



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Welsh Government

# Housing Adaptations Service Standards

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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## 1. Aim

The Welsh Government recognises the essential role housing adaptations play in supporting disabled and older people to live safely and independently, improving the health and wellbeing of the individual, their families, carers and reducing pressures on frontline services such as health and social care.

The preventative work which housing adaptations offer is very much in line with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the approach set out in Prosperity for All and Healthier Wales. Housing Adaptations should also be considered within the wider context of Equalities Act 2010 and the UN Principles for Older Persons and service providers should pay due regard to them in providing support to service users.

The provision of support for housing adaptations in Wales is complex and is a reflection of the multiple partners involved in the care and support arrangements of disabled and older people.

The aim of the standards is to set out the level of service expected for the delivery and installation of a **housing adaptation** that service users, regardless of their geographic location and tenure, can expect. The service Standards should ensure service providers deliver **housing adaptations** in a more consistent manner and inform service users on the level of service to expect when they seek support for a housing adaptation.

The service standards should be viewed as a planning and delivery tool by service providers to align their procedures and systems with the standards as much as possible and to coordinate and integrate their work with other relevant service providers that operate within their region.

## 2. Key Issues

Recent independent reviews have highlighted the complexity of the different ways in which housing adaptations are provided. Examples of reports include:

- A review of Independent Living Adaptations: Welsh Government (2015) <sup>1</sup>
- Housing Adaptations: Wales Audit Office (2018) <sup>2</sup>
- Housing and Disabled People: Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) <sup>3</sup>
- Housing Adaptations: Report of the Public Accounts Committee (2018)<sup>4</sup>

Each report has identified issues of funding complexity and the challenging arrangements for accessing services across Wales. The multiple funding programmes in place for providing adaptations in Wales has resulted in service

<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/review-independent-living-adaptations/?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/housing-adaptations-2018-english.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-wales-hidden-crisis.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11703/cr-ld11703-e.pdf>

users receiving different levels of service dependent upon their tenure and where they live.

### 3. Scope

These standards will be applied to all housing adaptations, and will be relevant to:

- Local Authorities
- Care and Repair Agencies
- Registered Social Landlords
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) organisations
- Occupational Therapists
- Service Users or their representatives

In addition to the above, the service standards will be relevant for Healthcare and Social Service Professionals e.g. community nurses and social workers.

The Welsh Government will keep the standards under review, and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

Legislation requirements for the delivery of specific types of adaptation overrides any services standards outlined in this document, and service providers should seek their own legal advice where needed.

### 4. Service Standards for the delivery of Housing Adaptations

The service standards set the expected levels of service for the installation of a Housing Adaptation and can be seen at **Figure 1**. There is a responsibility on both the service user (or their representative) and provider to work constructively and collaboratively together towards agreed outcomes, with neither party acting unreasonable which could result in unnecessary delays or an unsatisfactory outcome.

Setting service levels will help to ensure housing adaptations are delivered in a consistent manner, regardless of a service user's location and tenure, whilst giving flexibility to service providers to determine the best way to utilise their own resources to meet the standards. In meeting the needs of a service user, it should be noted that in some situations it may be more appropriate that other measures are considered and explored before a housing adaptation is considered e.g. re-ablement or re-housing to more suitable accommodation where this is an option.

Due to the complexity of delivering some housing adaptations, especially larger sized adaptations, the process can result in a number of steps that may involve input from wider stakeholders such as the planning department, building control teams and utility companies. These steps have to be taken to ensure that the adaptation will provide the help and assistance needed for the service user and meets broader legislative requirements. As a result, the timeframes for delivering a housing

adaptation can vary. The 'Expected Timeframes' service standard in **Figure 1** has been split to reflect the following key phases that can be involved in deciding if a Housing Adaptation should be provided:



- **First Point of Contact** - The time it takes from a service user making first contact with a relevant service provider (this could be a Local Authority, Care and Repair Agency, Housing Association or from their health or social services contacts) to being assessed by a competent person (such as an Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor) and;
- **Housing Adaptation confirmed as necessary** - The timescale for an Occupational Therapist (or another suitably competent person) report/referral/recommendation being provided to the service provider outlining the adaptation works required.
- **Installation of Housing Adaptation** - The date of referral (or decision, recommendation, report) made by the competent person when the adaptation is confirmed as needed to installation. This is to ensure that alternative forms of assistance (e.g. re-ablement) are considered before deciding a housing adaptation is needed.

