

**The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest public health crisis in the UK in living memory with wide-reaching and long-lasting health and social impacts for both individuals and communities. As a result of guidance early in the pandemic advising people to stay at home and avoid contact with others, the housing sector - including adaptations providers - has had to meet challenges head-on and alter policy and practice in order to continue supporting those most in need.**

Tai Pawb held a digital session with providers as part of its Online Equality Series looking at the impact of the crisis on adaptations as well as ways and means in which organisations have adapted their services.

While there were and continue to be differing principle practices - some providers undertaking adaptations for hospital discharge purposes while others were also considering work that prevented an admission to hospital - there were issues that were common place across Wales. For example, **fear among tenants about the risk of transmission** was high combined with an expectation that full PPE was required in all circumstances. Providers also agreed that **face to face contact with clients was very difficult and had all but ceased** (other than urgent works). Concerns were also raised on **availability of materials** and the difficulties faced by contractors locally, with a need to maintain a **sustainable supply chain**. Across the board, there was a **decrease in requests for adaptations**. In some circumstances, there was a concern that some people had been **discharged from hospital into homes that were not fit for purpose**.



### **\*GOOD PRACTICE\***

- \*Regular communication with clients to keep them informed of any delays. This can be used as an informal assessment of their wellbeing too
- \*With the agreement of the client, external works that don't require entry to the property or any face to face contact can be carried out
- \*Some providers, such as Bron Afon, have moved towards digital tenders as well as introducing online/video assessments. This can save time and resource as well as helping to reassure the end user
- \*Where possible, some providers have been able to mitigate potential supply chain issues through liaising with internal agencies

**THE RECOVERY CHALLENGE:** as lockdown restrictions ease, pent-up demand will likely lead to a backlog of works; there is therefore a need for further Wales-wide guidance on the consideration of 'priority' work so that providers can plan and coordinate better. Equally, clear messages from both Welsh Government and Public Health Wales on PPE will be essential in order to have the confidence of clients when carrying out works. Tai Pawb will continue to liaise with Welsh Government on behalf of members and will host another online forum to discuss adaptations in light of restrictions easing.

