

**REPORT TO:** Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Adults

**PORTFOLIO:** Adult Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Minor and Major Adaptations Performance Update

**WARD(S):** Borough wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on performance relating to Minor and Major Adaptations funded through Halton Borough Council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That the Board**

### **1) Note the contents of the report.**

## 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 Minor adaptations (which may include grab rails, hand rails, steps and banister rails) as well as major adaptations (which include stair lifts, level access shower area and ground floor extensions) are assessed for by the Occupational Therapy (OT) team within the Prevention and Wellbeing Service (PWS).
- 3.1.2 A minor adaptations contract is in place for people in owner occupied or private rentals. This contract is currently awarded to Upholland Property Services (UPS). Minor adaptations required for people living in Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties are processed in 2 ways. Many minor adaptations can be arranged via a self-referral to the RSL directly. Recommendations may also be made via the OT service.
- 3.1.3 Major adaptations requiring a Disabled Facilities Grant are managed through Halton's Home Improvement Agency (HIA). RSLs utilising the joint funding agreement are mostly managed by the RSL, who will then invoice Halton Borough Council via the HIA.

### **3.2 Performance**

- 3.2.1 There are 4 key stages of delivering a home adaptation.  
Average for cases completed April 2024 to March 2025

Stage 1	No of days from referral to HIA to return of agency agreement	20
Stage 2	No of days from referral to valid grant	140
Stage 3	No of days from grant application to grant approval (legislative framework set by government is 6 months)	20
Stage 4	No of days from work ordered to work signed off by OT	101

- 3.2.2 Stage 2 of the process is the most complex hence the larger timescales presented. The steps involved include proof of ownership, agency agreement sent and returned, survey stage, design stage, landlord consent, planning permission, building regs approval, tender, scrutiny of documentation etc.

3.2.3	Minor adaptations completed (UPS)	1515
	DFG completed	35 (44 cancelled)
	RSL DFG completed (50/50)	110
	Stairlifts completed	9 (20 cancelled)

- 3.2.4 In the financial year 2024-25 UPS completed minor adaptations at 995 owner occupied/private rented properties (NB. Multiple adaptations may have been completed at each address, and on some occasions the adaptation will be benefitting more than 1 person, e.g. husband and wife).

### 3.3 **Current challenges within the provision of minor and major adaptations**

#### 3.3.1 **Staffing**

There are currently vacancies sat within the HIA. It has historically been difficult to recruit to the position of Surveyor and we are currently working with a company to support. Within the OT service although it has been difficult to recruit Occupational Therapists, by utilising apprenticeships and a grown your own approach the service is fully recruited to.

#### 3.3.2 **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) paperwork**

There is a lot of paperwork involved in the administration of DFGs, and requirements for physical signatures which adds time to the process. The tender process for DFGs is also paper based and therefore we are working with procurement to identify options to streamline the process.

#### 3.3.3 **DFG funding**

The DFG limit is set at £30,000 per application. There has been an increase in the complexity of adaptations required in the borough and as a result more adaptations are breaching this limit. There has also been a sharp increase in cost of materials since Covid. When this happens the most common top up route is via the Discretionary Support Loan (DSL). This can put financial pressure on individuals and adds more time and staff resource to the overall process.

#### 3.3.4 **DFG budget allocation**

Due to the increased in complexity of referrals for adaptations, this adds additional pressure to the overall budget allocation for the financial year.

More RSLs are choosing to ask tenants to utilise a DFG application rather than using the joint funding process because of their own financial concerns. This in turn impacts on the DFG allocation.

**3.3.5 Managing expectations**

Sometimes expectations of what can be provided via the DFG are not realistic. There has been a slight increase in people disputing the agreed adaptations when work is on site, even when they have been discussed, plans shown, agreed and signed. This can cause delays at the start or mid adaptation work.

**3.3.6 Availability of building contractors**

Some adaptations have been delayed in starting as the contractor who has won the tender has a backlog of work, or experiences unforeseen circumstances.

**3.3.7 Minor adaptations**

The limit for a minor adaptation is set at £1000, and the increase in cost of materials has impacted on the scope of minor adaptations that can be provided within this allocation.

**3.3.8 Behaviours that challenge**

There has been an increase in referrals for children and adults with behaviours that challenge who require adaptations to support their safety at home for example padded walls and specialist lighting.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

**5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Occupational Therapy delivered by the Local Authority is key in the delivery of the Prevention agenda as set out in the Care Act 2014. Occupational Therapists are vital in promoting wellbeing and maximising independence, and this is core to their role in social care.

**6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

**6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

**6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

None identified.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None identified.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None identified.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.