

ACCESSING MINOR ADAPTATIONS

**Report By: Private Sector Housing Manager and the
Partnership Manager, Integrated Community
Equipment Services**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee about the provision of minor adaptations to homes within Herefordshire and to outline the ways in which these can be accessed.

Background

2. The Council has responsibility for the provision of minor adaptations which arises from the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 Section 2 (e) "the provision of assistance for that person in arranging for the carrying out of any works of adaptations to his home or the provision of any additional facilities designed to secure his greater safety, comfort or convenience"
3. The term 'minor adaptations' therefore refers to modifications to the home of a disabled person, costing less than £1000. Typically, these are:
 - grab rails either inside or outside the property, to improve ease of access or to enable a person to move around their home safely
 - stair rails to assist with accessing bedroom or bathroom
 - ramped access to the property for wheelchair users
 - widening a doorway (e.g. for a wheelchair user) or to enable a person to use their kitchen or bathroom
 - installation of intercom system or key safe to allow admittance of visitors or carers.
4. A minor adaptation differs from the provision of Community Equipment in that it involves an element of fixing or structural work, whereas an item of Community Equipment is not fixed in place and is easily removable.
5. The assessment for minor adaptations is currently carried out by the Occupational Therapy Service based within Herefordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Herefordshire Hospitals Trust.

6. The provision of Minor Adaptations in Herefordshire currently consists of three distinct services:
 - Rapid Response Service
 - Minor Adaptations Service (funded by the Integrated Community Equipment Service)
 - You @ Home Repairs on Prescription
7. These services are all provided by a single group of administrative and technical staff based at the You @ Home Home Improvement Agency, but with differing aims and funding mechanisms.
8. Development of the minor adaptations services is currently included in the improvement plans for the agency, and assisted by the joint funded Housing Occupational Therapist post based at the agency.
9. The appendices to this report outline the referral routes for each of the above adaptations services.

Rapid Response Service

10. The Rapid Response Service is a service aimed at ensuring that minor adaptations can be provided quickly to facilitate a safe and timely discharge from hospital, or to prevent imminent hospitalisation. The works will normally be of a minor and emergency nature – e.g. grab rails, stair rails & key safes. The service is a cross tenure service, so as to provide a swift response when required to people living in properties of all tenures – including Housing Associations. The works are undertaken within 48 hours or to suit discharge arrangements.
11. The service is funded via a Minor Works Assistance grant made available through Private Sector Housing, and is available for people of all ages regardless of financial status, where a referral is received from Occupational Therapy staff indicating that the requested works meet the above criteria.
12. The maximum amount of assistance is £200 per application (exclusive of additional agency fees of £30). The cost of the adaptations is determined by the materials cost, plus mileage at 40p per mile and labour at £15 per hour. The agency fee is then added to these costs.
13. Minor adaptations not essential for discharge are recommended via the Minor Adaptations service.
14. Most works will be of minor and emergency nature and fall within the £200 limit. Where it is likely that works will cost more than £200, these will be funded via the ICES budget.

Minor Adaptations funded by ICES

15. The Minor Adaptations service is funded by the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES), which is jointly funded by Herefordshire PCT and Herefordshire Council by an agreement established under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 and is

commissioned by ICES from the You @ Home Home Improvement Agency. In accordance with government guidelines, standard minor adaptations are defined as those adaptations which cost less than £1000 and are differentiated from “equipment”, which does not require fitting.

16. Herefordshire ICES provides equipment or minor adaptations to meet needs which are assessed as “critical” or “substantial”, as defined by Fair Access to Care Services (FACS), in accordance with council policy. Work is currently ongoing to provide all assessment staff with updated guidance to ensure an ongoing consistent approach to this decision making.
17. This service is currently provided for clients in private sector properties. Private Sector Housing liaises with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) who currently undertake minor adaptations for their own tenants.

