



Minutes of the 473rd Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council
The Housing Centre, Belfast or Conference Call via Webex
Thursday, 8th October 2020 at 10.30 am

The Officers joined the Meeting at 10.50 am

Present at Meeting:

| | |
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| Tommy Nicholl | Mid & East Antrim Borough (Chair) |
| Jim Speers | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough |
| Amanda Grehan | Lisburn & Castlereagh City |
| Catherine Elattar | Mid Ulster Borough |
| Mickey Ruane | Newry, Mourne & Down District |

Present by Video Conferencing

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| Anne-Marie Fitzgerald | Fermanagh & Omagh District (Vice Chair) |
| Mark Cooper | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough |
| Michelle Kelly | Belfast City |
| Allan Bresland | Derry City & Strabane District |

In Attendance:

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| Clark Bailie | Chief Executive (NIHE) |
| Paul Price | Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight (DfC) |
| David Polley | Director of Housing Strategy & Co-ordination (DfC) |
| Kelly Cameron | Secretary (Housing Executive Secretariat) |

Apologies

Nick Mathison Ards & North Down Borough:

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| 1.0 | <u>Declarations of Interest</u> None. | |
| 2.0 | <u>To adopt the Minutes of the 472nd Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday 10th September 2020</u> It was proposed by Councillor C Elattar, seconded by Councillor M Ruane and resolved, that the Minutes of the 472nd Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10 th September 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair. | |

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| 3.0 | <p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p> | |
| 4.0 | <p><u>Housing Executive’s Board Bulletin Board Meeting – Wednesday, 30th September 2020</u></p> <p>Mr Bailie reported on the Housing Executive Board’s deliberations as follows:-</p> <p>4.1 <u>Approval of Annual Report and Accounts</u></p> <p>The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2020.</p> <p>4.2 <u>CT078 – Bathroom Replacements</u></p> <p>The Board approved the award of contracts for bathroom replacement works in Housing Executive properties.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Economic Appraisal for 64-86 Knocknagoney Avenue</u></p> <p>The Board approved the Economic Appraisal for the demolition of a block of 8 No residential properties and 4 No commercial units at 64-86 Knocknagoney Avenue, Belfast. These properties will be replaced in due course.</p> <p>4.4 <u>Update on Year Three of the Customer Excellence Strategy (CES) 2017/18 –2019/20</u></p> <p>This paper provided a summary of key achievements from the first two years of the Strategy, along with a detailed update of activities for the final year of the CES (2019/20). The Board approved the report which will be published on the Housing Executive website.</p> <p>4.5 <u>Annual Progress report to the Equality Commission</u></p> <p>The Board approved the Annual Report to the Equality Commission. This is the 20th Annual Progress report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the Housing Executive’s Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.</p> | |

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| 4.6 | <p><u>Occupational Health Contract</u></p> <p>The Board approved proposals for the procurement of a comprehensive occupational health service for Housing Executive employees.</p> | |
| 4.7 | <p><u>Economic Appraisal for Land at Posnett Street South</u></p> <p>The Board approved the disposal of a site at Posnett Street South, Belfast following a Public Sector Transfer process.</p> | |
| 4.8 | <p><u>Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2021 - Approval to proceed with a sample size of 7,000</u></p> <p>The Board had approved the plan to proceed with a sample size of 7,000 for the 2021 House Condition Survey (HCS). Previously, the 2016 Survey was carried out with a sample size of 3,000. It produced robust data at NI level however, at Local Council level this sample size only produced robust data for a very limited number of reporting fields.</p> <p>Consultation with stakeholders has shown that there is a requirement for more robust data at Local Council level, and for other important sub-sectors of the market such as the private rented sector and housing associations.</p> <p><u>Other papers were noted by the Board, as follows:-</u></p> | |
| 4.9 | <p><u>ARTES Initiative</u></p> <p>The ARTES Initiative that was presented to the Board by the Director of Asset Management on the 26th February 2020.</p> <p>The Initiative is the Housing Executives contribution towards increasing trade skills and social value benefits within our communities from its long term Maintenance Contracts and will assist in addressing the technical and traditional trade skills shortage within the wider construction industry.</p> | |

