



mhs
homes group

Customer
Scrutiny Panel

Aids and Adaptations Services Report

December 2023

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) has reviewed the mhs delivery of aids and adaptations services focusing primarily on customer experience. The CSP selected aids and adaptations as a service for review as part of their continuous programme of service reviews undertaken by the Panel. In addition, the Board and the Executive identified aids and adaptations for review to provide insight into the delivery of this important service in partnership with a number of external partners, including the Council, Occupational Health Therapists, NHS and social services. Each partner has an important role to ensure that the most vulnerable and disabled are supported to live independent lives in their homes, which can be enhanced by the provision of minor or major adaptations. The aim of the CSP was to investigate the customer journey for mhs customers using the aids and adaptations service in terms of accessibility, clarity and fairness.
- 1.2. The review scope provided a range of reality checking opportunities for the CSP to identify what works well, and opportunities to be even better. Overall performance information and really understanding the customer journey has not been given the priority required and operating procedures including communicating with the customer and sign off of completed works are not as effective as they need to be which may be a result of having a multi partnership approach to delivery of the service and not sole responsibility by mhs.
- 1.3. The CSP requested a copy of the contract to fit and deliver aids and adaptations in the home but this was not provided so the review has not

been able to consider in detail how the work is delivered and checks to ensure quality of work provided. From CSP visits to homes that have had work completed 100% had work not completed correctly but invoices paid because only a limited number of post inspection visits are completed. The CSP considers that a business service review needs to be completed to raise the standard of works completed in homes and ensuring that sign off and payment procedures are correct as there is the potential for wasting of finite financial resources. There needs to be the same care and checking whether it relates to mhs or local authority funding.

- 1.4. This review has highlighted a number of positives and we know that mhs do care about their customers but sometimes forget to look at needs through the eyes of the customer.

2. Period of review October – December 2023

2.1 The key recommendations for review by the Executive and the Board to assist improvement include:

- 2.1.1. **Improving communication** with customers so that they are kept informed, can self-help and prevent the opportunity for the “loudest and most persistent” customer to achieve the fastest service.
- 2.1.2. **Review complaints** process, recording and management of complaints as it was stated that there had only been one complaint – which does not reflect feedback from the customer survey.
- 2.1.3. **Record and monitor compliments** to encourage excellence by promoting good behaviours, whether verbal or written as no feedback was able to be shared.
- 2.1.4. **Record and report on compensation paid to customers by mhs-** no payment information provided.
- 2.1.5. **There is no 'learning log'** as no complaints and collection of satisfaction feedback from customers when works completed.
- 2.1.6. Ensure that the **aids and adaptations policy is a living document** and those managing the contract understand the detail and requirements and service standards are met.
- 2.1.7. Ensuring that those taking responsibility for aids and adaptations services are provided with **appropriate training** to address deficiencies identified through document review - ensuring that there is always perception of professional behaviours and understanding of vulnerability and disability.
- 2.1.8. **Customer call centre** has to provide advice and support to help signpost those seeking help and feedback indicates that advice is not always consistent so a review of the aids and adaptations service information detailed in the operators' handbook may assist to ensure the right advice is offered.
- 2.1.9. Ensuring issues around the failure to complete all jobs agreed is managed effectively, because it is clear that minor adaptations

get completed in a timely manner but further works get delayed or forgotten and the customer not kept informed.

2.1.10. **Void adapted properties are not given the priority required** to ensure that they are offered to those with a disability and this has resulted in a number of complaints from other residents that those in most need may be getting forgotten.

2.1.11. **Give aids and adaptations the right resources to operate effectively** – feedback indicates that there is only a part time resource allocated to deliver and monitor the service.

2.2. Overall, customers that seek support and help are reluctant to complain and accept, wrongly, that as they are disabled and vulnerable they have to be accepting of what is offered. Those that have had a good experience are very grateful for the benefits to live a more independent life in their home.

2.3. **The key principles followed by the CSP for this review were:**

2.3.1. Reviewing customer experience and business delivery on behalf of mhs customers ensuring that mhs and their contractor provides services to the highest standard.

2.3.2. Promoting and encouraging transparency and evidenced based reporting.

2.3.3. Provide an independent check and critical challenge to drive up, and influence, improvements to standards, processes, and performance.

2.3.4. Reflecting the needs and aspirations of the customer.

2.3.5. Provide insight and learning to the Executive and the Board.

2.3.6. Making recommendations based on evidence.

2.3.7. Ensure that mhs positions residents at the heart of the business.

2.3.8. Understanding roles and responsibilities of all partners delivering aids and adaptations.