
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 26 January 2012

Report of the Director of Adult Community and Housing Services

Housing Adaptations

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Scrutiny Committee on the current position relating to the provision of adaptations to private and public sector housing in the borough.

Background

2. The last report for members on this subject was presented to Select Committee for Environment in 2008. However following a rationalisation of work plan priorities this was placed for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee for Health and Adult Social Care during this current year 2011/12.
3. **Access and Assessment**
In October 2010 in order to improve the waiting time for assessments, the Occupational Therapy teams reorganised into 2 teams – Quick Response (Duty OT Team and Assisted Living Centre (ALC)) and the Long Term Occupational Therapy Team.
4. The access criteria is across all tenures and is for people of all ages who have a permanent and substantial disability or illness that is affecting their ability to undertake activities of daily living.
5. From September 2011 all requests go through to the Access to Adult Social Care Team where they are screened initially by the Customer Service Officers and then by the Duty Occupational Therapist.

This Screening function is important as it identifies people who :

- are eligible for the service i.e. they have permanent and substantial disability
- require only advice and information which is provided or they are signposted to another agency
- need to be referred to a more appropriate agency i.e. PCT for rehabilitation / Falls Team
- need simple equipment to be provided e.g. urine bottles, equipment repairs etc. which can be dealt with immediately
- are at risk e.g. with transfers on / off chair, toilet, bed. These cases are allocated to the Quick Response OT Team for more urgent assessments – target 3 weeks maximum wait
- where equipment appears to be a solution. In these cases appointments are booked at the Assisted Living Centre for assessment
- Urgent attention is given to assessment relating to someone waiting to be discharged from hospital

Where the situation appears to be more complex and / or long term solution appears to be ahead for an adaptation, then the cases are referred to the Long Term OT Team for assessment.

6. An assessment identifies what outcome the individual is aiming to achieve and then all of the possible solutions available to enable them to achieve this.

Example 1 : the disabled person may want to be able to stand from a chair independently.

The solutions to achieve this aim would be to :

- teach a different technique or arrange for rehabilitation to achieve this
- provide a standard or electric riser chair (Community Equipment Service)

Example 2 : the disabled person may wish to access the upstairs of their property to sleep.

The solution to achieve this aim would be to :

- consider rehabilitation to improve stamina and ability to negotiate the stairs
- order a stair rail to be installed (minor adaptations)
- recommend the installation of a stairlift.

7. The full process from enquiry to a referral being made for major adaptations is attached at Appendix 1.
8. During the first six months of 2011/12 the OT teams received 3932 contacts (7481 for 10/11). The contacts relate to the number of enquiries received prior to screening taking place and not all require further assessment.

During April – September 11 of the 3932 enquiries received :

912 had equipment provided at the point of contact (23.2%)

196 were closed requiring no further action (5%)

382 were signposted or provided with information (9.8%)

1805 required assessment through either the Quick Response or Long Term OT Teams

9. **Minor Adaptations**

Minor adaptations are those works that have a notional estimated value of less than £500 and are considered to be simple and non time consuming building works mainly comprising external handrails, grabrails, steps, small areas of slabbing and door entry systems.

Private Sector

Works are organised through a contract with a local building company and are funded directly by Disability Services. The contract is monitored by Private Sector Housing. 1258 referrals have been made to date this year (1662 were completed in 10/11).

Public Sector

Works are notified to the Repairs Management Centre and are dealt with as

part of the reactive maintenance service carried out by a dedicated adaptations team within Building Services Construction (BSC). At the end of November 2011, 835 referrals had been made and it is projected that 1250 will be received during the current year (1446 in 10/11).

10. **Major adaptations**

Major adaptations are works that are estimated to cost in excess of £500 and will include more complex building works. They normally include ramps, wheelchair access, level access showers, ground floor WC's, lifts, extensions to provide additional bedroom / bathroom.

Currently all cases referred by Disability Services are dealt with in date order. Where medical evidence is obtained that supports the case that the client is at significant risk without the adaptation then these cases are given priority. However where short term arrangements can be made although often not ideal requests for prioritising are refused.

