

# DSD/DHSSPS Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services: Final Report and Action Plan 2016



**Northern Ireland  
Executive**

[www.northernireland.gov.uk](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk)

Consultation supported by the  
Department for Social Development and  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

## Joint Ministerial Foreword

Housing adaptations services enable people with disabilities to remain at home and enhance their independence within their local community. The NI Executive remains committed to providing these important services.

Our Departments carried out a public consultation exercise in 2013 on the report of the [Inter-Departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services](#). The Review examined the current system of approval, the use of resources, and the delivery of housing adaptations in Northern Ireland on a cross tenure basis to maximise resources, ensure best value and equality of provision across health and social care trusts and housing providers.

Value for money considerations continue to underpin all that we do particularly given the current extremely challenging budgetary pressures that all Departments face, wherein we are often asked to do more with less. Furthermore, demographic trends indicate that there is growing demand for these services.

This final report has now been produced together with a draft Action Plan 2016. The Action Plan addresses the recommendations of the review report and deals with additional areas identified from the 2013 consultation. It also highlights significant strands of work that have already been completed, for example, the launch of the Adaptations Design Communications Toolkit on 1 April 2014.

Our Departments have responsibility for different aspects of housing adaptations. Looking ahead we will develop closer joint working between our two Departments to help further improve service provision. The development of a joint Memorandum of Understanding under Theme 1 in the Action Plan will help pave the way to help to secure this important objective.

Finally, in reaching this point we would like to thank those service users, their families and carers, and their various representative organisations whose valuable input has been instrumental in helping to shape the development of the draft Action Plan. We look forward to receiving your views in due course.

Thank you.



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MAURICE MORROW  
Minister for Social Development



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# Introduction

## Background & Rationale

Housing adaptations are necessary to make the home of a person with a disability suitable for their needs and to promote independent living. The assessment for and provision of housing adaptations requires effective joint working between housing, health and social care to improve standards and make best use of available resources.

In the financial year 2013/14 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive spent a total of approximately £21m on adaptations in both the public and private sectors. The 2013/14 Housing Association spend on adaptations was approximately £1.1m. The Health and Social Care Trusts (HSC Trusts) also incurred annual expenditure of £9.3m<sup>1</sup> in 2013/14 on minor adaptations, lifts, ceiling track hoists and community equipment. Demographic trends indicate growing demand for these services.

The NI Executive recognises the need to ensure that, through collaborative working, resources are being used effectively and are helping as many people as possible. However, there is increasing pressure on public finances to deliver more with less; the Department for Social Development (DSD) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) have therefore undertaken an inter-departmental Review of housing adaptations services.

The Review was launched in February 2010. The purpose was to review the current system of approval, resources and delivery of housing adaptations in Northern Ireland on a cross-tenure basis, to maximise resources, ensure best value and equality of provision across HSC Trusts and Housing providers.

## Scope of Review

With a central focus on processes that directly affect the lives of service users, the Review examined:

- Current and likely future demand for the housing adaptations service.
- The impact of housing adaptations investment on the health and well-being of service users and on cost savings elsewhere.
- The key legislative and policy influences on housing adaptations services considering interdepartmental/interagency interfaces.
- Joint interdepartmental resources available, including HSC Trust community equipment, to meet the housing and independent living needs of older and disabled people in Northern Ireland.
- Funding models utilised in other parts of the UK.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures provided by HSC Trusts

- The use of existing housing adaptations and the use of recyclable resources.
- Governance arrangements and current performance in the assessment and delivery of housing adaptations services.
- Interagency co-ordination of complex case work and the range of options/solutions which can be utilised to meet assessed need.

## Policy Context

When examining the legislative and policy infrastructure shaping housing adaptations services in Northern Ireland, it is clear that while the primary responsibilities lie with DSD/DHSSPS, the legislation and policies of other Northern Ireland Executive Departments and their agencies are influential at both strategic and operational levels. This includes OFMDFM equality legislation in relation to older and disabled people, DOE planning policy and DFP building regulations and procurement policy. In total, the legislation and policy of five departments directly influence and shape the housing adaptations service and these are referenced in Appendix 1.

