	29	64
Works surveyed and going onto Dynamic Purchasing System (tendering system)	91	431

* While waiting, the assessment will identify any interim measures/changes/equipment that can support people to stay safe while the adaptation is designed and delivered (not as an alternative but as a 'for now' measure). If further information is received and people's needs have changed (increased) we can push their works up the priority list.

The waiting list is triaged based on need not just order of application.