Lift Contract

Since June 2008, the Minor Works team within Housing Services have administered a joint collaborative working term contract with Stannah Lift Services (SLS) for Public and Private Sector Housing and Disability Services. This contract includes the provision of stair lifts, curved track lifts, external step lifts and vertical through floor lifts. The repair and maintenance of all new and existing lift equipment installed for clients through the referrals process is also included in the contractual arrangements. Lifts that are no longer required by the client are removed and recycled where possible. Old lifts are broken down and parts reused where possible. This contract provides efficiency savings in terms of new installations, recycling and maintenance. SLS have performed very well on this contract and in May 2011 their contract was extended for a further two years to 31st May 2013.

In the Private Sector, Disability Services finance all maintenance and recycling costs and with Private Sector Housing financing all new installations. In the Public Sector the provision of new and recycled installations together with the maintenance and repair of all lifts is financed from the public sector adaptations budget.

The average waiting time for installation of lifts from date of order is :

- straight stairlift - 4/5 weeks
- curved stairlift - 6 weeks
- vertical lift - 8/10 weeks

Private Sector

In the private sector major works are funded through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) financed in part by an annual allocation from Communities and Local Government, Capitalised Housing Receipts and General Rate Fund. 201 referrals have been received to date this year (463 in 10/11).

However it is a prerequisite for DFG applications that a property assessment is carried out to determine whether or not it is reasonable and practicable to carry out adaptations at the property. The internal design, size and location of the property will be taken into consideration when determining if a grant is appropriate in the circumstances. Cost effective alternative schemes or other

housing solutions for the client are also explored at this stage. However many properties within the borough are difficult and expensive to adapt due to design and access problems. Where properties are not suitable for adaptation then advice and assistance is provided to find an alternative solution for the client. Flexibility in this sector and reuse of previously provided adaptations is more limited than in the public sector as the majority of clients own their own homes. Alternative solutions can often be lengthy to procure and expensive for the client and are invariably subject to housing market influences.

In the private sector where lifts form a part of major adaptation scheme clients are fast tracked where possible. The lift element of the referral is installed whilst the client waits for the other adaptation works to be carried out. This contributes to improving the quality of life for the client in the interim.

In 2010/11 a small pilot of six level access showers for private sector clients was organised through the FHM contract to identify if savings and efficiencies could be made. However due to the working practices and programming used by FHM for the public sector the contractor was unable to programme the work within their scheduling and instead sub contracted the work. On completion of the pilot no cost savings / efficiencies were identified.

In 2012/13 a scheme of fixed price personal budgets for the installation of level access showers will be piloted and evaluated.

Whilst DFGs are available for all clients who meet the statutory eligibility criteria irrespective of tenure in Dudley only applications from clients living in the Private Sector including Housing Association tenants are processed through this legal provision. The main difference to clients is that in the private sector all applications are subject to a financial means test to determine if they have to make a contribution towards the cost of the adaptations and in the public sector tenants are not asked to make a contribution.

Public Sector

All major adaptation referrals are issued by either Disability Services or the Housing Occupational Therapy (Housing OT) team to the Minor Works team within Housing Services. The Housing OT works closely with tenants and Disability Services to identify adaptations required and alternative housing solutions. This includes making the best use of existing stock that has previously been adapted.

Proactive work is also carried out on the housing waiting list by identifying clients that have adaptation needs that can be met by adapting existing void stock to a suitable standard. The client is then re-housed into the adapted property and this assists in reducing waiting list numbers and void turn round times. Most Housing OT requests are treated as priority to enable work to be carried out as part of the void process.

At the end of December 2011, 278 referrals had been issued by Disability Services (estimated 370 cases 11/12). Historical records indicate that since April 2005 an average of 37 referrals per month have been received from Disability Services. In addition a further 25 referrals have been received from Housing OT (estimated 35 cases 11/12). This is consistent with the average

number of referrals issued by Housing OT each year.

Two further measured term contracts are currently in place to meet the requirements of the public sector adaptations programme, one for the installation of level access showers with Frank Haslam Milan (FHM), one for major internal and external adaptations with Longlife Buildings Ltd. Both building contractors have performed extremely well but due to European procurement regulations both programmes of work are to be re-tendered this spring.