You @ Home Repairs on Prescription

18. The You @ Home Repairs on Prescription service provides assistance to vulnerable people in their homes by carrying out essential or urgent works up to the value of £1000 which have been identified and referred by Health or other Key Workers including Occupational Therapists, Fire Service and Police.
19. The aim of the service is to enable more vulnerable people to live in secure, safe and decent housing in communities of their choice.
20. The service was funded by “Kick Start” funds for the years 2004/5 and 2005/6 and has been continued during 2006/7. Funding is available across tenures and the service is provided at no cost to the service user. Future funding options for this service need to be investigated and these may involve a charging policy. Lack of resources in this area could have an impact on ICES funding, as some works requested under this scheme would otherwise need to be funded under the Minor Adaptations scheme.
21. Examples of works provided under this service include areas of access, insulation, safety, security, fitness/repair, in addition to some minor adaptations.

Works costing in excess of £1000

22. Works costing in excess of £1000 are not covered by the above schemes. These may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant delivered through Private Sector Housing, subject to a national means testing process.

Self Referral and Self Assessment

23. Traditionally people have been referred to minor adaptations services through their General Practitioner. In recent years, referral has been possible by users, families and carers direct to the Occupational Therapy service, or via the Signposting Scheme.
24. The Community Occupational Therapy Service now carries out some telephone assessments on initial referral. This enables simple needs to be met in a much shorter time than previously, whilst allowing the Occupational Therapy teams greater scope for complex assessments.

25. The Community Occupational Therapy service, as with other therapy services within the PCT, is currently undergoing a reorganisation which will lead to central management and a central referral point.
26. Private Sector Housing and the You @ Home agency aim to work closely with the Occupational Therapy service in future to develop a route for self-assessment for simple needs in line with the current government agenda. Self-assessment is also likely to be a key part of the Transforming Community Equipment Services Project currently being developed by Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) team within the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP), teams associated within the Department of Health.

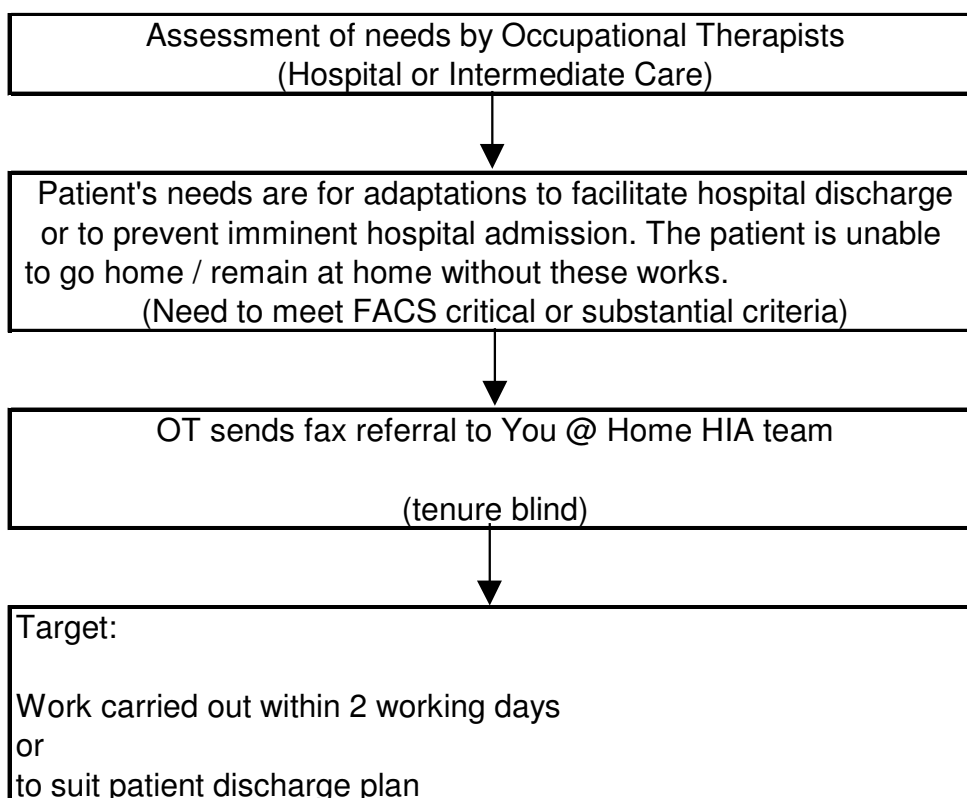
RECOMMENDATION

THAT the arrangements for accessing minor adaptations in Herefordshire be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make.

