

Report for: Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel – 22nd Feb 2024

Title: Update – Aids & Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grant

Report authorised by: Vicky Murphy, Service Director – Adult Social Services

Lead Officer: Kerine Smith – Acting Head of Service
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Adult Social Services

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key / Non-Key Decision: Non-Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. The Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel requested a further update on the Council's response to its previous recommendations on Aids & Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grant.

2. Background information

- 2.1. The Panel received a report from the Head of Integrated Care on this issue in September 2022 and heard directly from a number of residents who shared details of the difficulties that they had experienced in getting aids and adaptations installed in their homes. Concerns were raised about communications with residents and delays to work being completed. Full minutes of this meeting are available at: <https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=74001>
- 2.2. The Panel subsequently made a series of recommendations for change which were:
 - When the initial assessment is made by the Occupational Therapist, the resident/family requiring the aid/adaptation should remain part of the process around the procurement of the aid/adaptation and be actively involved in any changes or updates to the agreed provision.
 - An advocate should be offered by the Council (rather than only when specifically requested) to help with the initial discussion and remain part of the process to provide support to the resident where required. An advocate should also be made available where required when a resident was attending a meeting of an assessment Panel.
 - Key communications/decisions should be confirmed in writing by email/letter so that the resident/family has a record of this.
 - There should be a clear explanation for any delays and the resident/family given the opportunity to discuss any changes.
 - A named person and contact details should be provided to the resident/family and kept up to date during the process.
 - Suggestions made by the resident/family should be recorded on the case file and treated in the same way as those from professional staff as the resident/family are experts in their own case and situation.
 - A record should be kept by the Council of all delays and the timescales agreed with the resident/family. Where the agreed timescales are

exceeded, there should be an alert triggered so that the resident/family can be appropriately updated on progress with expectations set and urgent issues to be prioritised.

- The Commissioning team should look at widening provider choices for aids and adaptations to provide alternative options when delays or other problems occur.

2.3. An update report on the progress made towards these recommendations was presented to the panel in March 2023. It was reported that significant additional work had been carried out to increase capacity, reduce delays and improve communications. Full minutes of this meeting are available at: <https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/mqAi.aspx?ID=75471>

3. New process & improvements

3.1 Staff are now extremely pro-active in keeping the resident's up to date with where their adaptations are up to by direct phone calls and emails, include timescales and delays if any to ensure that there is complete transparency of the situation.

3.2 From April there will be a major recruitment drive to ensure with have enough staff to meet the needs of the user and to ensure that the waiting lists are as low as possible.

3.3 All residents are now being provided with the OT & Surveyors direct contact details at the initial contact allocation stage and again after the initial home visit and the service keeps the resident updated by written communication or by phone calls at each stage of the process to explain the progress and next steps and includes contact details of contractors following the tendering process. Once the adaptations are deemed as technically feasible.

3.4 There has been an increased investment of approximately £250,000.00 in year for DFG, which has been used specifically to fund an increase in staff to ensure that we meet the demands and improve resident experiences.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The Committee to note the contents of this report and help us consider how we can sustain and build on improvements to our support for residents.

5. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

5.1. Finance and Procurement

This is an update report for noting and as such there are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

5.2. Legal

This is an update report for noting and as such there are no recommendations for action.

5.3. Equality

This is an update report for noting and as such there are no recommendations for action.

6. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Updated PowerPoint presentation
Appendix B - Draft Aids & Adaptations Policy
Appendix C – 6 weekly review pathways