Although some more complex works requested by the Housing OT as part of the void process are carried out by the term contractors (e.g. extensions) the majority of works requested by the Housing OT (e.g. level access showers) are carried out by BSC's void team as part of the void refurbishment with the Adaptations Void budget financing the 'extra over' cost of the adaptation.

11. **OT referral for adaptations**

Following on from referral all properties across both sectors are surveyed and a decision is reached about whether the proposed adaptation is reasonable and practicable.

Private sector

A caseworker from the Home Improvement Service will visit the client to discuss in more detail the adaptation works and the funding options available to pay for the works. This is in addition to discussing further help and support that they can help the client access. It is not considered that every adaptation will be funded by a DFG. As this funding is limited other options can be discussed for clients who do not wish to wait. This does not affect a clients right to pursue an application for a DFG.

The larger more complex adaptation cases and those proposed for the Private Rented sector are discussed at Adaptation Panel meetings where appropriate solutions are jointly sought with representatives from Disability Services and Private Sector Housing. Private sector clients have the choice of arranging the works themselves or using the Councils recently accredited Home Improvement Service (DHIS). Options available through DHIS are:

- self funding with advice and guidance from DHIS only
- self funding using full DHIS
- specialist loans
- rehousing
- charitable funding
- personal budget (to be piloted in 12/13 for level access showers)

Where an application is pursued for a DFG, plans are drawn up and agreed with the client and OT before a schedule of work is produced. This is given to clients who choose to arrange the works themselves. Where DHIS is organising the works this is used to procure a contractor from the Councils Approved list of Builders. In all cases three quotes are required together with planning and building regulation approval (if required) and a full and valid application. When this is received the Council has six months within which to approve the grant. In addition to this it can add conditions to the approval and the most common conditions attached are :

- 12 months to complete the works from approval
- Recycling of lift when no longer required
- Six month deferred payment of grant monies

Where DHIS is acting as agent for the client the works will be inspected, monitored and supervised and remedial work will be organised by the agency through to satisfactory completion. In all other cases the works will be inspected and monitored to ensure that the grant works have been completed to a satisfactory standard but supervision and contract management becomes the responsibility of the client.

Public Sector

If the adaptation can be achieved to meet the needs of the client and are to the satisfaction of both the client, the OT and are sympathetic to the future letting of the property a full specification and full working drawing is produced by the Minor Works team.

Some of the larger more complex adaptation cases are discussed at monthly Adaptation Panel meetings chaired by the Assistant Director with representatives from Disability Services, Housing OT and the Minor Works team. All aspects of the case are discussed before a decision is made on whether to proceed with the adaptation or to investigate alternative solutions to meeting the clients needs such as re-housing. Since the introduction of the Panel in 2007 there has been a notional saving of around £1.7M to the HRA through meeting the clients' needs in this way.

Once it has been determined that an adaptations scheme can proceed the scheme is then inserted into the relevant work programme. When appropriate a works order is placed with the appointed term contractor for the works to be carried out. They in turn will contact the client to advise them of the date for starting work, carry out all dilapidations surveys, agree tenants' choice and address any concerns that the client may have.

Works on site are carried out by the contractor but monitored by the Minor Works team. All contractors are informally monitored through regular site visits and inspections by suitably experienced/qualified officers in relation to their quality of work, working methods, work variations etc. Review meetings with management/site supervisors are held with term contractors on a quarterly basis.

The average waiting time for major adaptations from client enquiry to works starting on site is approximately 70 weeks. The time taken from issue of works order to start on site only takes, on average, three weeks of that time.

Excluding jobs that have been programmed as part of the current 2011/12 work programmes, it is forecast that there will be 250 jobs on the waiting list (estimated value of £1.75m) at March 2012. In addition there will be a commitment to finance the minor adaptations work programme and the maintenance programme for the stair lift contract together with an allowance for maintaining the hoist stock within the borough and making allowance for smaller one – off orders e.g. hoists and clos-o-mats that may arise. It is expected that around 440 referrals will be issued by OTs over the next 12

months with an estimated value of £2.3M. The effect of this will be that a budget of around £2.4M (including funding for minor adaptations and voids) for 2012/13 will only serve to stabilise waiting times at their current level.

