

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into Home Adaptations

Response from : Older People's Commissioner for Wales: additional written  
evidence 2

Communities, Equality and Local  
Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

18<sup>th</sup> March 2013

**Re: Inquiry into Home Adaptations**

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the recent opportunity to provide oral evidence to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's Inquiry into Home Adaptations. During the session I promised to provide further written information on two specific areas; namely the current discrepancies in access to adaptations between different tenures and also the good practice that local authorities shared with me in recent written correspondence.

In relation to the current discrepancies across tenures, I expressed my concerns in my earlier written evidence about the complexity of the current system within which aids and adaptations services are funded and delivered. Adaptation services have developed from a range of different pieces of legislation, supplementary orders and guidance and new policies which have been introduced to improve parts of the system over time. The inconsistencies and inequalities in the current arrangements have created a disjointed and complex system where access to resources is dictated by housing tenure.

Differences in the way that various funding streams are administered and implemented, depending on local policies and decisions, create a serious risk that people with complex needs will fall through one of these funding gaps. For the older person trying to access the help they need, navigating this complex web of eligibility criteria can act as a significant barrier.

I am concerned that current arrangements are not conducive to developing a common sense solution to the needs of an individual but instead are directed by the access to a particular funding route. I would therefore strongly welcome any move towards a simplified, tenure blind approach to adaptations that is more focussed on meeting the needs of the individual. This need not necessarily equate to the introduction of one single system or delivery mechanism, but should ensure that eligibility for, and access to, adaptations is based on need, rather than housing tenure. This approach would mirror other support services, including the recent changes to the Supporting People Programme, which reflect more needs based approach in relation to eligibility.

In relation to the good practice, I have attached for your information a list of initiatives that local authorities shared with me during recent correspondence on DFG delivery times. I have classified this into a number of common themes including joint working, use of resources, the customer experience, process issues and alternatives to DFG provision. I would take the opportunity to reinforce the point I made at the oral evidence session; that much of this should, in fact be regarded as standard practice if we are to move to a position where if an older person needs aids and adaptations in their home to help them stay safe and independent, they will be assured that they will get the help they need on a timely basis in a way that suits the life that they lead and the things that they want to do.

I hope you find this supplementary information useful. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance. I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Committee's inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Rocher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'r'.

**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