The Welsh Government expect service providers to work in collaboration with Occupational Therapists (or other competent persons who can advise and identify the required adaptation) as well as service users to determine the best possible outcome is achieved, while still reflecting the principles of all work being **necessary** and **appropriate, reasonable** and **practicable**.

Definitions of the different types of housing adaptations (Small, Medium or Large) are listed in **Figure 2**. These are included to provide a guide for service providers to determine how to record the most appropriate type of adaptation (Small, Medium or Large). For situations that are considered urgent e.g. to facilitate a hospital discharge, support a palliative care package, or prevent admission to hospital or a care home, these instances should be prioritised and delivered as soon as practicable.

The definitions in **Figure 2** also aims to help service users understand the different types of adaptations and what they can expect in how they are delivered by the service provider.

The Welsh Government recognises there may be situations or individual cases which do not fit within the categories of **Figure 2** for a variety of reasons. In these cases, **service providers should use their professional judgement to decide the most appropriate category to use based on sound judgement and evidence.**

## **5. Monitoring and enforcement of Service Standards**

Performance monitoring data will be submitted to the Welsh Government using the data collection methodology for 'Housing Adaptations Data Monitoring', which will help evidence progress on delivery of the service standards. The data collected through this process will be published on an annual basis. The Welsh Government has revised the terms of conditions for a number of grants it provides for housing adaptations for service providers to work in line with the service standards.

## **6. Complaints and concerns**

If a service user is not satisfied with the level of service received, they have the right to make a complaint. Any complaints should be directed to the service provider and handled in accordance with their organisational complaints procedure.

**Figure 1 - Housing Adaptations Service Standards**

Service Standard	Level of Service Expected
<p><b>Standard 1:</b> <i>Purpose</i></p>	<p>The purpose of a housing adaptation can provide a number of benefits, but is primarily to help disabled and/or older people and support their carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to remove barriers that can lead to people being disabled by their environment and not by their impairments (social model of disability);</li> <li>• to remain or become more independent within their own home;</li> <li>• to facilitate an earlier hospital discharge; and</li> <li>• to prevent any further falls.</li> </ul> <p>The adaptation provided should be necessary and appropriate, as well as reasonable and practicable.</p>
<p><b>Standard 2:</b> <i>Equality and Diversity</i></p>	<p>Disabled and/or older people can expect that they will be treated fairly and respectfully. Service providers will ensure they have equality and diversity policies in place to ensure this and that staff have undertaken the appropriate disability awareness training.</p>
<p><b>Standard 3:</b> <i>Communication</i></p>	<p>Communication should be a two way process between the service provider and service user (or their representative), and based on the principles of coproduction and the ‘what matters’ conversation as endorsed in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Information and communication will be in a format which most effectively meets a service users’ needs, such as Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. At the start of the process the service user (or their representative) will be informed of the key steps to install an adaptation. The service user should be meaningfully included in the decision making process on the design and delivery of an adaptation where practicable. They will also be informed of the expected timeframes, be regularly updated on progress and invited to provide feedback during and at the end of installation.</p>