12. Quality of Work

Private Sector

All contractors are monitored through regular site visits and inspections by suitably experienced / qualified officers in relation to their quality of work, working methods, work variations etc. In addition to this customer satisfaction surveys are carried out on all completed cases and are monitored on a regular basis.

Contractors are formally monitored through a series of performance indicators that measure issues such as customer satisfaction, timely completions, communications, quality of work and they can be suspended or removed from the approved list if they fail to perform in relation to one or more schemes. In some cases contractors have been removed from site during work where the standard has been identified as being poor and alternative contractors have been procured to complete the adaptation work. Clearly this is a very unsatisfactory situation for the client and this is an area that is being improved. All contractors are now required to be registered with Constructionline and in addition to this all contractors are required to sign up to a Builders Code of Conduct which addresses the issues of working with vulnerable clients in their own homes.

Public Sector

Contractors are formally monitored through a series of performance indicators that measure issues such as customer satisfaction, health and safety, timely completions, defects, timely completion of defects and communication. Records indicate a continuous improvement by both contractors across all four years that they have been employed by Housing Services. The table below indicates their performance in 2011/12 to date:-

| Key Performance Indicator | FHM | Longlife Building Ltd |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Customer Satisfaction | 99% | 99% |
| Health and Safety. | Average 0.01 issues/job (this equates to 1 job out of 78 audited) | No issues reported |
| Timely Completion | 98% | 98% |
| Defects | No defects reported | No defects reported |
| Average time to make good Defect | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Communication | 100% | 100% |

13. Customer Satisfaction

In May 2010 a random sample of 150 public and 150 private sector customers who have had major adaptations to their properties within 2009/10 were sent a postal survey. 148 surveys were returned telling us about their experience of having major adaptation work done at their property. Of those that responded 48.6% were aged 75

years and 79.7% had lived in the borough for over 21 years.

The majority of respondents to this survey had had level access showers, stairlifts, ramps and shower room extension adaptations carried out.

The questions asked ranged from how they found out about the service, and if the information was clear and accessible, what was the experience like for them, qualitative assessment of contractors and quality of life assessment following completion of the works.

60.1% found out about the service from OT or Social Worker

94.2% found the information clear and accessible

87% found no difficulty in the process of having adaptations carried out and 89.1% were satisfied with the experience

84.1% said they were well informed throughout the process

90.6% rated their builder as good or excellent at timekeeping

86.9% rated their builder as being good or excellent for politeness and courteousness

84.8% rated the quality of the work as good or excellent

93.5% said that the adaptations had improved their quality of life

14. **Waiting Times**

The current wait for assessment by the Long Term Team is 3.5 months and equates to 128 people (as at 29 December 2011).

Private Sector

There are currently 213 cases on the waiting list (estimated value £1.94m) awaiting caseworker visits and plans / schedules to be prepared for proposed adaptations. In addition to this there will be 69 cases approved in 11/12 with conditions attached for payment of grant monies after 1 April 2012 (value £500k) and a further 52 applications awaiting approval after the capital programme has been set for 12/13 (value £470k). Therefore currently there is a potential demand for adaptations estimated at £3m and this excludes any new referrals received after 1 January 2012. On average 30 referrals are received from OTs per month and the average grant approval is estimated at £9800.

The ongoing waiting lists for adaptations will be dependent upon the level of budget set for 2012/13 and the number of priority cases received annually.

In years 09/10 and 10/11 additional monies were put into the adaptation budget to meet the increased demand and in January 2010 the waiting list was reduced to nil and all OT referrals were dealt with as they were received. Since then as budgets have not kept pace with demand the waiting list has returned and additional options are offered to clients who do not wish to wait and prefer to self fund.

Public Sector

Average waiting time for major adaptations from enquiry to the OT to works starting on site is approx 70 weeks. The time taken from issue of works order to start on site only takes on average 3 weeks of that time.

Excluding jobs that have been programmed as part of the current 2011/12 work programmes, it is forecast that there will be 250 jobs on the waiting list (estimated value of £1.75m) at March 2012. In addition there will be a commitment to finance the minor adaptations work programme and the maintenance programme for the stair lift contract together with an allowance for maintaining the hoist stock within the borough and making allowance for smaller one –off orders e.g. hoists and clos-o-mats that may arise.