When a person with disabilities begins undertaking major adaptations to their home they will require the support of a range of skilled professionals and agencies working collaboratively within different legislative and policy frameworks. It is therefore highly desirable that stakeholders work closely and seamlessly together on policy interfaces. This will help to ensure that operational processes are coordinated efficiently and effectively to make that journey as smooth and problem-free as possible. This Review report identifies a range of actions which will help to clarify and develop policy and delivery interfaces.

### “Home is the Hub of Care”

A safe, accessible and warm home is an essential foundation stone underpinning both independent living and care in the community. Housing adaptations services, together with accessible new build housing, play a significant role in the delivery of a range of contemporary Housing and Health/Social Care policies in Northern Ireland.

Independent living is a core objective of several policies such as [Transforming your Care](#), [Supporting People](#), [Housing Adaptations](#) and the [Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy](#). It is acknowledged that most people will want to live in their own home for as long as possible and, if desired, to have choices regarding other options in respect of accommodation and care in local neighbourhoods which are affordable and close to family and friends.

Living independently may include living with carers. DHSSPS' strategy, [Caring for Carers](#) highlights the importance of assessing a carer's needs. The Housing Adaptations Review recognises the need for a well-designed home to promote a carer's safety and convenience when using assistive equipment and providing personal assistance.

Further work on developing the legislative and policy framework and the importance of housing services are anticipated as the DHSSPS work through the various stages of [Who Cares: The Future of Adult Care and Support in Northern Ireland](#) with stakeholders. It is recognised that housing plays an important role in enabling people to retain their independence and will therefore be a key issue for

consideration as the reform moves into the second stage and the development of proposals for change.

## **Service users at the heart of planning**

A robust legislative and policy framework now exists to support the improved involvement of people with disabilities in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services, for example [The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities/ United Nations Principles for Older Persons](#) and [OFMDFM Strategy to Improve the Lives of People with Disabilities](#). These help to underscore the need for significant user involvement and cross-departmental collaboration to better plan and co-ordinate disability services. [Personal and Public Involvement policy](#) is also promoting user involvement within our Health and Social Care organisations.

Stakeholders will engage proactively with service users through fora such as ad hoc disability design workshops to help inform and support policy development. In the current challenging financial climate, affordable housing and keeping warm in particular is a significant concern for many. The [Affordable Warmth Scheme](#) funded by the Department for Social Development, combined with appropriate adaptations services, helps to give people more control over home energy bills.

Government has a duty to spend tax-payers' money wisely and to ensure resources are coordinated effectively. Improved procurement policies have the potential to make government finances stretch even further and create better information, for example, on the accessibility features of existing housing in all sectors, which is needed to help maximise choice. The OFMDFM [Active Ageing Strategy](#) recognises this need and it selected two of this review report's recommendations; the creation of an accessible housing register for social housing; and improving housing accessibility information for private sector housing for rent or sale as signature projects.

## **Towards a more inclusive society**

The combined strategies in the DSD Housing [Association Guide](#) for building Lifetime Homes (within [General Needs Housing](#)) and [Wheelchair Housing; Adaptations Guide; Part R Building Regulations](#) for accessibility; planning policies such as [Creating Places](#) and the creation of more accessible public buildings and retail outlets as a result of the [Disability Discrimination Act](#) are helping to build a more inclusive and sustainable society. This means in practice that people can leave their own homes when they want to, visit family and friends, access essential community services, and have more options for enjoyable living.

When delivering housing services for people with disabilities in rural areas, there are additional considerations in terms of access to services and the [NIHE Draft Rural Action Plan](#) has developed a strategy to address these challenges.

The new build and adaptations programmes are interlinked, investment in improved new build housing designs such as lifetime homes and wheelchair standard dwellings address recurring adaptations trends in older social housing stock significantly reducing the future need for, or scale, of more potentially costly time consuming, and sometimes complex adaptations. The supply of new build accessible housing options in the private sector however needs further development.

## Future horizons

In meeting the future challenges of a rapidly ageing society and in addressing any potential care gap that could arise, housing and associated assistive technologies such as home environmental controls will have an important contribution to make in complementing personal care.

There are opportunities for future collaborative cross-sector research to harness the expertise of people with disabilities and their carers, health and social care professionals, housing providers, and specialists from design and technology disciplines. There is also an increasing understanding and awareness of a need for future housing and health and social care research into the impact of the design of the environment on human behaviour (“design for the mind”), which would contribute to both the [Autism](#) and [Dementia](#) Strategies.

