



Foundations

Helping vulnerable  
people maintain  
their independence





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## Introduction from Andy Chaplin

### “It’s better than winning the lottery!”

That’s how Mr E from Staffordshire described the impact of having a level access shower installed to replace the old bath which had caused numerous accidents at his home following deterioration in his physical health.

This is exactly how home improvement agencies (HIAs) make their clients feel through the work they do every day be it case-work, organising adaptations, triaging in-bound calls for help or actually completing the handyperson jobs themselves.

During the past year HIAs and Handyperson (HP) service providers have faced unprecedented challenges with limited budgets. Supporting People (SP) and the loss of Private Sector Renewal (PSR) funding created a tough climate over the last year - but HIAs have been immensely resourceful in identifying alternative financial backing enabling them to continue supporting in excess of £100 million in adaptations and home improvements.

Increasingly, commissioners and providers of acute services are recognising the value of HIA preventative services and we will support a continuation of this trend with the emergence of Health and Wellbeing Boards. Whilst this shift continues we must also seize the opportunity to constantly challenge and improve how we work to sustain our delivery of better outcomes and better value.

At the start of 2012 we took encouragement from the Government’s commitment to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) when the Department of Health (DH) pledged an extra £20 million through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Since then Foundations has been immersed in various task groups examining all aspects of DFG delivery.

Regional road shows highlighting best practice will follow shortly to ensure we utilise this vital fund as effectively and efficiently as possible.

During the past year, one of the leading providers of equity release products has been both proactive and creative in adapting some of its products and the advice it provides to make them more relevant to the HIA and HP client group. We will be launching orientation training on all of this for over 200 HIA caseworkers during Spring/early Summer 2012.

There is still uncertainty around how the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) within Green Deal will play out in practice for older and vulnerable homeowners especially the growing number officially classified as living in fuel poverty. The initiative will signify a major shift from the current arrangements for protecting those most vulnerable and we will be supporting HIAs to ensure we identify the role we are best placed to fulfil in midst of these developments.

I hope you enjoy reading about how the sector has been actively supporting more than 200,000 enquirers over the past 12 months and are encouraged (and maybe even surprised) by the sense of entrepreneurship that is starting to emerge as new opportunities arise for HIAs to sustain their services.

**Andy Chaplin**  
Director of Foundations



# The Policy Landscape

Foundations is commissioned by DCLG. We act as the national body for home improvement agencies and handyperson services.

Home improvement agencies assist vulnerable people to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. These agencies are sometimes known as 'Care and Repair' or 'Staying Put' agencies. Their preventative measures reduce costs to health, social care, housing and emergency services.

This year the coalition government has continued to steer policy towards keeping people safe and independent as evidenced with the allocation of funding to enable and boost local delivery schemes.

## Key announcements during 2011/12 have been:

### Health and Social Care Act

Received Royal Assent on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

### New campaign for dementia

Six out of ten people with dementia go undiagnosed, in November 2011 a £2 million campaign was launched to tackle dementia.

### Announcement of Warm Homes, Healthy People Funding

Local schemes such as snow wardens, winter workers and community angels were announced in December 2011 as part of Department of Health £20 million funding.

### Extra money to help people leaving hospital

£150 million for hospital discharge schemes announced January 2012.

## The future funding of social care

In July 2011 The Dilnot Commission report on the funding of Social Care in England was published containing ideas that reinforced the key role played by HIAs. The report commented on the need for;

**“Specific support through aids, adaptations and home modifications that can help people remain at home and manage needs better.”**

Andrew Dilnot recommended that the Government needed to review the funding and operation of the DFG, with particular concern about the length of time it takes for people to access funding for small routine adaptations. This was encouraging for the HIA sector and demonstrated that concerns are now being shared with central government.

## Housing and health working together

Central government announced in January 2012 that Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) were to be given £150 million by the DH to pass onto local authorities to spend on services that people need to live independently at home. This additional investment has enabled local services to discharge patients from hospital more quickly and provide effective ongoing support for people in their own homes.

The aim is to reduce the pressure on health services, and particularly hospitals during the winter period. A hospital discharge service speeds up a patient's release from hospital by installing measures such as a key safe, grab rail and securing loose carpets to prevent falls.





# How have HIAs responded to the current climate

85% of local authorities still have a recognised HIA provider and 96% for handyperson services. Agencies also continue to deliver repairs, improvements and adaptations in the homes of vulnerable people with a total value of over £128 million.