It is expected that around 440 referrals will be issued by OT over the next 12 months with an estimated value of £2.3M. The effect of this will be that a budget of around £2.4M (including funding for minor adaptations and voids) for 2012/13 will only serve to stabilise waiting times at their current level.

As minor adaptations are dealt with as part of the reactive maintenance service all works are completed within the target turnaround time of 2 weeks

Performance

The length of waiting lists for clients needing adaptations in both sectors are dependent upon the level of budgets set annually and the number of referrals received from the OTs. In the Private Sector approximately 30 referrals are received per month and based on the average DFG approved (£9,800) creates an ongoing annual demand of £3.5m. In the Public Sector with an average of 37 referrals per month this equates to an annual estimated budget of £2.4m.

Many of the clients currently waiting for adaptations have already been waiting for over 12 months. It is proposed that they will have those works carried out during 2012/13 providing the annual budget meets the total estimated costs.

Routine customer satisfaction surveys are carried out independently in both sectors, however in 2010 a Joint Major Adaptation Survey was carried out which showed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of works carried out by builders in providing adaptations and that in the majority of cases the adaptations had improved the quality of lives for clients.

| | 2010/11 | | 2011/12 (at Dec 11) | |
|---|---------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| | Private | Public | Private | Public |
| Budget | £2.8m | £2.4m | £2.8m | £2.3m |
| Housing Stock | | | 110,614 | 22,992 |
| No. of minor adaptations | 1662 | 1446 | 1258 | 835 |
| No. of OT referrals for major adaptations | 463 | 201 | 278 | 442 |
| No. of Housing OT referrals | n/a | 35 | n/a | 25 |
| No. of referrals on waiting list | n/a | n/a | 334 | 250 |
| Estimated costs of adaptation works / waiting list | n/a | n/a | £3.0m | £1.75m |
| Builder rated as good or excellent by client | 90.6% | | | |
| Works rated as good or excellent by client | 84.6% | | | |
| Adaptations improved quality of clients life | 93.5% | | | |
| No difficulty in having adaptations carried out by client | 87% | | | |
| Client satisfied with experience | 89.1% | | | |

Finance

15. The following tables show budget and housing profiles.

| Budget | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Private sector | | | | |
| Major adaptations | 2853 | 3709 | 2732 | 2679 |
| Minor adaptations | 185 | 167 | 122 | 141 |
| | | | | |
| Total spend (private) | 3038 | 3876 | 2854 | 2820 |
| | | | | |
| Public sector (HRA fund) | | | | |
| Minor adaptations | 110 | 106 | 95 | 95 |
| Major adaptations | 2015 | 2467 | 2260 | 2185 |
| Adaptations (voids) | 76 | 98 | 113 | 81 |
| | | | | |
| Total spend (public) | 2291 | 2671 | 2468 | 2361 |

16. The housing stock position in the borough at 1 April 2011 :

| <u>Stock owner</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>% of total stock</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| | | |
| Local authority owned stock | 22992 | 17.21 |
| Registered social landlord | 4174 | 3.12 |
| Other public sector | 63 | 0.05 |
| Private sector | 106377 | 79.62 |
| | | |
| Total stock | 133606 | 100 |

Law

17. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970 imposes a duty on the Council to make arrangements for the provision of home adaptations and/ or additional facilities for the greater safety and/ or convenience for adults and children.
18. NHS and Community Care Act 1990 which consolidates government policy on community care also places a duty to assess clients in certain circumstances for services under the above act.
19. Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a duty upon the Council to provide grants to enable adaptations to be carried out to facilitate a wide range of basic activities specified with in the Act (as amended) namely, safe access into and around the property including the garden and suitable washing, bathing, cooking and sleeping facilities. This can include Council tenants although currently tenants in the borough are not expected to go through this process.

Additionally the Act also requires the Council to approve grants within six months of receiving a valid application.