Such research will help to underpin the evidence base for policy and practice, drive forward technological innovation, and has the potential to stimulate industrial development and job creation in Northern Ireland. [The Connected Health and Prosperity Memorandum of Understanding between DHSSPS and Invest Northern Ireland](#) (Sponsored by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment) currently delivers a model of good practice for such work.

This review will help to realise more strategic co-ordination of housing adaptations policy and other related policies, with the objective of widening housing options for people with disabilities.



## Recommendations and Action Plan

The Inter-departmental Review of Housing Adaptations Services included a series of recommendations. Following joint Ministerial and NI Executive agreement, the review report and recommendations were subject to public consultation, which took place in 2013. Following analysis of the consultation responses, a number of additional areas were identified for further consideration and these have been grouped under seven key themes:

1. Closer working between statutory bodies
2. Improving partnerships
3. Interagency case management
4. Resources, procurement and recycling
5. Design standards
6. Research
7. Equality and rural proofing

The Minister for Social Development and the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety jointly approved the launch and implementation of the [Adaptations Design Communications Toolkit](#) on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 in advance of this final review report.

The toolkit delivers across a series of design standards and governance recommendations contained in the Review. These include:

1. DHSSPS to undertake an evaluation regarding the transfer of responsibilities for minor social housing adaptations assessment from HSC Trusts to social housing providers. This evaluation was completed in 2013.
2. Ensure that there is a consistent range of minor social housing adaptations, which can be provided without the need for referral to HSC Trusts for assessment, thus harmonising NIHE and Housing Association provision.
3. Develop evidence-based, consistent and equitable design standards for housing adaptations across all tenures and it is also recognised that complementary, bespoke design pathways are also available in exceptional circumstances.
4. Improve design presentation formats to help disabled people and providers visualise and discuss proposed housing adaptations.
5. Develop standardised and robust occupational therapy formats for housing adaptations recommendations, specifications, and follow-up communications to all housing providers.
6. Provide DHSSPS financial governance guidance for delegated levels of occupational therapy authority to recommend housing adaptations.

7. Develop electronic formats for documentation to facilitate more timely and consistent inter and intra-agency communications.
8. Ensure that there are robust data protection arrangements for interagency electronic transfer of housing adaptations data.

## **Review Implementation**

A Core Group (Project Board) was established to oversee the Review and its implementation, which is jointly chaired by the DSD and DHSSPS. Other core group members include representatives from the NIHE, Health & Social Care Board and Public Health Agency. The role of the Core Group is to provide strategic direction and guidance for review implementation. The DSD and DHSSPS will ultimately monitor and endorse the outputs of the Review.

The NIHE Regional Services Housing Adaptations Policy Unit, with oversight from the Housing Adaptations Liaison Officer, will facilitate the implementation of the Review on behalf of DSD and DHSSPS.

The Joint Housing Adaptations Steering Group (JHASG) initially established to support an earlier Joint Fundamental Review of the Housing Adaptations Service in 2002, comprises representatives from housing, health and social care, community and voluntary sector/service users. The role of this group is to ensure comprehensive stakeholder representation, assist with the development of detailed action plans and ensure their implementation.

Since this Review has commenced, a Concordat has been signed by Government and representatives of the Joint Forum (from the Voluntary and Community Sector) which will facilitate cross-sector partnerships between the statutory and community/voluntary sectors.

## High Level Action Plan

Action plan colour code key:

Action Completed



Action to be completed in 2015/16  
Action to be completed in 2016/17



### Theme 1: Closer working between statutory bodies

**Recommendation 1:** DSD/DHSSPS to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to include areas such as coordinated planning of resources, framework for collaborative working, data exchange, joint research and training and to consider the emerging impacts of community planning on the provision of housing adaptations services.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Officials to draft a high level document outlining legislative, policy and organisational responsibilities/interfaces and key areas of joint concern.	Memorandum of Understanding.	DSD & DHSSPS officials.	<b>June 2016</b>
Consider new DOE planning functions within the MOU and the impacts on housing adaptations provision.	Include in DSD/DHSSPS Memorandum of Understanding.	DOE.	<b>June 2016</b> subject to DOE implementation.