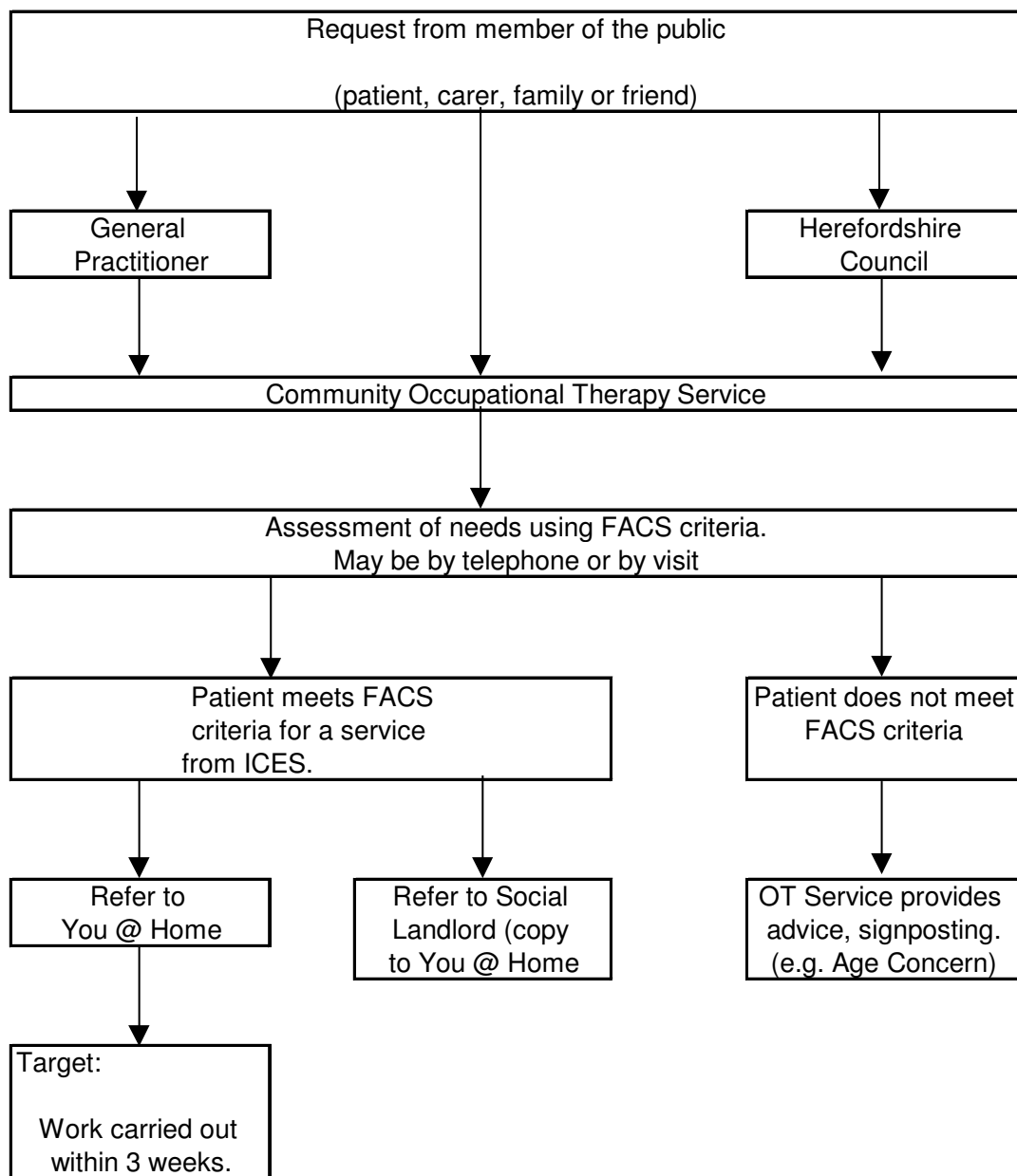
BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Rapid Response Service



Minor Adaptations



Repairs on Prescription

