



Consultation Briefing: draft guidance on the provision of equipment and adaptations

About this briefing - This is a new type of briefing exclusively for CIH members. These briefings are designed to inform you about current consultations, highlight potential implications for the sector that you might want to consider in your own response and set out CIH Scotland's position.

Background

The Scottish Government published [guidance on the provision of equipment and adaptations](#) for local authorities and NHS Boards in 2009 and developed a range of [good practice guides, toolkits and information](#) to support improvements to services.

In 2011 the Adaptations Working Group (AWG) was established to make recommendations on how to achieve better outcomes through investing in adaptations. Two reports were published in 2012, [Adapting for Change](#) and [Planning Ahead](#). The Scottish Government then implemented a pilot scheme, Adapting for Change, which ran in five areas from 2014-2017 producing a [full evaluation](#) and [summary of learning points](#).

The Scottish Government is now consulting on an updated version of the 2009 guidance, seeking views on the clarity of the guidance and on the impact on any equality groups. The consultation is [available online](#) and will run until 6 June 2022.

Issues with the current system

The AWG and others have noted that the current system for adaptations can be complex and needs to be streamlined. A person's tenure or ability to self-fund can also create barriers and more needs to be done to ensure that the provision of equipment and adaptations is adequately resourced.

What the draft guidance covers

The guidance seeks to improve on the 2009 guidance, recognising changes such as the integration of health and social care (H&SC), greater alignment with housing and the need to work with other partners.

It highlights the need to address barriers to equal access, inconsistencies in funding arrangements and focus on prevention and early intervention. People who need equipment or adaptations also need to be able to understand their rights and the assessment

process and be able to participate in decisions.

Specific guidance is set out in the following sections:

- Contribution of equipment and adaptations
- Assessment and provision
- Prevention, early intervention, and self-management
- Moving and handling
- Postural management
- Hospital discharge
- Children and young people
- Care homes
- Prisons
- Wheelchairs
- Communication aids
- Technology enabled health and care
- Sensory impairment
- Fire safety alarms
- Integrated pathways for equipment provision
- Store service models
- Health and safety
- Recycling, infection control and decontamination
- Adaptations and housing solutions

Key actions are identified for each of these sections with an expectation that organisations will review their practice using a new self-assessment 'Equipment & Adaptations Baseline Assessment Tool' and revised good practice guides. An ['easy read' executive summary](#) has also been drafted and will be published alongside the final guidance.

Actions relating to the housing sector

The contribution of equipment and adaptations - the guidance document highlights the fact that equipment and adaptations can reduce the risk of injury, improve confidence and mental wellbeing and avoid admission to hospital or move to a care home.



It specifies that H&SC partners and housing colleagues should work together to maximise opportunities provided by Technology Enabled Care (TEC), developing local policies and strategies, including reviewing charging policies to ensure that these do not act as a barrier to access. It also states that the contribution of equipment and adaptations should be clearly articulated in local H&SC strategies.

The assessment and provision of equipment and adaptations - the guidance calls for streamlined service provision (for all ages) to be effectively incorporated into the integrated arrangements for H&SC partnerships with clear links between H&SC, education, and housing partners.

Integrated pathways - the guidance notes that the integration of health and social care has encouraged services to review their pathways and better utilize multi-disciplinary approaches to service provision. It suggests that this progress should be built upon, and that consideration should be given to the role of other partners such as housing and third sector partners to streamline access.

Adaptations and housing solutions – the guidance states that while adaptations can help people to live well at home, they should be considered as one of a number of possible solutions which could include housing support or a move to a more suitable home. Encouraging people to think about longer-term needs, which may include a move, is welcome and can help to prevent people having to move home at the point of a crisis and when it may be too late to settle into a new location.

Recognising that many of the AWG recommendations have yet to be acted upon and that more needs to be done to achieve a tenure neutral approach to adaptations through Integration Authorities, the guidance states that a national Adapting for Change Action Plan should be devised to support implementation of the AWG recommendations.

Partnerships should implement Housing Solutions change programmes to develop local protocols and training to improve outcomes. These should promote:

- Early intervention with full exploration of rehousing opportunities.
- Better planning for barrier-free housing and an inclusive design/living approach.

- Joint governance providing clear strategic direction and supporting priority setting.
- Joint finance arrangements to help streamline service improvements (e.g. pooled budgets).
- Equity in the system, applying a 'tenure neutral' approach.
- Address barriers in the system, removing the requirement for grant assistance for owner occupiers; the need for OTs to provide an assessment for standard adaptations in RSL homes e.g. shower provision; and encouraging 'direct access' arrangements.
- Maximising procurement and recycling benefits to help deliver efficiencies.

The CIH view

Recognition of the contribution of equipment and adaptations is welcome, but recognition without additional resources for delivery will not achieve the desired outcomes for people who need support.

At some points the guidance refers just to the provision of Community equipment, failing to mention the value of adaptations and the role of the housing sector which is mainly set out in a separate section at the end of the guidance. This is particularly evident in the section on hospital discharge which only briefly mentions the need to plan for any adaptations required for use with equipment.

The section on prisons relates solely to the provision of equipment and adaptations to support individuals during their time in prison. It does not mention the need to share this information as part of arrangements for people being released from prison and ensuring that they have access to adequate housing to meet their needs. This type of information sharing would help to support the [SHORE standards](#).

We would like to see more emphasis on the role of housing and housing practitioners in supporting people to live well at home throughout the guidance document.

We will be developing a response to this consultation and would like to hear what CIH members think. You can share your thoughts by emailing scotland@cih.org