Recommendation

20. It is recommended that:-

- The contents of the report are noted
- That further reports be brought back to the committee to discuss elements of the service in greater details if required



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Andrea Pope Smith
Director of Adult Community and Housing Services

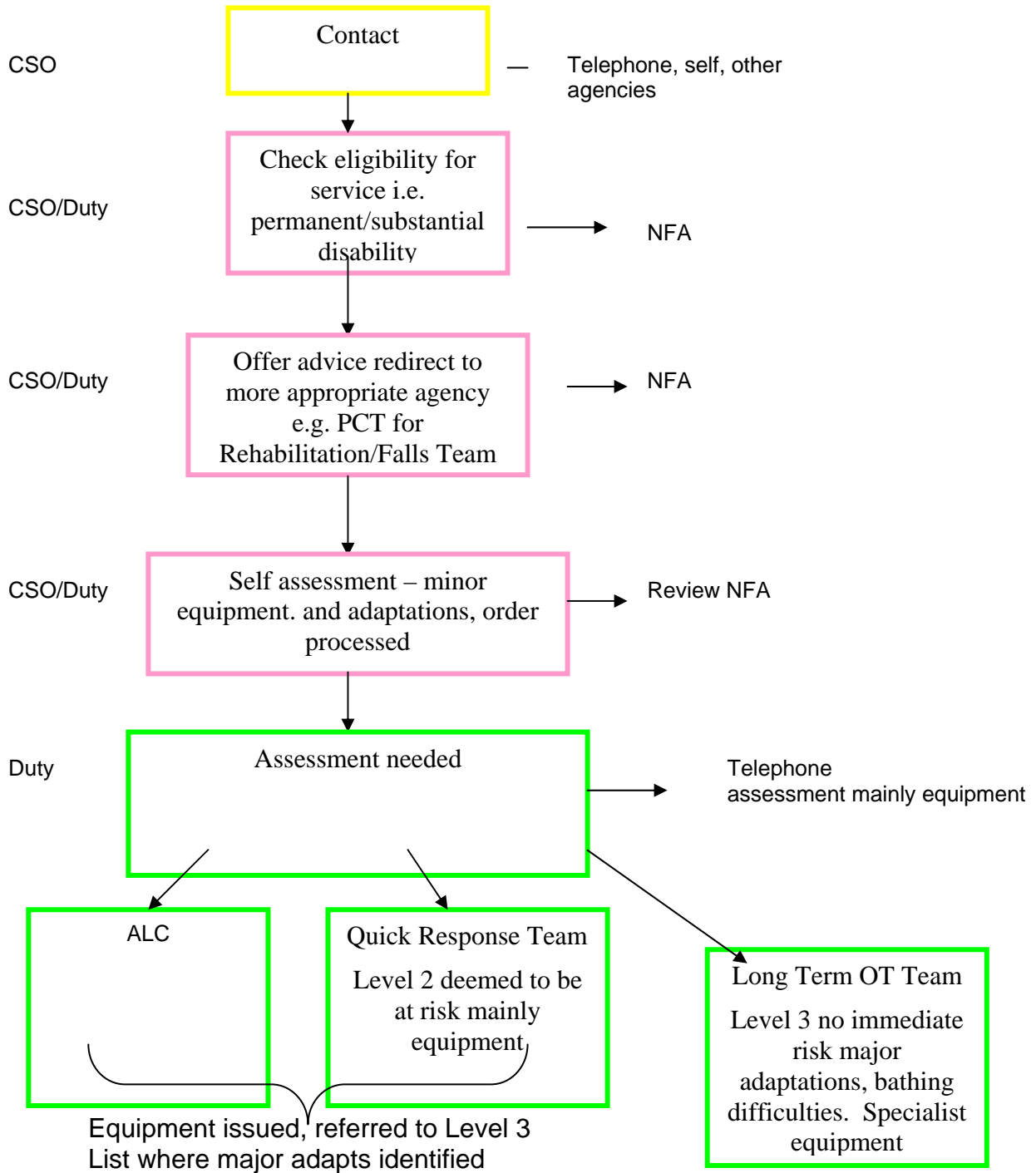
Contact Officer: Helen Barlow
Head of Service (Private Sector Housing)
Telephone: 01384 812633
Email: Helen.barlow@dudley.gov.uk

