

# Handyperson Services

## Foundations Seminar Programme



# Introduction & Welcome

Eric Laverick, Foundations



# A New Era for Handyperson Services

Gemma Penn, Communities & Local Government



# Handypersons services

Gemma Penn

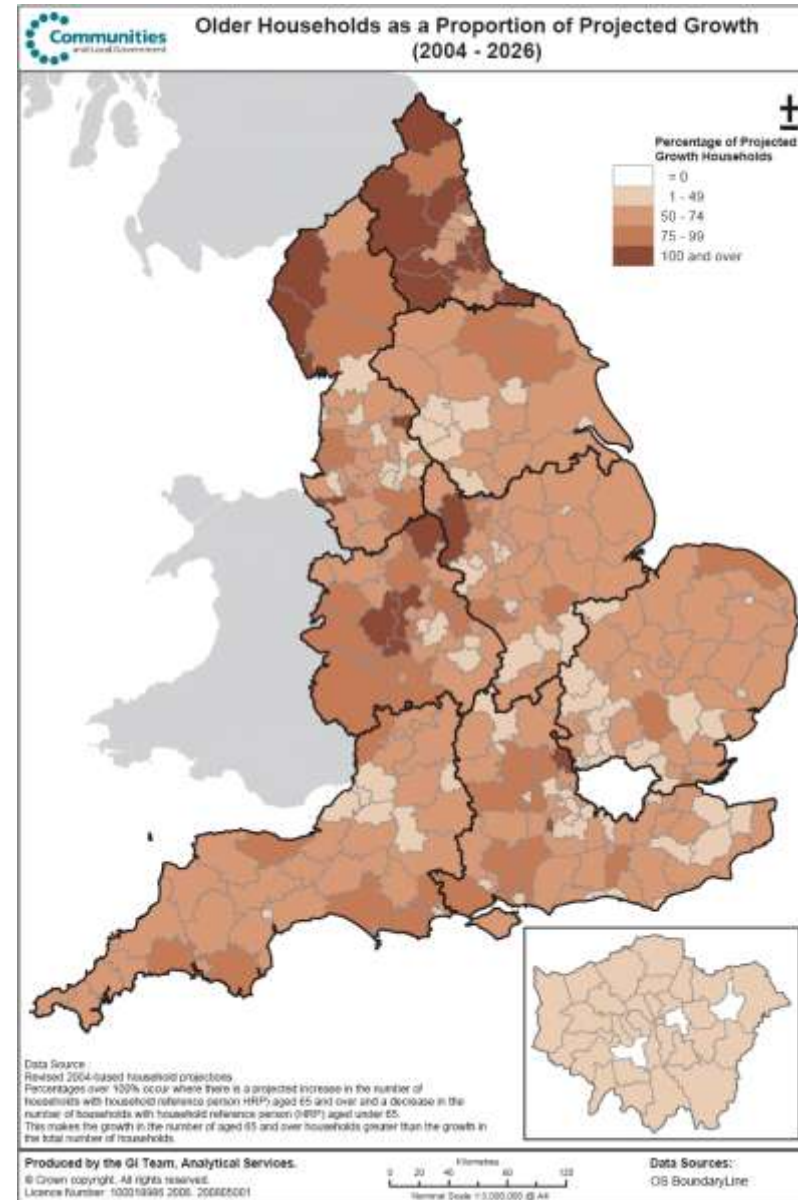
**Communities and Local Government**  
**February 2009**

LIFETIME HOMES, LIFETIME NEIGHBOURHOODS  
A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society



# The big picture that led us to Lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods

- About all of us ageing not older people as a 'client group'.
- Nearly 70% older people own their home and rising. % live in sheltered, 5% in care homes.
- Older households make up almost a third of our communities.
- 48% of all new households will be over 65s to 2026 - 2.4m more older households
- Number of older disabled people to double from 2.3 m to 4.6 m by 2041.
- National ageing debate previously seen as about pensions and care, now housing and communities.