**Recommendation 2:** DSD-DHSSPS to produce supporting policy guidance to be produced and coordinated jointly to address key areas of joint concern.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Draft coordinated DSD/DHSSPS policy guidance on three priority areas.	Interdepartmental policy guidance on key policy interfaces.	DSD & DHSSPS.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 3:** Determine and develop the optimal infrastructure for strategic housing adaptations policy development within NIHE Regional Housing Services in consultation with internal and external partners.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Review and re-organisation of strategic and operational functions including staff roles and responsibilities.	Revised organisational arrangements with a regional focus on the planning of disability housing services.	NIHE Regional services in consultation with landlord services and appropriate external agencies.	<b>Completed 2014</b>
Consider the most effective infrastructure for review implementation.	Framework for ongoing cross-sector working developed.	JHASG.	<b>April 2016</b>

**Recommendation 4:** Evaluate and harmonise the system of minor housing adaptations which can be provided without referral to HSC Trust for assessment, improving both public and professional awareness of these arrangements.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
DHSSPS to complete an evaluation of the impact of the transfer of responsibilities to housing providers.	Produce an evaluation report and recommendations.	DHSSPS.	<b>Completed 2013</b>
Publicise the select lists of adaptations for social housing providers.	Produce a communications strategy.  Revised leaflets, posters new web links, articles in statutory/community and voluntary sector literature. Comprehensive but targeted distribution to key stakeholders.	NIHE/JHASG.  NIHE.	<b>Completed May 2014</b>
Ensure cross-sector communications regarding adaptations can be delivered electronically and securely	Data sharing agreement between HSC Trusts and Housing Providers.	HSC Trusts/ BSO/NIHE/ NIFHA.	<b>January 2016</b>
Cross-sector electronic communications for adaptations implemented	Methods of secure electronic transmission developed and tested.	HSC Trusts/BSO /NIHE/NIFHA/ Housing Associations.	<b>Completed March 2015</b>

**Recommendation 5:** Consider the Equality Commission’s Legislative Reform Proposals to strengthen protection for disabled people in Northern Ireland within DDA in line with changes in GB under the Equality Act relating to housing adaptations and develop supporting guidance for landlords and tenants.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
The Equality Commission has submitted drafts to OFMDFM for consideration.	Revised Legislation and guidance.	OFMDFM/ Equality Commission.	Currently under review by OFMDFM Ministers.  Equality commission proposals sent June 2009. Agree timescale after OFMDFM approval of the Equality Commission’s Legislative Reform proposals.

## Theme 2: Improving Partnerships

**Recommendation 6:** The representation and engagement of disabled people in decision-making structures should be improved and strengthened.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Extend the good practice model of service user involvement found in NIHE/public sector to other tenures.	Ongoing operation of the NIHE Disability Forum extended to identify private sector housing issues.	NIHE.	<b>Completed 2014</b>
	Include HSC input to this forum.	HSC Board/PHA Patient and Client Council/HSC Trusts.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 7:** A value for money review is carried out to establish the best partnership arrangement for delivering HSC Trust minor adaptations.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
HSC Trusts Estate Services to scope current minor adaptations provision.	Scoping report and recommendations.	HSC Board & HSC Trusts.	<b>April 2016</b>
Explore housing models with Supporting People which support older and disabled people to remain in their own homes including equipment, minor adaptations and home repairs.	Scoping report outlining options.	NIHE/HSC Board HSC Trusts. Community and Voluntary Sector providers.	<b>March 2017</b>

### Theme 3: Interagency Case Management

**Recommendation 8** : New arrangements to support HSC Trusts and Housing Providers to jointly deliver services to people with the most complex disabilities.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
<p>Stage 1 Review and develop the NIHE case management and option appraisal system in light of organisational change.</p>	New NIHE organisational arrangements.	NIHE.	<b>December 2016</b>
<p>Stage 2 Develop the interagency case management and optional appraisal interfaces with HSC organisations to strengthen joint working.</p>	Agreed cross-sector protocols for joint working.	NIHE/HSC Board/ PHA/HSC Trusts, with the input of Service Users.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 9**: Review of Housing Association Guide to assist specification of complex needs requirements in new build housing developments.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Map out the most effective interagency case management arrangements when planning new build schemes for disabled people with complex needs and develop supporting good practice design guidance.	Good practice guide endorsed by both departments and referenced in the DSD Housing Association Guide.	HAU/NIHE/NIFHA HSC Board/HSC Trusts.	<b>September 2016</b>



