

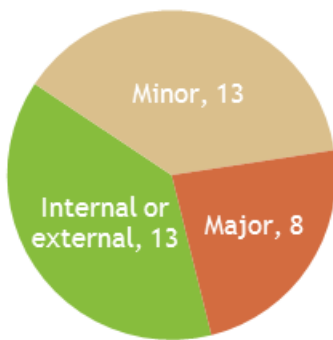
Tri -Service SFA Adaptation Process Survey Brief 2012

Housing continues to be AFF's most reported issue. A considerable proportion are additional needs issues, of which a number are related to problems with the adaptation process. There has also been much anecdotal evidence regarding the adaptation to SFA process, so a survey was conducted to collect concrete evidence. Due to the relatively small numbers of Service families that have a dependant with a disability and/or additional needs that are involved in this process it was decided to make this a tri-Service survey. We hoped it would give a broader overview of the problems being experienced.

"It always seemed to be us chasing every step of the way. Your survey suggests there is a process - we were never made aware of one - it always seemed as though we were asking for a favour and were always made to feel we were putting people out by asking"

The survey ran from 27 March 2012 - 1 June 2012. There were initially 107 respondents but because we were collecting data from adaptations to SFA in the last three years, the number of respondents decreased to 44.

Types of adaptations



Adaptations were divided into:

- Minor adaptations - handrails, changes to fixtures and fittings"
- Internal or external - some structural change to one room such as the bathroom or outside ramps.
- Major adaptations - extensive internal and/or external structural work, installing lifts or hoists, landscaping gardens and ramping.

Three main areas of concern were identified:

- Communication, information and awareness of Housing Allocations Service Centre (HASC) staff, particularly the Additional Needs Focal Points (ANFPs)
- Getting an initial or new Occupational Therapist's (OT's) report, particularly on moving from Local Authority (LA) to another LA
- The timescale of the whole process.

"We rang MHS Helpline"

41% of respondents were not aware of who to contact to get the adaptation process started

"Nothing is EVER EASY there is no info on who to go to first"

"No list with up-to-date contact details, names or who ANFP is"

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“Even the HASC didn’t know who the person was or have a name, contact number or email for them. Just advised to send in report and it would be passed to whoever needed it. Totally inappropriate when dealing with sensitive medical in confidence”

“As far as I am aware there isn’t one”

41% of respondents did not know which HASC to contact.
88% did not know who the ANFP was

“They have no idea whatsoever”

When respondents were asked if they were confident that the ANFP had a good understanding of their disability and additional needs and the requirements of the OT report, 66% said they were not confident

“She was not interested in listening”

Once acknowledgement of the OT report had been received, only 9% of respondents were informed about the process

“HASC personnel extremely difficult to communicate with”

86% of respondents were not aware of the DIO Adaptation Process Flowchart

Getting OT reports

The majority of respondents were asked for a new OT report when/ moving from one LA to another LA 'cf' fYa U]b]b[']b'h\Y' existing LA and if adaptations k YfY' needed to WffYbhSFA. Problems acquiring an OT report were mainly associated with moving from LA to another.

“The incoming LA had never met us and, because we weren’t living in the area, it took a lot of persuasion and sitting on their waiting list”

41% of respondents had a problem acquiring an OT report

“I was told to get an OT report prior to moving (for the new SFA) only to be told I needed to do another all in a space of a month from having the first OT report done”

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Timescales

Most respondents stated that it took longer than a month to receive acknowledgment of fYW]dhicZ'h\Y]f OT/medical reports by the HASC. Some didn't receive any acknowledgement at all.

53% waited longer than three months for the work to start

In some cases the whole process took fourteen months

"If they had kept me informed of progress I would probably been okay about delays, but they didn't, so I got frustrated and stressed"

Not all respondents were able to view the adapted property before move-in

"This would have been beneficial because when my husband went to march-in there were problems and we had to change the move-in date"

62% of respondents were given a completion date. But 80% of respondents received no adequate reason or information for the delays

AFF view

It should be remembered that no family chooses to be in the position where a spouse, civil partner or child has a disability and/or additional need. These people have a right to a safe home environment and independent living just the same as the rest of the population.

This survey highlights the need for identifiable ANFPs in the HASC. The ANFPs should have training in disability awareness and communication skills. They should also have a good knowledge of additional needs and disability and the impact that it has on Service families.

The problems Service families have acquiring an OT report, particularly when moving to a new LA, need to be addressed as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. Delays in getting an OT report impacts on the whole process and therefore the family's wellbeing.

There needs to be a definite timeframe for the adaptation process with time limits to each stage of the process. Also good reason and information needs to be relayed to the occupant regarding any delays. At the moment too many people are involved and it takes too long.

The DIO Flowchart needs to be freely available and written in a user-friendly easily understood format. It should be given by the HASC to occupants on application for an adapted SFA.

For further information, please contact
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