Last year the sector saw the withdrawal from the HIA market of three Registered Social Landlord (RSL) providers, Anchor, Hanover and Hyde Housing Associations. However, to counter this, three new providers entered the market for the first time; Swan, Family Mosaic Home Improvement Agencies and Mears PLC which has helped to mitigate the impact on HIAs affected by the withdrawal.

We have also seen expansion by Ridgeway Housing Association and Papworth Housing Association both winning big tenders in the south of the country. The sector has seen many successes by forging new relationships with the health sector, focusing on reablement and building on existing links with social care services. This has led to a sustained, healthy coverage of HIAs across the country.

## Case Study – St Helens Home Improvement Agency: Project Duffy

Project Duffy is a collaborative initiative between St Helens, Knowsley and Halton PCTs and St Helens HIA (operated by St Helens Council).

The PCT consortia approached the HIA to formally occupy a seat on the PCT's hospital discharge steering group, and from this the HIA was invited to lead on a project (Project Duffy) which has the stated intention of providing intensive hospital discharge services using dedicated handyperson support, with the objective of releasing the 60 bed Duffy ward in Whiston Hospital.

This is significant in the development of integrated services which link housing, health and care and is a leading example of a HIA being used as a tool to effect structural change.

More significantly however, the objective of releasing a ward clearly illustrates in a tangible fashion the direct cost savings that handyperson interventions can bring, as previous initiatives have tended to highlight hypothetical or modelled benefits and savings.

Funding for the initiative is relatively modest, with the only additional manpower resources being two WTE (whole time equivalent) handypersons and one WTE Occupational Therapists for the period of the 12 month pilot.

The aspiration is that by the end of the 12 month pilot period, the scheme will have facilitated the complete removal of 60 non-elective beds. The consequences of which are three-fold:

- Quicker patient discharge to a safe and warm home.
- Reduction in inappropriate occupancy of non-elective surgical beds.
- Greater access and throughput of non-elective surgical cases.





# Foundations

2011/2012 has been a busy and fruitful year for Foundations as we continue to represent the HIA sector to central government, key stakeholders and the media.

## Working with Central Government

We are constantly working hard to raise awareness of the great work the sector achieves by presenting evidence to central government through our ongoing discussions and consultation responses. These include,

- Responding to 'Hill's Fuel Poverty Review'
- Department of Work and Pensions - Support for Mortgage Interest consultation
- Department of Health - Caring for our future: shared ambitions for care and support White Paper consultation response
- Department for Energy and Climate Change consultation on the 'Green Deal', and
- The Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework.

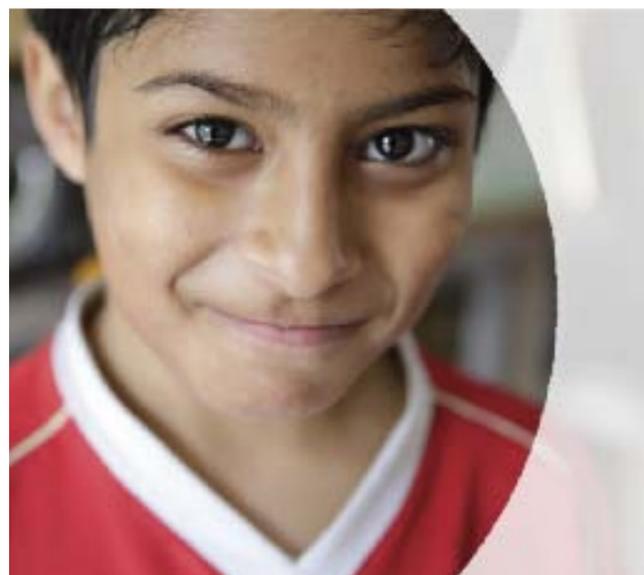
In March 2011, we presented evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group 'Living Well at Home' inquiry. The recommendations from the report are continuing to influence with emphasis on reablement and hospital discharge schemes as areas of priority for government.

## Working with the Media

The past 12 months have seen significant returns on dedicated campaigns focusing on dementia and retro-decorating. The coverage spreads over 30 regional and national channels including online, hardcopy, radio and television and includes reaching over 16 million viewers and readers. National coverage was featured in the Guardian, Mature Times and Inside Housing. We also worked with BBC Northwest and received interest from Channel Four to film sector case studies.

We continued to raise the awareness of the sector through participation in two Guardian online expert panel debates on health and housing and older people's services and dementia.