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| <p>4.10</p> <p>4.11</p> <p>4.12</p> | <p><u>Welfare Reform - Quarterly Update Paper</u></p> <p>The Board received an update on the progress of the Welfare Reform Project. The paper focused, in particular, on the impacts on Income Collection and the approach being adopted, to identify and mitigate against these impacts.</p> <p>The paper covered the activities between October 2019 and 31st August 2020 in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities carried out by the Welfare Reform Project team; • mitigating the impact of welfare reform for the Housing Executive and its customers; • impacts on income collection and arrears recovery. <p><u>Bonfires Update Paper</u></p> <p>The Board were provided with an update on bonfires on Housing Executive Land for 2020 including; information on costs, contractor procurement arrangement for contentious bonfire lifts, stakeholder engagement and a brief summary of the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Government Departments and partner organisations.</p> <p>Presentations received by the Board included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People Strategic Needs Analysis (SNA) Draft Report; • An Overview of the Purpose of Research. | |
| <p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> | <p><u>Housing Issues, Department for Communities</u></p> <p>Mr Paul Price and Mr David Polley highlighted the changes under the specific headings on the Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Issues:-</p> <p><u>Social Newbuild starts</u></p> <p>Aims to provide an additional 1,850 social homes by March 2021 of which 200 will be shared housing and 10% will be wheelchair accessible. Progress towards the commitment is progressing as would be expected at this time with a small number of schemes (13) on site delivering 128 units. The NIHE continues to engage with the developing housing associations in bringing forward planned schemes.</p> | |

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| <p>5.2</p> | <p>It was noted that the Minister for Communities and the Housing Executive have been corresponding regarding the suggested proposals to address this. The Housing Investment team have engaged directly with the Development Programme Group with an action plan established to track progress.</p> <p>As part of these initiatives, the Minister is particularly keen to explore how to target those areas of highest housing need. As such, Departmental officials have been tasked with exploring a range of options, of which the potential ring-fencing of SHDP budget and/or target is one, to ensure areas of acute housing need are prioritised with the SHDP.</p> <p>Members noted that Housing Associations are coming up with innovative solutions to minimise the impact that Covid is having on the delivery of the Plans. As the Plans are delivered over a 5 year period it is anticipated that there will be scope to enact a recovery plan and fully deliver the Plans as things return to the new normal.</p> <p>It was noted that the target of 1850 starts to March 2021, at present there are 290 starts.</p> <p>Members appreciated the factors attributing to the shortfall of meeting the target at the end of the 2019/20 and only 290 starts to date this year, but expressed their concern and the impact this will have on housing stress and the waiting list.</p> <p>In response to Mrs Grehan's question in relation to the increase of building trade being increased by at least 20-30% due to Covid-19, therefore few properties are being able to be built. Mr Price confirmed that the Department carry out a review the grant rate twice a year to calculate actual costs within the programme and increased costs are reflected in the grant rate.</p> <p><u>Co-ownership</u></p> <p>The PfG target is to support 3,750 first-time buyers to purchase a new home through Co-ownership or similar schemes by March 2021. Target of 1091 in 19/20 exceeded with 1102 Households supported at 31 March 2020. An Economic Appraisal for £145m FTC to fund Co-ownership for the next 4 years has been approved by the Minister and the Department of Finance (DoF) . While work to reverse the ONS decision is underway. The Minister has approved an interim capital budget allocation of £10m to deliver at least 287 homes, which has enabled Co-ownership to reopen to new applications from 22 June 2020.</p> | |
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| <p>5.3</p> | <p><u>Programme for Social Reform</u></p> <p>The above programme aims to complete preparations to implement Ministerial decisions to take forward a Programme of Social Housing Reform by September 2018 and to tackle the maintenance backlog for NI Housing Executive properties.</p> <p>The Minister is aware of the challenge facing the NIHE and has indicated her priority to protect NIHE stock.</p> | |
| <p>5.4</p> | <p><u>Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy</u></p> <p>Mr Price confirmed that the Minister is currently considering the way forward options for implementation and it is her intention to publish a consultation report and action plan in the Autumn.</p> <p>Referring to intimidation points, it was noted that the Minister had stated in the Assembly, that it was not the intention to remove intimidation points but to seek alternative arrangements.</p> <p>Members await the publication of the Report.</p> | |
| <p>5.5</p> | <p><u>Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers</u></p> <p>It was noted that work is ongoing with the NIO to ensure the passage of legislation to maintain the classification of Northern Ireland's Registered Housing Associations to the private sector. (Also detailed in NDNA). It is anticipated that ONS will review their decision on 21 October 2020. The reclassification will be back dated to the date of Royal Assent.</p> | |
| <p>5.6</p> | <p><u>Supporting People Delivery Strategy</u></p> <p>The above Strategy oversees both the delivery of the Supporting People Programme and the implementation of the 2015 Review Recommendations.</p> <p>The Housing Executive intended to bring about substantial change to the existing SP Programme in the form of the 2020-23 Strategy. The first draft of this was issued for public engagement in January 2020. However, a full public consultation is required meaning inevitable delays and the inability to complete this within the given timeframe.</p> | |

