

BRIEFING NOTE

Agenda Item No. 6

TO: Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 15 February 2011

RE: Disabled Facility Grants and Aids and Adaptations

Purpose

To provide the Panel with an update on:

- Additional service improvements
- Performance improvement
- Future areas of working

Recent Developments

- Streamlining of under £12,000 enquiries is now fully in place;
- Waiting list reduced from 185 in September 2010 to 75 as at 1st February 2011;
- Time from referral to approval reduced from 49 weeks as at 1st October 2010 to 30 as at 1st February 2011;
- The Service is now assisting more people in the same period: Quarter 3: 09/10 **31**; Quarter 3: 10/11 **149**.

The Service has –

- Clearer OT referral forms;
- 'Freed up' OT resources;
- Clearer and simpler application forms for residents;
- Faster turn-round from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and agreement from main RSLs for block approval;
- Focussed technical and OT staff on complex schemes;
- Been used as best practice at Regional Audit Commission presentation.

Constraints against continued major improvements

- Referral rate outside Council control – expected to continue to increase (extra 11,600 over 60 year olds in borough by 2015);
- Key is that resource dependent – especially capital funding.

Further action

Proactive work in a number of key areas is being undertaken to provide citizens with the widest possible options for independent living and maximise the available resources:

Preventative adaptation service – Capital bid of £1M. 100% land charged assistance to owner occupiers to help them secure adaptations where they don't meet statutory DFG or FACs criteria. This is a spend to save initiative intended to:

- Prevent slips, trips, falls and bed blocking;
- Improve residents quality of life sooner;
- Reduce future pressure for DFGs and Care and NHS costs.

Other activity

- Supporting Independence Scheme – Capital bid of £226K as a spend to save project to help move residents from care / nursing homes into independent accommodation;
- Enhanced advice and support for residents and their carers through Handyperson Service, Neighbourhood Community Officers, OTs and Housing Improvements Services for residents;
- Discussions led by Walsall with Black Country Council procurement managers to secure reduced costs for common adaptations through joint tendering for lifts etc;
- Maximisation of the number of:
 - Properties and types of property on the Adapted Social Housing register;
 - Life Time Homes and wheelchair adapted properties secured in new affordable housing developments.

Recommendations

Scrutiny Panel to note progress on disabled facility grants and aids and adaptations.

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