**Recommendation 10:** The DHSSPS will ensure that each HSC Trust has a dedicated occupational therapist to provide a point of reference and expertise on housing adaptations for disabled people.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
HSC Board/PHA to ensure a dedicated specialist occupational therapist post is created in each HSC Trust within existing resources.	Post embedded within occupational therapy provision in each HSC Trust.	HSC Board/PHA/HSC Trusts/OT professional leads.	<b>31 March 2016</b>
DHSSPS to commission an OT postgraduate module on environmental design for disabled people from UUJ to support dedicated Housing OT posts.	Completion of this accredited postgraduate module.		<b>Completed July 2015</b>

**Recommendation 11:** Explore the potential of a housing options service to support older people in particular make choices about their housing. In addition to a housing options service for older people consider developing a housing options service for other key groups in transition i.e. young disabled people leaving home and adults with learning disabilities whose parents are growing older.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Development of existing case management and option appraisals systems.	Clarify and strengthen existing pathways for support.	NIHE/NIHFA/HSC Board/Trusts. Community and Voluntary sector.	<b>December 2016</b>
Coordinate strategic planning with NIHE Supporting People.	Coordinated strategic planning with Supporting People.	NIHE/NIHFA/HSC Board/Community and Voluntary sector.	<b>December 2016</b>

Explore and promote the use of existing services.	Develop improved referral protocols within case management processes to existing providers.	NIHE/NIHFA/HSC Board/Trusts/Community and Voluntary sector.	<b>April 2017</b>
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**Recommendation 12:** To develop common standards for user-centred services across all housing tenures and HSC Trusts and agree consistent terminology for strategic planning of housing adaptations services and benchmarking.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Establish cross-sector task group to consider existing standards of service including other UK benchmarks and service user perspectives.	Standards of service which incorporate measures which are relevant for service users. Consistent definitions and performance indicators are agreed.	JHASG with Disability Forum input.	<b>December 2016</b>
Ensure that adaptations provision can be monitored by age group to facilitate equality monitoring.	Specifications for future IT development across all sectors.	JHASG.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 13:** A focused review to determine how home environmental control technology can support service provision for older and disabled people. Prioritised DHSSPS bid for resources made to OFMDFM Delivering Social Change programme.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Develop terms of reference.	Terms of Reference document.	Housing Adaptations Liaison Officer.	<b>Completed 2013</b>
Prepare a service user led scoping exercise of the service.	Disability Action Home Environmental Controls Report.	NIHE/Disability Housing Design Panel.	<b>Completed 2013</b>
Establish monitoring arrangements in preparation for a commissioned service.	HSC Board Reports. NIHE Reports.	DHSSPS/HSC Board//HSC Trusts with Service User involvement.	<b>Completed 2015</b>
Consider environmental control provision within the MOU.	Include appropriate references within the Interdepartmental MOU.	DSD/DHSSPS.	<b>September 2016</b>
Deliver a provider led scoping study of this service.	Research Report with preliminary recommendations.	NIHE Research Unit.	<b>December 2016</b>

Consider the findings and transfer of knowledge from DSD/NIHE Supporting People research on environmental controls to the housing adaptations programme.		NIHE/PHA/UUJ	March 2017
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#### Theme 4: Resources, Procurement and Recycling

**Recommendation 14:** Creation of an Accessible Housing register of socially rented homes which have been purpose built or adapted for disabled people. OFMDFM Signature project Active Ageing Strategy

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Undertake a proof of concept study to identify the requirements for an Accessible Housing Register.	Proof of concept study report and evaluation.	NIHE with service user input.	Completed April 2013
Quality assure historic NIHE/HA major adaptations data. Lift provision and an agreed survey sample will be classified and registered.	Interim IT database developed to register and classify stock. Historic extensions, lifts and sample stock survey findings.	DSD/HAU/NIHE Regional and Landlord Services with NIFHA input. Savills for the NIHE stock survey.	Completed May 2015
NIHE Landlord to develop new asset management system with an accessible housing register (AHR) component.	New asset management system which can store AHR attributes and investigation of additional IT support system requirements.	NIHE Landlord.	March 2016

Register ongoing major NIHE/HA adaptations which are completed and identify remaining stock with significant accessibility features.	Social housing with significant accessibility features surveyed and recorded.	NIHE/HA.	<b>March 2017</b>
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**Recommendation 15:** Improve information on the accessibility features of private sector housing for rent or sale. OFMDFM Signature project Active Ageing Strategy (Funding bid submitted by DHSSPS).