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| | <p>Further delay is expected with the challenges of Covid-19, Departmental colleagues have formally raised their concerns and a further update was provided at Programme board on 29 June and updated Strategy has since been formally shared with the Department for further comment with comments being provided to NIHE on 26th August. Strategic Needs Assessment is on schedule with plans to publish in September 2020.</p> <p>Findings were shared with stakeholders who agreed to move into Phase 2 with some £113.9m in scope. Although delayed due to Covid-19 the Project has re-commenced this month with a meeting of Oversight Group on 24th September. Checkpoint meetings between BCS and DfC will take place in October and November with a further meeting of Oversight Group to be held in December 2020. Progress is contingent on the impacts of Covid19 during the autumn and winter months.</p> | |
| 5.7 | <p><u>Homelessness Strategy</u></p> <p>It was noted that work is ongoing with the NIHE and across Government to implement the Homelessness Strategy (PFG target) to tackle homelessness.</p> <p>An Implementation Plan for year 4(2020/21) of the Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 has been drafted and is due to be submitted to the Housing Executive Board for approval. The Plan includes provision for a Temporary Accommodation Action Plan. Initial work on the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 has begun and will be refined and presented to Minister on 15 October 2020.</p> | |
| 5.8 | <p><u>Regulation of the Private Rented Sector</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Department is working with the NIO to ensure the passage of legislation to maintain the classification of Northern Ireland's Registered Housing Associations to the private sector. (Also detailed in NDNA)</p> <p>The Minister has indicated that progressing reform of the Private Rented Sector is a priority. Officials are working with the Minister to develop specific proposals for this mandate and beyond. In the meantime we have started work in some areas to improve the sector. Landlord Helpline underway as of 01/09/18. Pilot mediation service provided by Housing Rights Service has been operational since November 19 and will due to run for a period of 2 years.</p> | |

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| <p>5.9</p> | <p>Due to the impact of the COVID emergency the pilot has been extend for a further 12 month period, meaning it will run for a 3 year period in total.</p> <p>We have commissioned research to explore the future potential to transfer the landlord registration functions to councils, with a draft report due in the Autumn.</p> <p><u>Affordable Warmth Scheme</u></p> <p>Mr Polley thanked the Housing Council Members for their input with their respective Councils to endeavour to spend the allocated budget and to ensure that any necessary changes to aid the delivery of the scheme in 2021/22 are approved and implemented.</p> <p>Members noted that the Department have been in discussions with SOLACE in relation to 50 referrals, 50 base rate for Councils and are currently looking at this for the next financial year.</p> <p>It was also noted that the Minister has agreed to change the rules of eligibility as previously some benefits deemed as income has been removed. Therefore, widening the eligibility scope for those to avail of the scheme.</p> | |
| <p>5.10</p> | <p><u>Review of the Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in Northern Ireland</u></p> <p>Whilst the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) has the strategic role in provision of accommodation for Travellers, the Department for Communities has responsibility for producing and updating the <i>Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in NI</i>. The Guide is a technical guidance document to support the provision of appropriate, cost effective facilities for Travellers living in NI. It seeks to outline the key issues to be considered and identify the main design and management principles necessary to create high quality and sustainable Traveller sites which meet residents' traditional and cultural needs.</p> <p>The Department has reviewed the current Design Guide and is finalising an updated Guide. The new guide had been approved by Minister having been shared with the NI Assembly Communities Committee.</p> <p>The Housing Council received a final draft at the meeting and it was agreed that this item should be removed from the list.</p> | |