<b>Standard 4: Quality of Service</b>	<p>The work will be completed by a suitably competent person, either an employee of the service provider or someone from their approved contractors list which is regularly monitored by the service provider and subject to clear selection, retention and quality assurance procedures. If a service user decides to use their own contractor to carry out the work it will be the service user's responsibility to deal with and resolve any issues and will need the appropriate consent and permissions from their landlord where this is appropriate. Service users can also be signposted to other organisations or given initial advice to find the support they may need.</p>
<b>Standard 5: Quality of Equipment</b>	<p>Any equipment installed will be compliant with relevant health and safety requirements, technical specifications and be appropriate for the purpose which they were intended. Service user should also be informed and made aware of; warranty information, service charges and maintenance requirements where it is appropriate to do so.</p>
<b>Standard 6: Expected Timeframes</b>	<p><b>For Small Adaptations:</b> The solution will usually (i.e. for 90% of cases) be installed within 3 weeks (if urgent) or 4 weeks (if non urgent) from date of first contact with the service provider who have deemed it necessary for the adaptation to be installed.</p> <p><b>For Medium Adaptations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From first point of contact with the service provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist, or Trusted Assessor.</li> <li>- If the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision.</li> <li>- Solution usually installed within 4 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral/recommendation from a competent person.</li> </ul> <p><b>For Large Adaptations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From first point of contact with the service provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist.</li> <li>- Once the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision.</li> <li>- Solution usually installed within 15 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral from a competent person, to reflect steps taken in some cases, e.g. planning permission.</li> </ul>



<b>Standard 7: <i>Eligibility Checks</i></b>	<b>For Small Adaptations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Means Test is not required.</li> <li>- Occupational Therapist assessment not required.</li> <li>- Trusted Assessor assessment may be required.</li> </ul>
	<b>For Medium Adaptations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Means Test may be required (only in relation to a Disabled Facilities Grant).</li> <li>- Occupational Therapist Assessment may be required. If not, a Trusted Assessor will be required.</li> </ul>
	<b>For Large Adaptations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Means Test may be required (only in relation to a Disabled Facilities Grant).</li> <li>- Occupational Therapist Assessment will be required.</li> <li>- Trusted Assessor assessment would not be appropriate in these cases.</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 – Definitions of different types of Housing Adaptations**

Category	Nature of Work Required	Example of Work	Funding Source
<p><b>Small Adaptions</b> adaptations are inexpensive items, which can be provided very quickly. It would generally fit into the description of 'immediate falls prevention' or 'urgent for hospital discharge' and can be assessed and installed within days or the same day if urgent. It can be identified by a number of health/ social services/ other appropriately trained staff e.g. RSL staff, Care and Repair Staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor home modification required</li> <li>• Not a specialised solution</li> <li>• No building/planning approval required</li> <li>• Adjustable / Flexible</li> <li>• Simple &amp; Intuitive</li> <li>• Minimal maintenance and/or servicing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grab rails</li> <li>• Stair rails</li> <li>• Small ramps</li> <li>• Accessible taps</li> <li>• Key safes</li> <li>• Mop stick hand rails</li> <li>• Outdoor rails</li> <li>• External / staircase lights</li> <li>• Additional electrical sockets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENABLE</li> <li>• RRAP</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medium Adaptations</b> anything which is not classed as small or large.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major home modification may be required, but building/planning approval not required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk in shower</li> <li>• Stair lifts</li> <li>• Large ramps</li> <li>• A combination of adaptations installed as one job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENABLE</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Physical Adaptation Grants (PAG)</li> <li>• Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)s</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large Adaptations</b> these are works which will require specialist assessments, statutory approvals and major adaptations to a property such as extensions and through floor lifts. An Occupational Therapists assessment will be required and planning permission may be needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major home modification / structural change required</li> <li>• Specialised / Innovative solutions required</li> <li>• Building / planning approval required</li> <li>• Fixed / permanent / long term</li> <li>• Complex / unfamiliar / requires training &amp; supervision</li> <li>• Solution requires expertise for installation and maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building an extension to provide a downstairs bedroom and/or bathroom</li> <li>• Through floor lift</li> <li>• Significant internal structural modifications e.g. relocate bathroom or kitchen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled Facilities Grant</li> <li>• Physical Adaptations Grants</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>