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Engage service users in the identification of good practice guidance regarding accessing and presentation of accessibility information on private sector housing for rent or sale. Critically appraise current information sources including the Scottish single survey and develop good practice guidance.	Produce a service user led report.	OFMDFM, DHSSPS NIHE (Service users Disability Housing Design Panel). Housing Adaptations Liaison Officer.	<b>Completed 2014</b>
Identify potential size and nature of the market for accessible private sector housing.	Produce a briefing paper.	Housing Adaptations Liaison Officer.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 16:** HSC Trusts and Housing Providers should consider coordinated procurement opportunities and pilot methods where practical.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Share cross-sector best practice in lift specifications.	Agree core specifications for providers.	NIHE Landlord side/BSO/HSC Trusts/NIHFA/HA.	<b>March 2017</b>
Explore coordinated procurement of lifts.	HSC/NIHE/NIHFA Procurement frameworks can facilitate future coordinated procurement bids.	NIHE Landlord side/HSC Board /BSO/HSC Trusts /NIHFA/ Housing Associations.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 17:** Greater use should be made of recycled equipment and adaptations. For example the provision of prefabricated re-locatable extensions (pods) or ramps could be considered as an urgent response, where appropriate to the client's needs and where technically appropriate.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Access Ramps - Northern HSC Trust will procure and pilot a batch of modular recyclable ramps for people with urgent access needs.	Evaluation report.	Northern Health and Social Care Trust.	<b>March/April 2016</b>
If effective for service users/providers, provision may be considered by other providers.	Evaluation report.	NIHE District Maintenance. Other HSC Trusts.	<b>September 2016</b>
The potential of modern methods of construction will be explored in relation to housing adaptations delivery.	The new NIHE procurement framework will facilitate the use of modern methods of	HAU/NIHE Landlord side.	<b>Completed December 2015</b>

	construction for housing adaptations delivery where appropriate.		
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Notes:

A NIHE Landlord review of the delivery of major adaptations schemes, including design services and contractors, is underway. A pilot loans scheme is aimed at testing the potential for developing legislation for incorporating a Loans Scheme offering a tailored suite of loans that would either replace or augment the current discretionary grant scheme as part of the consultation for the review of Repair & Improvement within the Private Sector Strategy is being developed by DSD. While the pilot is not proposed to have any impact on the current Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant there is potential for considering interest free loans towards any non-adaptation works which are required in conjunction with the DFG adaptations.

### Theme 5: Design Standards

**Recommendation 18:** Develop new areas of disability design guidance to complement the adaptations design communications toolkit and to inform new build design guidance e.g. design for sight loss and “design for the mind”.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Draft a paper on integrating current good practice for dementia and sight loss into design practice for housing adaptations and new build housing where appropriate.	Identify cost neutral and low cost design elements relating to good design practice for dementia and sight loss which could be considered in housing adaptations and new build design guidance.	NIHE/NIFHA/HAU/HSC Trusts/Dementia Services Development Centre/RNIB.	<b>September 2016</b>
Draft a research proposal on housing interventions for people with cognitive disabilities and challenging behaviours.	Research proposal and specification for this area of research with NIHE/Supporting People. Future contributions to a potential BSI standard for “design for the mind”.	NIHE/HSC Board/PHA/HSC Trust/Universities.	<b>March 2017</b>

**Recommendation 19:** Consider Lifetime Homes standards and a proportion of wheelchair standard homes (based on cross-sector evidence) across all tenures and ensure increased use of Regional Disablement Services/Geographical Information systems mapping to support strategic planning for such initiatives.