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| | <p>There were no further updates this month on the remaining items:-</p> | |
| 5.11 | <u>Increasing Housing Supply</u> | |
| 5.12 | <u>NIHE Rent Scheme</u> | |
| 5.13 | <u>European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Investment</u> | |
| 5.14 | <u>Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework PfG</u> | |
| 5.15 | <u>Options to remove historical debt from the NIHE and exclude it from having to pay Corporation Tax</u> | |
| 5.16 | <u>Long term rent trajectory</u> | |
| 5.17 | <u>Affordability of social rents</u> | |

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| 6.0 | <p><u>Joint Presentation by the Health & Social Care and the Housing Executive on persons waiting for assessments by Occupational Therapists</u></p> <p>Copies of the Presentations are appended to these Minutes – (Appendix A-C)</p> <p>Mrs Leeann Vincent, Assistant Director Project Delivery from the Housing Executive gave a presentation on Programme Delivery Major Adaptations.</p> <p>Mrs Maureen Mawhinney from the Housing Executive gave a presentation of the Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services 2010-2020.</p> <p>Mr Linus McLaughlin, Performance Manager, Health and Social Care Board and Shane Elliott, Head of Occupational Therapy Services, Northern Ireland and Social Care Trust gave a presentation on Persons Waiting for assessment by Occupational Therapists.</p> <p>Mrs Mawhinney undertook to provide a written response to Mr Speers clarifying what interventions are available for DFG applicants where the contractor’s performance/standard of work is sub-standard.</p> | M Mawhinney |
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| 8.0 | <p><u>Social Housing Development Programme Housing Starts and Completions</u></p> <p>Members noted the report.</p> | |
| 9.0 | <p><u>Housing Executive's Scheme Starts September 2020</u></p> <p>Members noted the report.</p> | |
| 10.0 | <p><u>Date and Venue of Next Meeting – Thursday 12th November 2020 at 10.30 am</u></p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting would be held in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre for the foreseeable future, it was recognised that other Members would determine their preference to attend in person or participate remotely.</p> | |

The Meeting concluded at 12.40 pm.

Programme Delivery Major Adaptations



Leeann Vincent
Assistant Director, Project Delivery

8th October 2020

www.nihe.gov.uk

Contents

- Historical overview
- In-House Design Pilot
- Adaptation Review Project
- Looking forward
- Questions



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Historical overview

- The Major Adaptation programme was delivered by the NIHE's Design Group based in Hill Street, Belfast from 2009 to 2016.
- Design Group teams move to Asset Management Regional based teams March 2016
- DfC Inspection Team September 2016 discussions
- Subsequently May 2018 received a Satisfactory grading from DfC Inspection with 3 minor recommendations
- Central Major Adaptation post creation 2016
- South Region Pilot team commencement 2017
- Previous 2-4 year average completion time

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Previous Delivery v In-House South Pilot Scheme

| Stages | Previous Process | South Region Pilot |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Briefing, Survey, Consultation & Scheme Design Approval | Approx. 62 - 74 weeks | Approx. 13 weeks |
| 2 Statutory Approvals, Tender Action | Approx. 30 weeks (including 16-18 weeks for Procurement) | Approx. 14-16 weeks (including 3-4 with contractor off framework) |
| 3 Contract Administration, Project Completion | approx. 24 weeks | Approx. 14 weeks |
| 4 Defect Correct Period and Final Reconciliation | Approx. 28 weeks (i.e. 26 weeks defect correction period + 2 week reconciliation) | Approx. 54 weeks (i.e. 52 weeks defect correction period + 2 week reconciliation) |
| Total Weeks Saving | | <i>Approx 43 Not inclusive of defect period as this is post completion</i> |