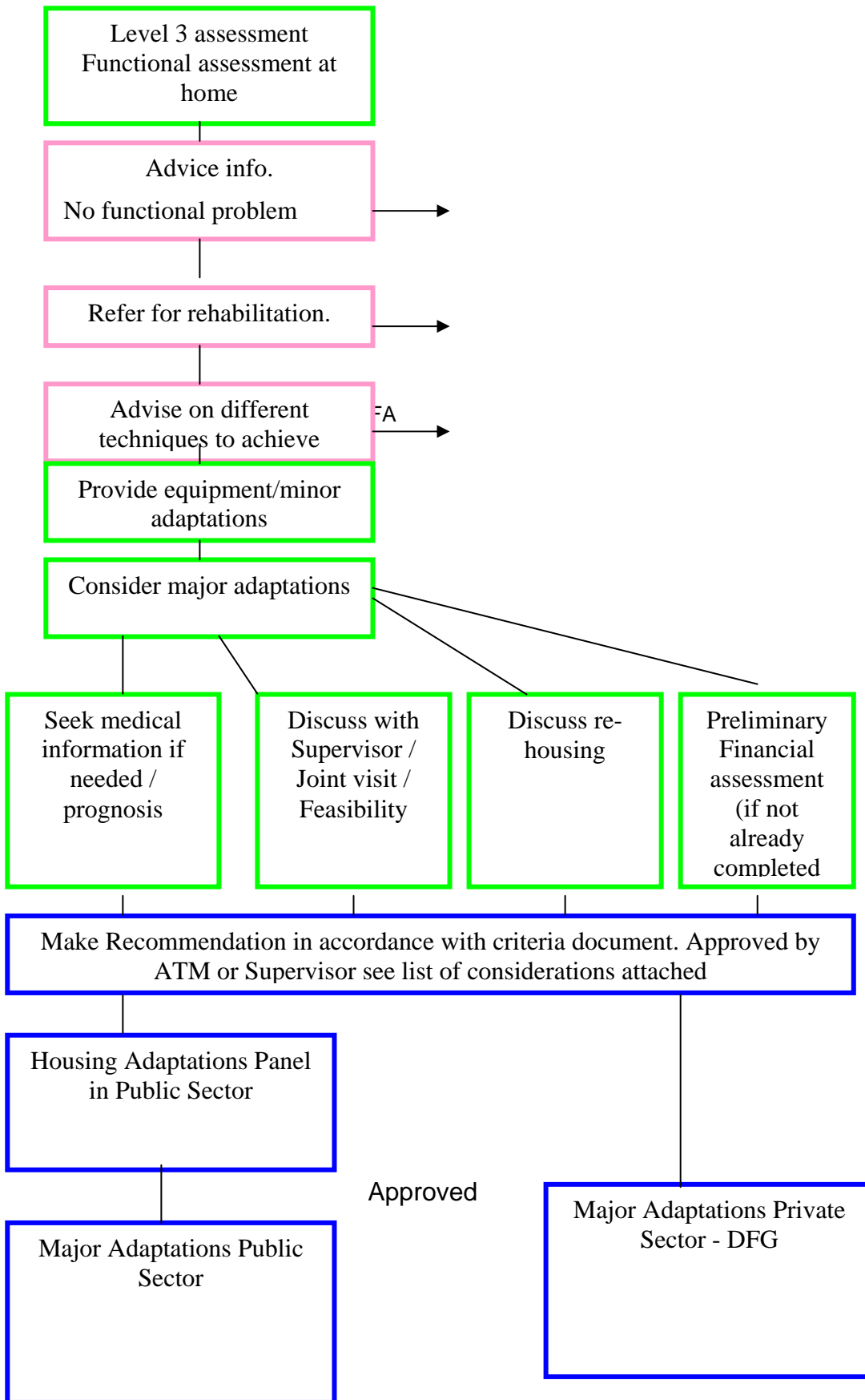
List of Background Papers

Report to Select Committee Environment June 2008
Major Adaptations Customer Satisfaction Survey 2010

Process from Initial enquiry to recommendation

(For equipment or adaptations)





Key to Process Map



Contacts



Assessments and Assessment process



Screened out



Adaptations

Glossary

| | |
|-----|---------------------------|
| ATM | Assistant Team Manager |
| CSO | Customer Services Officer |
| DFG | Disabled Facilities Grant |
| ALC | Assisted Living Centre |
| NFA | No further action |
| PCT | Primary Care Trust |