

# Walsall Adapted Housing Service

The Walsall Experience  
Presentation in Bolton on 15 June 2007  
By  
Walsall Disability Forum

# The Idea

- We the Disability Forum are from the Community and Voluntary Sector, we had an idea to make access to housing easier for disabled people who required adapted properties.
- We sat down and developed a frame work by looking at what sort of adaptations disabled people would require.

# Partners

- Initially it was very difficult to get partners around the table from 'The Idea', we had to work very hard at a Partnership Board level to convince partners of the benefits and savings this would bring.
- We eventually convinced partners by looking how they and others would benefit from an adapted housing service.
- The ownership of the service would lie with the V&C sector and a board made up of all partners would be set up to monitor its activities.

# Feasibility

- We said to the local authority that the project would need a small injection of money to carry out investigations that would gain evidence, which would give added value to the project. Some of this was also used to pay the membership fee to HoDis (National Disabled Persons Housing Service Ltd).
- From the study we found that we could in working with HoDis set up an Adapted Housing Service for a relatively small cost. This would enable us to do an initial spend for equipment, develop an Admin post to run the service, purchase software and pay for managerial costs.

# Initial Costs

- Setting up the service was an initial cost of 49k this would:
- Purchase the Laptop
- Purchase the Software (Database)
- Run an adapted housing survey via the V&C sector
- Setup and advertise the Officer post
- Setup managerial costs

# The Barriers

- Persuading value for money to the LA, statutory and Housing partners
- Limited Time Scales to initiate spend (March)
- Engaging the local community to carry out an adapted housing survey.
- Engage the local college to collate the raw data from the Survey
- Setting and Reaching meaningful Annual targets
- Agreeing criteria that would fit all partners
- Having an exit strategy for a sustainable service
- Getting the Right person to run the service.

# The Aim of the Service

- Walsall Adapted Housing Service the primary aim would be to improve access to appropriate adapted properties for disabled people in the Borough of Walsall, and to also develop and sustain partnerships within the borough in order to better meet the housing needs of disabled people.
- In matching people's needs to suitable adapted properties, through a central register, the service will help cut the time it takes for people to move into suitable housing and people awaiting discharge from hospitals will be matched to appropriate adapted housing. This process, with ongoing support, will enable people to move and live more independently in Walsall and make substantial financial savings for partner organisations and agencies. WAHS is a subscription service which is sustained by the partners involved in its operation.

# The First Years Target

- In the first year our target was set to 5 adapted properties
- Within the first year we housed 13 disabled people nearly 3 times more than our original target
- What were the benefits
- Who was set to gain

# Benefits

- The Housing partners and the local authority saved over 216k in the first year
- People with disabilities needing adapted properties were re-housed in properties that met the needs of the people with quality outcomes.
- The Local Hospital would and have saved on bed blocking
- Social Services saved in meeting the needs of clients with disabilities quickly and efficiently.

# Sustainability

- This service is not run on grant funding
- This service is run by the Voluntary Sector in Partnership with Housing Agencies and the Local Authority including the tPCT
- How did we do this?
- Who Pays the Money to sustain the service?
- How much does it cost?

# Who Pays

- The service is run and maintained by means of a subscription from partners who benefit and who hold housing stock.
- The service is run on a 27k budget
- The service is run with a P/T Admin post
- The Budget is set according to Housing Agencies Stock of housing

# The Formula

- We asked Housing Agencies to supply Evidence of their Housing Stock.
- The following data was collated and used as a costing element toward stock held.

# Contributions from Housing Providers

figures where based on property numbers

<u>Provider</u>	<u>Contribution</u>	<u>Stock Held</u>
• Walsall HG	£4500	
• WATMOS	£1,000	1828
• Caldmore HA	£1,000	1624
• Accord HA	£1,000	1446
• Beechdale CA	£750	1332
• Bromford HA	£150	125
• Touchstone	£150	123
• Focus Housing	£60	60
• Hanover	£30	36
• Jephson	£30	28

## Contributions from Housing Providers cont...

<u>Provider</u>	<u>Contribution</u>	<u>Stock Held</u>
• Darlaston Trust	£2,000	
• Central Trust	£2,500	
• Aldridge Trust	£2,500	
• Bloxwich Trust	£3,000	
• Willenhall Trust	£2,000	
• Mercian	£300	327
• Paddock Housing Co-op	£30	20
• Walsall Housing Partnership	£289	
• Walsall tPCT	£5000	
• Heantun Housing Ass Ltd	£150	
• Other	£1750.51	
• Giving a total of	£28,189.51	