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Benefits of Pilot Project

- Aiming for earlier engagement with OT's (including feasibility studies)
- Standardising of drawings, notes and specification
- Clearer lines of communications (direct contact with Contractors)
- Faster response time to queries
- Customer focused and joint consultations
- Clearer demarcation of duties and roles
- Continual managerial review on progress
- Project escalation processes adopted
- In-Site utilised as a Project Management Tool
- Dedicated Staff aligned to District/Areas

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Limitations

Factors that can impede the progress of schemes and delivery of adaptations to tenants ranked in order of severity

1. Market forces within the Construction Industry
 - Higher Prices / Poor Response
 - Mitigated by Framework Contractor
2. Scope Creep
 - OT and District Changes
 - Mitigated by enhanced Welfare Officer communication/engagement and better relationships
3. Resources
 - Difficulties in obtaining M&E design. Duplication of work within Departments
 - Mitigated by M&E consultant appointment
4. Statutory bodies
 - Delay with Planning and NIE
 - Work Groups established

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Adaptation Review Project

Housing
Executive

- Development of MAPD Contractor Framework, reducing the need for constant open procurements (Approx 12 week saving)
- KPI Management within Contractor Framework
- Development of Professional Services (Consultant) Contract
- Contractual queries and disputes centrally managed
- Development and management of Insite system and Dashboard
- Monthly PRG Reports devised, bespoke to Adaptations major and minor

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Insite

Housing
Executive

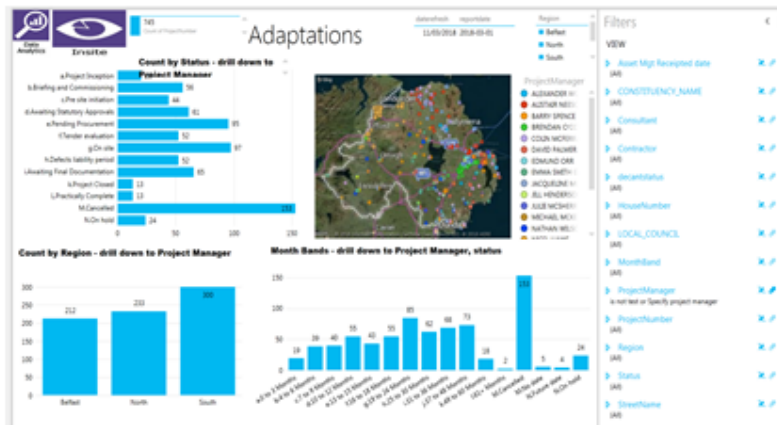
Insite is a new in house Project Management software/tool which has been integral in the development of the Pilot Project

- Every MAPD fully tracked through the whole process in various stages
- Provides full overview to all staff to ensure the process is managed effectively and efficiently
- Each stage can be reported in real time through the Insite dashboard which dramatically improves communications across all departments
- Up to date overview ensuring good governance
- Email triggers in stages provides an update for senior management of any slippage of schemes – this helps ensure that no scheme is overlooked



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Insite Dashboard



Appendix B

Department for Communities & Department of Health

Inter-Departmental Review of
Housing Adaptations Services
2010-2020



Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services

- **Rationale for Review**
- **Infra-structure**
- **Key Milestones**
- **Key Outcomes**
- **Next Steps**