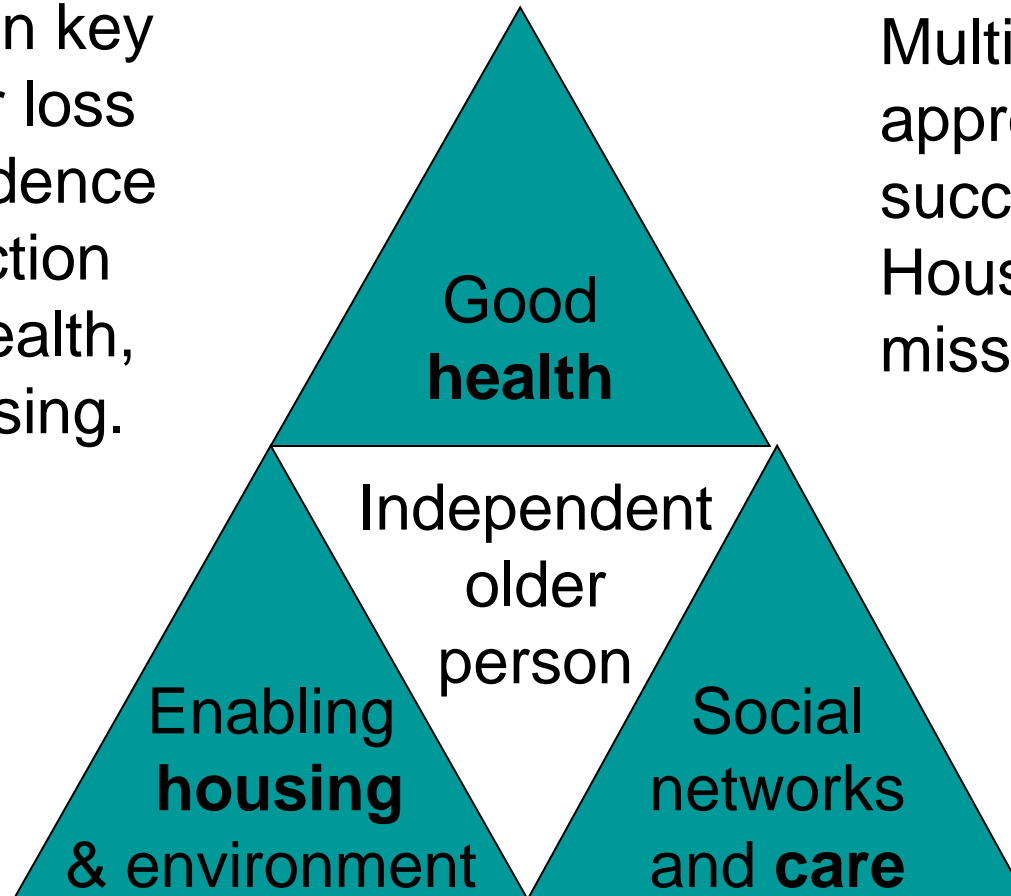
- New local performance framework and PSAs.
- **LAAs** allow work across housing, health and care through flexible funding and joint commissioning.
- **Personalisation and choice.** With **individual budgets** popular low level services may benefit. Market may open for handyman services.
- Growing interest in prevention. Investment in low unit cost preventative services to **improve home safety and independence.**
- Increasing budget pressures?

## Poor housing results in poor health and care home admissions

- **Falls** alone cost the NHS £726m a year
- **26,000 “excess winter deaths” last winter** - result from illness connected to cold and damp conditions (ODPM HSHS research)
- **28% of older people live in non-decent** or hazardous housing or 2.1 million *households* (EHCS 2005).
- **51% go into care home after hospitalisation because a return to home not practical.**
- **Long-term care expenditure** would need to rise by 325% in real terms between 2002 and 2041 if we do nothing.

## Health, housing and care. 'The triangle of independence'

Evidence on key reasons for loss of independence are inter-action between health, social, housing.



Multi-disciplinary approach more successful.  
Housing often missing link.

Services in one area fail the person if other parts missing.