We also represented the sector at a number of conferences and events including presenting to the Inside Government Group and Andy Chaplin was also invited as a guest speaker at the National Housing Federation Adaptations Conference 2012.



## Working with sector stakeholders

We continue to work closely with other stakeholders in our aim to keep older people living independently for longer.

In the past 12 months we have:

- Worked with FirstStop to develop HIA relationships. Following the successful delivery of seminars in May, focus turned to partnership arrangements which have been put in place with local HIAs. 11 HIAs have signing up with FirstStop to deliver housing options services, and Foundations primary role has been to help and support these partnerships and ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Worked with Just Retirement Solutions on a pilot project to enable clients of HIAs to access an equity release service with products specifically developed for their needs. This will also include the training of 200 caseworkers which will begin in Spring 2012.
- Set up the RWE nPower PLC Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) referral scheme, established to enable agencies to access insulation measures for the most vulnerable with a fee available to agencies.
- Unveiled the final report of the Fit for Living Group at our annual conference presented by Andrew Van Doorn, HACTs policy head and chair of the Fit for Living Group. The report focuses on help for vulnerable home owners via improvements to suitable loan products, advice & information and handyman services.

## Working with the sector

We continue to help and assist agencies and commissioners to deliver quality services that will continue to be recognised as essential in an ageing society. Here are some of the ways we do this:

### TrustMark

TrustMark is a not for profit organisation, licensed by Government and supported by consumer protection groups. Its website lists local, trustworthy & reliable tradesmen, operating to Government endorsed standards. We have worked with TrustMark to ensure vetted and trusted Handyman services are listed. There are currently HIA handyman services covering 50 Local Authority areas posted on the TrustMark website.

### Quality Mark

Foundations continues to be committed to driving up quality in the sector. The Foundations Quality Mark for HIAs is a comprehensive service assessment process. At its heart it has a core module which mirrors the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework service objectives for HIAs. In total 41 HIAs now hold the HIA Quality Mark covering 60 Local Authority areas, with 17 validations taking place in 2011.

## Working with members of the public

In 2011 - 2012 Foundations received 62,000 enquiries from the general public all needing advice and assistance to repair and adapt their homes. We refer these enquiries onto HIAs who in total including their direct contact deal with around 230,000 cases every year.



# Foundations Events

## Home Improvement Agency Awards 2011

Last year, the winners of the Home Improvement Agency Awards 2011 gathered at the House of Lords for a prestigious awards ceremony hosted by Baroness Hanham, and sponsored by Mears and Stannah. The annual awards are always a special occasion where the sector can come together to celebrate and recognise each other's achievements.

The ceremony was well supported by both houses including Baroness Sally Greengross (opening the ceremony on behalf of Baroness Hanham), Baroness Kay Andrews OBE, Hazel Blears MP, Paul Maynard MP, Frank Field MP, Graham Jones MP and George Mudie MP.

The award winners for 2011 were,

### Agency of the year

Blackpool Care & Repair

### Handyperson service of the year

Salford Helping Hands

### Excellence in delivering major adaptations

Wirral Home Improvement Agency

### Excellence in delivering housing options service

Care & Repair Leeds

### Best approach to commissioning HIA services

Care & Repair Worcestershire

### Outstanding partnership with a service user

Mears Crewe and Nantwich

### Outstanding achievement by a volunteer

John Richardson and Tom Lowe (Spire Homes Care & Repair)

### Outstanding contribution by an individual

Sue Sinclair (Hyndburn Homewise) and Paul Gordziejewicz (Rochdale Home Improvement Agency)

### Lifetime achievement award

Stephanie Brann (Newham Home Improvement Agency)



## Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Conference 2011

The overarching focus of the 2011 conference was 'Living Well at Home: Making it Happen'. Over 200 delegates attended conference to discuss overcoming funding challenges and share innovative ideas to sustain services in difficult economic times.

The event was opened with a keynote address from Jon Bright, Director at DCLG. Speakers included Domini Gunn, Director of Public Health and Vulnerable Communities at the Chartered Institute of Housing, Guy Robertson, Joint Head of the Ageing Well Programme and Jeremy Porteus, Director of the Housing Learning Improvement Network.

David Bitner (Director of Business Development at Just Retirement), Alan Long (Executive Director of Mears Group), Sue Freeth (Director of Welfare at Royal British Legion) and David Herring (Home Solutions Manager at Papworth Trust) were on hand to join in a lively questions and answers session, talking to audience members about how HIAs can become the central delivery mechanism to meet the ambition of Living Well at Home.