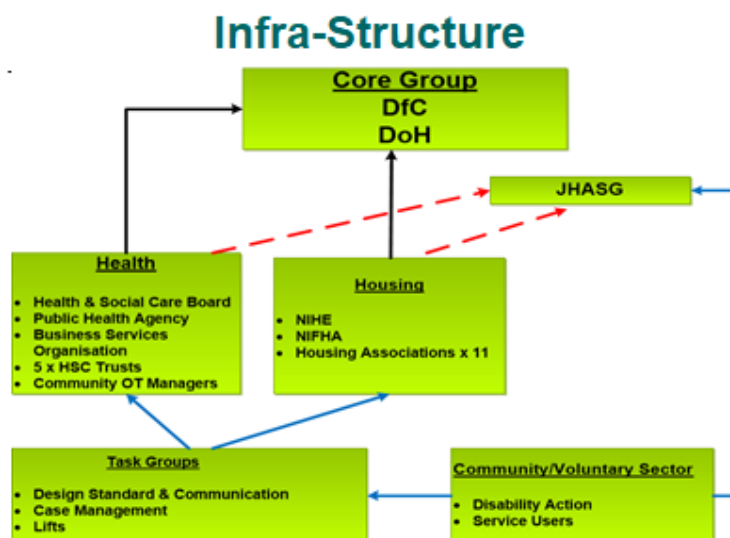
Rationale for the Review

○ Background

- Demographics
- Economics
- Maximise resources

○ Launch

- February 2010





Key IDR Milestones

- Executive Summary & Evidence Based report signed off by Ministers 2012 & N.I. Executive January 2013
- Public consultation completed May 2013
- Advance Departmental approval to proceed with agreed work strands 2014
- Final Report & Action Plan drafted 2015
- Consultation on Final Report & Action Plan 2016
- Final Report & Action Plan approved by Departments & Ministers Jan 2017
- Submitted to Executive Office Jan 2017
- Government collapses
- Ongoing implementation 2014-2020



Key IDR Outcomes

Theme 1:

Closer working between Statutory Bodies

- > **Memorandum of Understanding signed by DfC/DoH**
- > **Revised Terms of Reference for JHASG**

Theme 2:

Improving Partnerships

- > **Disability Forum QA function**



Key IDR Outcomes

Theme 3:

Inter-agency Case Management

- **Post Grad Diploma Course for Specialist Housing O.T.'s Course**
- **Environmental Controls Research completed Dec'16**

Theme 4:

Resources, Procurement & Recycling

- **Development of N.I. Accessible Housing Register for Social Housing**
- **Development of a Private Sector AHR Interface**



Key IDR Outcomes

Theme 5:

Design Standards & Communications

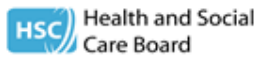
- **Design Standards Toolkit**
- **Generic Wheelchair Design Standards**
- **Wheelchair Housing Targets aim is 10% of New Build**



Next Steps

- **Form new Joint Housing Adaptations Steering Group (JHASG)**
- **Outstanding work streams identified**
- **Present IDR Final Report & Action Plan to N.I. Assembly**

Appendix C

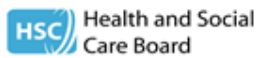


Northern Ireland Housing Council

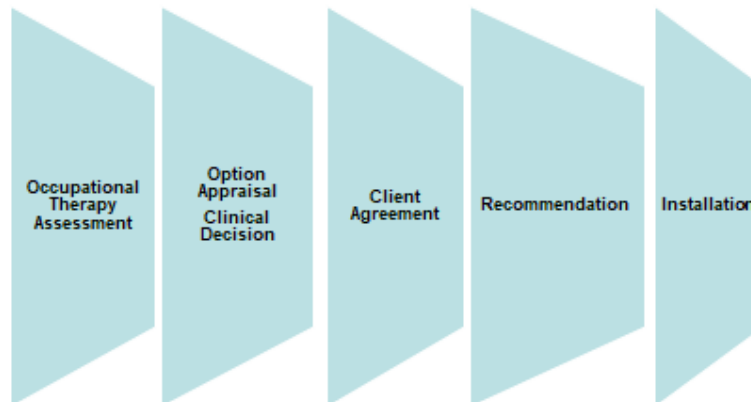
Persons waiting for assessment by Occupational Therapists

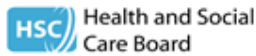
Directorate of Performance Management
and Service Improvement

8 October 2020



Housing Adaptations - Pathway





Adaptations pathway

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – Assessors

Occupational Therapy – delegated authority on behalf of Chief Executive

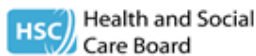
Providers/Funders- dependent on housing tenure

Private sector

- Health Trusts provide minor adaptations/ homelifts in private sector homes.
- Private Homes – Major adaptations - Disabled Facilities Grant (Administered by Northern Ireland Housing Executive Grants offices)

Social Sector

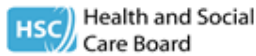
- NIHE – Minor and Major adaptations
- Housing Associations – Minor and Major adaptations



Performance Monitoring

- Department of Health (DOH) sets strategic policy.
- Minister sets targets and indicators of performance through annual Commissioning Plan Direction.
- HSCB responsible for performance monitoring of these targets and indicators.