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Target Completion
<p>Develop appropriate strategic data exchange between HSC organisations and housing planners to develop housing services for older and disabled people.</p>	<p>Appropriate data sharing arrangements and scheduled cross-sector reports.</p>	<p>NIHE Regional Services/HSC Board/Regional/Disablement Services/NIFHA/Housing Associations/HSC Trusts.</p>	<p><b>Completed for wheelchair housing planning in 2013.</b></p>
<p>Review best design practice for larger wheelchair standard housing (4 person plus) including 2 storey options.</p>	<p>Submission for DSD consideration.</p> <p>Draft principles of good practice and reference in the Housing Association Guide.</p>	<p>NIHE/NIFHA/Housing Associations with input from HAU, HSC Trust and Service Users.</p>	<p><b>Completed June 2015</b></p> <p><b>September 2016</b></p>
<p>Examine the scale of need in the private sector (see recommendation 15) and monitor ongoing research into the options emerging in this sector, including the Housing Standards Review in England.</p>	<p>Report outlining needs and cost benefits of extending Lifetime Homes and targeted wheelchair standard housing to the private sector.</p>	<p>NIHE/Housing Adaptations Liaison Officer.</p>	<p><b>April 2017</b></p>



## Theme 6: Other Non-Design Related Research Areas

**Recommendation 20:** Undertake a study on the accommodation needs of homeless disabled people.

Actions	Outcomes	Responsibility	Target Completion
Consider the outputs of the current NIHE “customer journey” study in relation to homeless disabled people.	NIHE organisational changes to better support the customer journey.	NIHE.	<b>March 2017</b>
Determine the requirements for additional supplementary research.	Scoping paper.	NIHE.	<b>March 2017</b>
Undertake urban/ rural studies of the housing journeys of homeless people with disabilities seeking housing solutions through new applications, transfers and adaptations.	Project report to inform future needs in this area; consider future housing models and housing options services.	NIHE Research Department with Service User Involvement.	<b>March 2017</b>

Note:

Ongoing research evidence from Northern Ireland will be compiled and shared with the GenHome project, which is creating an international electronic database of research evidence on housing interventions for disabled people.

## Theme 7: Equality and Rural Proofing

**Recommendation 21:** Develop measures to address specific challenges of housing adaptations service delivery in rural areas

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsible	Target Completion
Develop a communications plan to address rural isolation in collaboration with NIHE Rural Policy Unit.	Communications plan.	NIHE.	<b>Completed July 2014</b>
Identify and disseminate targeted service information for rural areas.	Attendance and dissemination of information at rural events.	NIHE.	<b>Completed July 2014</b>
Contribute to the NIHE Rural Action Plan	To ensure inclusion of housing adaptations information in rural publications.	NIHE.	<b>Completed May 2014</b>

# Appendix 1: Cross-Departmental Legislation and Policy

## Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

### Policy

UN Principles for Older Persons 1991  
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2010  
A Strategy to Improve the Lives of Disabled People 2012 -2015  
Active Ageing Strategy 2014 - 2020

### Legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2004  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

## Department for Social Development

### Policy

Warmer Healthier Homes 2011-2015  
Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017  
Housing Related Support Strategy 2012-2015  
Northern Ireland Supporting People Guidance 2012  
Support for Repair and Improvement in the Private Sector 2012  
NIHE Rural Action Plan 2013-2015  
The Housing Association Guide 2014

## **Legislation**

The Housing Support Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2002  
The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003  
The Housing (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006  
The Domestic Energy Efficiency Grant (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

## **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

### **Policy**

DHSSPS Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) 2007  
Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland: A Regional Strategy 2011  
Transforming Your Care: A Review of Health and Social care in Northern Ireland 2011  
Fit and Well: Changing Lives 2012 – 2022  
Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy 2012 - 2015  
Who Cares? The Review of Adult Social Care and Support in Northern Ireland 2012 (Consultation Document)  
The Autism Strategy 2013 – 2020 & Action Plan 2013-2015  
Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2014 (Consultation)

### **Legislation**

The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972  
The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1978  
Disabled Person's (Northern Ireland) Act 1989  
The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995  
Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002

## **Department of Finance and Personnel**

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

The 'Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy 2009' (now at Version 11, August 2014)

## **Department of the Environment/Department for Regional Development**

Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Developments 2000

PPS 7 Quality Residential Environments 2001

PPS 7 (Addendum) Residential Extensions and Alterations 2008

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside 2010

## **Department of Trade, Enterprise and Investment**

### **Policy**

Controlling Risk Together: Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland 2014

### **Legislation**

Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

**Housing**  
Executive

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[www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)