# Conditions to Properties

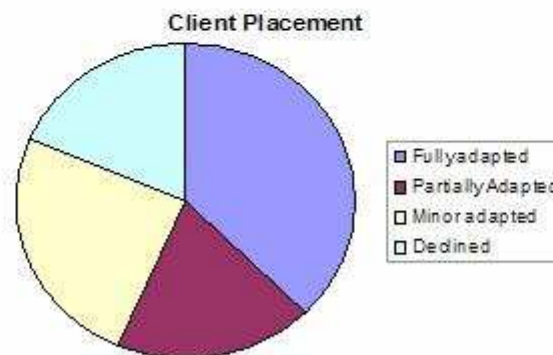
<u>Moved to Address &amp; RSL</u>	<u>Type of Property (Adaptation)</u>	<u>Medical needs</u>
Lord Street The Delves, Walsall WATMOS	Vertical lift, Walk in shower, Handrails 3 bedroom house	Mobility issues, Arthritis, Hear condition, Extended Family
Oak Road, Pelsall	Extension downstairs, Bedroom, Wet room. 3 bedrooms up stairs, with bathroom. Dropped kerb to front, ramp side entrance.	Wheelchair user, 40 years, 17 year old son, grandfather disabled due to polio
Foster Street, Darlaston (W.H.G)	2 Bedroom house, Front and rear ramps, Stair lift	Double Amputee, Extended Family
Croft Street, Caldmore Green (Caldmore Housing)	Ground floor flat Minor Adaptations	Physical disability Cerebral Palsy
Buckle Close, Adapted (Caldmore Housing)	Wheelchair accessible Raised plug sockets Lowered light Downstairs bedroom/bathroom Lower work surfaces	Degenerative spine disease, Asthma, elderly person, extended family
Sandlands Road, New Invention, Willenhall W.H.G	4 bed Adapted, vertical lift, level access shower, extended room, wheelchair accessible	Severe Learning Disability Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy
Ravenscroft Road, Willenhall W.H.G	2 bed ground floor flat, walk in shower	Parkinson's disease, Mobility issues

# Moves Requested / Achieved

## Moves requested / achieved

Since the launch we have had seventy six referrals to WAHS of which sixty remain on the register. We have successfully rehoused thirteen families into suitable adapted properties; three others were matched but were not re-housed. The annual target for the service was five matched properties. Levels of adaptations varied from minimal access and minor adaptations e.g. grab rails and ceiling hoists to fully adapted properties e.g. vertical through floor lift, extended ground floor room with level access or walk in shower.

Matched clients	Number
Fully adapted	6
Partially Adapted	3
Minor adapted	4
Declined	3
Total	16



# Cost benefits

**The total estimated cost saving in the period of this report is £217,050 (see table below)**

This is a general summary of the savings made by WAHS providing a matching service of individuals into suitable adapted properties.

The figures below have been derived by calculating some actual and estimated costs supplied by housing providers and partners of this service, these include:

- Costs of adaptations at the existing property if required
- Costs of removal of adaptations from a property and void rental loss if the RSL had the adaptation removed and property renewed for new tenants
- Void rental loss to RSL if WAHS had not matched property with tenant
- Costs of person staying in hospital/respite care etc whilst property is being adapted

<b>Items</b>	<b>DFG</b>	<b>tPCT</b>	<b>RSL</b>	<b>Other*</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£182,500</b>	<b>£10,400</b>	<b>£9,650</b>	<b>£13,900</b>	<b>£216,450</b>

**Based on these totals the average saving per property is currently at £16,650.**

\* these are savings made to local authority – social care and inclusion in terms of housing benefit for individuals re-housed from residential care to independent tenancies

# Summary

- Clearly the benefits are with both client group and subscriber.
- The service provides a vehicle for moving disabled people into adapted properties effectively and efficiently
- The service provides a statistical monitoring element of adapted properties and equipment
- The service also provides an element for mutual exchange of property between the client group and housing agencies.
- The service saves huge amounts of funds and promotes efficiency and added value to Local services.

# The Future

- The ongoing development of WAHS is clearly justified by the continuing need to:
- make better use of existing resources/housing;
- reduce number of empty adapted properties and to improve the turnaround time for letting adapted housing to people who require it;
- avoid unnecessary spending on adaptations through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs); and to
- improve the quality and quantity of information about the housing needs of disabled people and existing adapted housing.

# The Future Continued

- The WAHS will continue to support housing initiatives to better meet the needs of disabled people by:
- Providing a single point of contact for referring adapted properties and individuals with disabilities in need of adapted properties and provide a matching service for both.
- Continuing to collate data on existing adapted housing and housing needs of disabled people in Walsall, which will lead to a significant improvement in housing provision and planning.
- More effective use of resources, e.g. adapted and accessible housing and disabled facilities grants
- Increasing our focus to work more closely with the tPCT – especially with people awaiting discharge in hospitals and from rehabilitation
- Exploring alternative funding to further develop and sustain the WAHS in future years. Through this we hope to develop a specialist housing advocacy service, which will include assessment of needs, information, guidance and support.