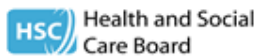




2020/21

CPD Target - Elective Care (AHP): from April 2018, no patient waits longer than 13 weeks from referral to commencement of Allied Health Professional (AHP) treatment.

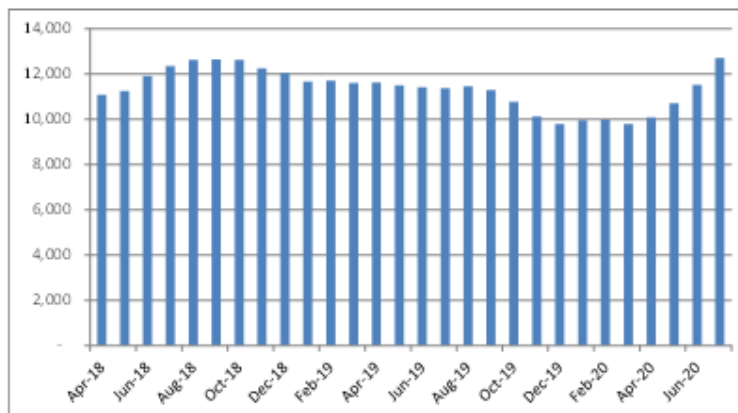
CPD Indicator – Housing Adaptations (Lifts/Hoists): Percentage of patients who have lifts and ceiling track hoists installed within 16 weeks of the OT assessment and options appraisal

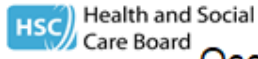


Occupational Therapy Services

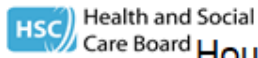
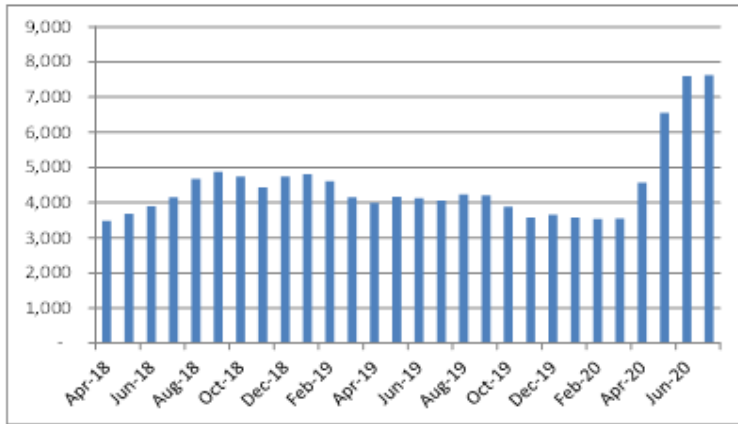
Total numbers waiting

(note; Housing Adaptations 10%-20% of O.T. services)

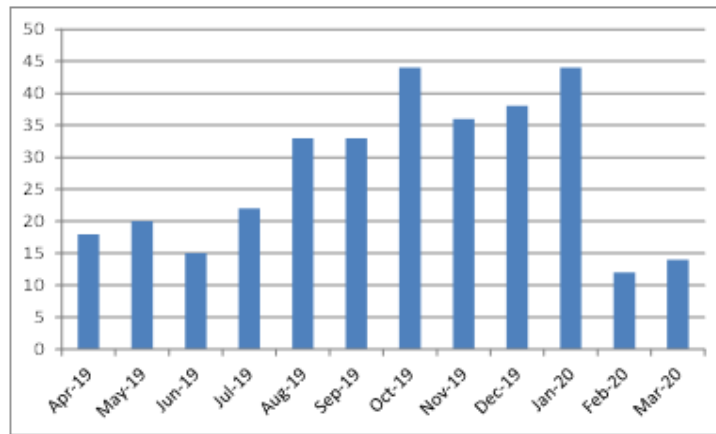




Occupational Therapy Services – Total numbers waiting > 13 weeks (Regional)



Housing Adaptations (Lifts/Hoists) Total numbers waiting > 16 weeks (Regional)



Challenges

- Covid-19 - impact on OT capacity to assess
- Use of technology - virtual assessments
- Waiting list management
- Funding