# What older people say they wanted

- We should build **adaptable** ‘homes for life’.
- **Space.** We often need room to accommodate visiting family or a carer, and need good storage space.
- Housing design should be **user-friendly, low maintenance and safe**
- Our homes should also be **affordable to heat.**
- **Access to green, private space, and a safe neighbourhood.**
- Housing that is accessible to good local transport, facilities and amenities.
- Access to independent **information** and advice about our housing options
- **A reliable repairs and adaptations services for that bit of help around the home.**
- But above all, people want to be **listened to and be involved** in the design of everything that will affect us

## Expansion of handyman schemes across country

- Gaps in existing provision
- Many services are not 'holistic' and are not effectively targeted - missed opportunities
- £33m extra funding 2009-11 available to all local authorities to develop new fast repairs and adaptations services and enhanced services
- After that, funding via area-based grant
- Evaluation essential locally and nationally



*Photo: Care and Repair England*

- Small building repairs, odd jobs and minor adaptations
- General home safety checks with remedial action, falls / accident prevention, hygiene, sanitation, food storage and preparation
- Security checks with remedial action
- Small home energy efficiency measures
- Fire safety
- Hospital discharge
- Assistive technology – install and maintain equipment
- Foot in the door for other services, including state benefits, care, support, more substantial home improvements, leisure and social links

Report commissioned as part of Lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods action plan.

- Identifying good practice and innovation in the sector
- Future-proofing – responding to the changing delivery landscape and *Lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods*
- Will inform commissioning, e.g. handyman services.

Sub-reports covering:

- Advice, information and advocacy
- Funding for repairs and adaptations
- **Handyperson Services**
- Major Adaptations – DFGs
- Connecting with health and care

- *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods.*
- *More Choice, Greater Voice.*
- *Housing choices and aspirations of older people.*
- *Predicting who will need costly care.*
- *The Future HIA*
- *Coming shortly – Handypersons services*

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) - housing and older people section

# The Commissioner Perspective

Diana Higton – Project Manager  
Wellbeing Derbyshire County Council





# Derbyshire Handy Van Network

Lead Officer: Diana Higton – Project  
Manager Wellbeing Derbyshire  
County Council



# Derbyshire Handy Van Network

- Comprises of:
  - Eight vans – one per district/borough
  - Multiple funding streams
  - Multiple partners
  - Multiple providers therefore different business models



# Delivering...

- Practical assistance tasks
- Home Fire Safety Checks
- Home Security Checks
- Fitting items highlighted by those checks
- Referrals to Environmental or Housing Departments
- Signposting to other agencies



# Boundaries

- Time limited visits
- Visits per annum limited
- Those over 65 or identified as Vulnerable by partner agencies
- Why the Boundaries?
  - Free basic service – not means tested
  - Some tasks the owner/occupier purchases own materials – e.g. shelves
  - 65+ Population of 122,962



# the initial challenge - why do it?

- Older People told us they wanted a handy person service
- Identified by various organisations as needed; Joseph Rowntree Trust Report – ‘That little bit of help’!
- Good projects already in place
- To develop some consistency across the County



# how 'needs analysis' affected the commissioning process

- It didn't in the standard way
- What did affect the process were:
  - Funding
  - Existing services
  - Partner Organisations

# working with other commissioners - pros and cons

- Cons
  - Too many decision makers need to concur to enable the process to move forward
  - Different working practices – ‘we don’t do it that way!’
  - Different levels of detail – e.g. Legal
  - Different geographical boundaries
  - Conflicting finances – e.g. Community Safety

# working with other commissioners - pros and cons

- Pro's
  - Excellent evidence of partnership working – very useful when seeking internal and external buy-in to the project
  - Internal and external promotion of service
  - Wider referral pathways to access
  - Access to training experts

# choosing the right providers

- Difficult – particularly when working with existing service providers and transforming/aligning their services
- Tender – must be clear what you want to achieve and what outputs and outcomes you want
- What experience do they have?
- How much does it cost?
- What do you get for your money?

# choosing the right providers

- What do you expect them to do?
  - Administration, is that part of the service level agreement
  - Monitoring
  - Publicity
- What do they expect you to do?
  - Support them? How?
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Continuation funding?



# what can providers contribute to the commissioning process?

- Experience of:
  - Service delivery
  - Customers
  - Networking
  - Other funding sources
  - Best practice
  - Volunteers – depending on your model of delivery



# quality monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the service

- Important because:
  - Evidence supports continuation of service
  - Assists in developing the service
  - Monitors targets
  - Monitors quality
- Difficult to:
  - Balance administration against delivery – FEMIS = useful tool but still requires maintenance
  - Reach agreement on what's required by all parties

# Commissioning Tips

- Have your funding approved if possible
  - Means doing your scoping carefully
- Take advice on costs from other providers and commissioners
- Be clear about
  - what you expect to receive
  - how you expect others to work with you

# Commissioning Tips

- If working in partnership have an agreement up front on how you will work together and who is the lead
- Ensure you have decision makers on your advisory group
- Be open and honest



# Finally

- Remembering who are the real beneficiaries....