It was also great to see speakers from HIAs getting involved presenting in workshops at conference. Sunderland, St Helens, Knowsley, Hyndburn and Wirral HIAs all contributed to interactive workshops on a variety of current issues affecting the sector including dementia, health and charitable funding.





# Foundations Independent Living Trust

Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT) is a charity founded and administered by Foundations. The Chair of the trust is Baroness Kay Andrews OBE, former DCLG Minister and now Chair of English Heritage. Grants are targeted at the clients of HIAs requiring urgent financial support when no other funding is available. During 2011/2012 FILT distributed funds on behalf of the Electrical Safety Council (ESC) and RWE npower PLC Health through Warmth (HtW).

During 2011/12 we have distributed over £170,000 in grants and levered over £250,000 of other charitable funds to assist 200 of the most vulnerable households. We also distributed £100,000 on behalf of the ESC to the HIA sector as part of their national grants scheme which has helped around 600 households.

Due to the expanding role of FILT as a national charity we have been able to appoint a full time Hardship Fund Coordinator to not only process the growing number of applications but to also look at ways to develop the fund and attract further donations.

## Case Study

### Mr P, Burton upon Trent

76 year old Mr P lives in Burton upon Trent and has cardiovascular problems and reduced mobility, which can be worsened by the cold. He was left without heating and hot water when his boiler broke down. Mr P only had two portable gas heaters to keep him warm during the day but couldn't use them at night because it wasn't safe. Mr P wore several layers of clothing in bed to try to keep warm and would often wake to find ice on the inside of his windows.

Mr P had no savings and couldn't afford to fund a new boiler, so he approached Orbit Care & Repair Agency for help. The caseworker arranged for quotes and applied for funding from the Staffordshire County Council Warm Homes Project (£1051.68) and The Royal British Legion (£1051.68) as Mr P had served in the armed forces, but there was a short fall of £750. A successful application was made to the Foundations Independent Living Trust Health Through Warmth Hardship Fund, for the remaining balance. With this funding, the agency was able to arrange for the new boiler to be fitted just before one of the coldest winters on record in Britain.

Mr P comments: *"When my boiler stopped working I didn't know where to turn, but the team at Orbit Care & Repair Agency went out of their way to secure funding to help me get a new one. It's such a relief to be living in a warm house again and I don't have to wear layers of clothing in bed anymore to try to keep warm."*



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INDEPENDENT LIVING TRUST





# How we go forward together

We see the following themes as areas where we can support and work with the HIA sector to build upon the successes of 2011/2012:

## Housing and public health

In November 2011 the Rt Hon Grant Shapps launched the Governments' Housing Strategy. The strategy emphasises the role that safe, warm, suitable housing can play in boosting public health. In many cases hospital admission and entry in residential care can be avoided, by simple handyman repairs or low cost security measures- making significant savings for health and social care budgets. We must capitalise on the visibility given to HIAs in this crucial strategy by doing all we can to develop strong links with Health and Well Being Boards in your area.

The housing strategy looks at improving the quality and choice of suitable housing for older people. The measures announced focus on the importance of providing good quality, accessible advice and information so older people can make planned choices about appropriate housing. Foundations will continue to work with national advice provider FirstStop on the best way to provide such services.

## Understanding the changes that will come with the forthcoming Green Deal

The Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is set to change the way energy efficiency and fuel poverty is tackled considerably and will replace current government funded initiatives such as the Warm Front Scheme. We will continue to ensure that the most vulnerable people living in fuel poverty are given the visibility they deserve. We are determined that the interest of the HIA sector and their clients will remain a priority for all the major energy companies taking responsibility for fuel poverty when the scheme starts in autumn 2012.

We will also work hard to keep the Warm Front scheme moving smoothly whilst it's still in operation and now work alongside Carillion to ensure that help continues to be delivered to those most in need.

## Learning more about financial products for older people

We are beginning to see more financial products on the market to help older people repair or adapt their homes through either equity release or low cost loans. We will increasingly see these products become more popular as demand grows from our ageing society and public spending becomes more limited. Foundations will work with financial product providers and the sector to ensure caseworkers can provide information and guidance to clients in need of tailored financial solutions suited to their needs.





Foundations  
Bleaklow House  
Howard Town Mill  
Glossop  
Derbyshire  
SK13 8HT  
0845 864 5210  
[foundations@foundations.uk.com](mailto:foundations@foundations.uk.com)