.... They are the reason to make it work.

# The Provider Perspective

Sue Falder, Orbit Care & Repair &  
Lesley Bentley, Beth Johnson HIA





Alliance of Staffordshire Home  
Improvement Agencies

Countywide Commissioning  
for  
Handypersons Service



# Staffordshire HIA's

- Alliance formed 2001
- Beth Johnson Housing Association
- Orbit Heart of England Housing Association
- Spirita Housing Association



# Aims of Staffordshire Alliance of HIA's

- To work in partnership to provide a range of services across the County to eliminate a post code lottery for older, disabled and other vulnerable people
- To share Good Practice, benchmark services and challenge local practices
- Work collaboratively to maximise funding opportunities



# Strengths of the Staffordshire HIA Alliance

- County coverage of HIA service
- Experience of managing successful agencies
- Trust - Non predatory
- Openness to share ideas
- Ability to assist and support with each others problems/challenges
- Sharing of Good Practice
- Regular meetings



# Collaborative Working

- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue
- Staffordshire Police
- Health through Warmth/Beat the Cold
- Social Care and Health - Delivering DFG's
- Local Housing Authorities - Kickstart
- Local Voluntary Organisations
- LAA Blocks - Safer and Stronger Communities/Healthier Communities & Older People



# Invitation to Tender For Countywide Handyperson Service

- Tender issued
- Initial meeting to investigate the potential for a joint bid
- Sharing of tasks
- Preparing documentation
- Submission of Bid
- Presentation to Tender panel
- Award of Contract



# Innovation A Must!

- Equitable Countywide Service
- Central Access Point
- Free phone telephone number
- Generic e-mail address
- County leaflet
- Existing Service Provision
- Cross boundary working
- 5 Local offices

# Service Delivery

- Central Point of Contract (Access Officer- Free phone telephone number)
- County Leaflet
- 4 Handypersons/4 Vans
  - 1 HP working across Newcastle/Staffs Moorlands (Newcastle base)
  - 1HP Working across Stafford/East Staffs (Stafford base)
  - 2 HP's working across Tamworth, Lichfield, Cannock and South Staffs ( Cannock base)
- Cross Boundary Working (Holiday/sickness cover)

# Added Value - A Must!

- DFG's
- Housing Renewal Grants – based around repairs, improvements and adaptations
- Private Work for people who cannot access DFG's etc
- Small adaptations through ICES
- Falls Prevention
- Hospital Discharge
- Health through Warmth
- Local initiatives such as Emergency Warmth/Flood Victims
- Fitting Smoke Detectors & Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Telecare
- Gardening
- Energy Efficiency Works / Advice
- Benefits Advice



# Role of Steering Group

- Funding Partners
- Client Representatives
- Alliance members



# Performance/Monitoring

- Monitoring/measuring outcomes through Countywide Femis database
- Bespoke reports produced for individual agencies as required
- Quarterly return to Supporting People generated through Microsoft query



# Joint Training

- Data base
- Trusted Technician Qualification
- Fire Service
- Energy Efficiency/Health through Warmth
- Shadowing



# The Future

- Recognition from partners and funders of effective joint working
- Invitation to provide enhancement bid for Handyperson service
- Opportunities for further joint bids



Questions?

# Group Work Session

Introduction by Gordon Hinchcliffe,  
Foundations



# Group Work Session

- **Topic 1: Targeting need and prioritising the service**  
*A service for all or a service for those most in need?*
- **Topic 2: A holistic handyman service?**  
*Do we want a broader or deeper service?*
- **Topic 3: Delivering the service**  
*Home spun or contracted out?*
- **Topic 4: Evaluating the benefits of handyman services**  
*Will the service be driven by outputs or outcomes?*
- **Topic 5: A sustainable service**  
*A service supported by public subsidy or a broad based service which can stand on its own?*

# Group Work Session

- a) From the point of view of providers and commissioners, what are the main tensions raised by this topic?
- b) What solutions are there?
- c) How achievable are these solutions and what priority should be given to them?
- d) What external support is needed?