



# Foundations

## DFG Case Study #4

# Dorset Accessible Homes Service



**Dorset Accessible  
Homes Service**

May 2016

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## About Foundations

Foundations is the National Body for Home Improvement Agencies and Handyperson Services in England as appointed by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Foundations' remit is to:



Engage with providers and commissioners to monitor the sector and enhance the quality and reach of home improvement agency services



Arrange events and training



Develop tools and resources



News and publicity

For more information visit: [www.foundations.org.uk](http://www.foundations.org.uk)

### About Home Improvement Agencies

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), sometimes known as Care & Repair or Staying Put schemes, help vulnerable people maintain independence in their own homes. Their services include:

- visiting clients at home or providing detailed telephone advice;
- setting out housing options to help clients decide what type of housing is best suited to their changing needs;
- checking entitlement to any financial help, including grants and charitable funding;
- project management, drawing up plans, getting estimates and liaising with others involved in any building work/adaptations needed, such as council grants officers and occupational therapists;
- provision of handyperson services, to carry out small jobs around the home, help with gardening, or coming home from hospital; and
- helping to make homes more energy-efficient.

A searchable directory of accredited HIAs and handyperson services is available at: [www.findmyhia.org.uk](http://www.findmyhia.org.uk)



## About Dorset

Dorset is a rural county covering 6 districts in an area of relative affluence interspersed with pockets of deprivation. The population is approximately 745,400 with the County town, Dorchester making up just under 20% of the population. 25.2% of the population are aged over 65.



## The Vision

Since 1st April 2015, Dorset Accessible Home Service (DAHS) has enabled vulnerable, older and disabled people to maintain their independence, health and well-being in their home and community. The service places people at the centre and takes a holistic view of individual's needs to help people make changes to their home environment to prevent the need for more costly interventions such as admission to hospital.

The service has met the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and has been instrumental in integrating health, social care and housing. Underpinning the service are the following key values:

- Supporting people to retain the greatest possible control over their lives
- Ensuring people are treated with courtesy, respect and dignity
- Supporting people to get personally involved with the decision making



## Good Practice

The Dorset Accessible Homes service is run by Millbrook Healthcare who provide a family of services for people to choose how to live independently through the option which best suits them. Information, advice, assessments, signposting and advocacy are all provided free of charge available through home visits or through one of the mi-life centres.

Two fixed locations are in place to ensure maximum coverage for Dorset, in Blandford Forum and Dorchester. This is complimented by frequent pop-up events across the county to raise visibility and awareness of the service and what solutions are available, including a mobile demonstration vehicle with clinical staff.

The range of services run include:

- Advice and information
- Access and outcome based assessments
- Support to consider housing options
- Assistive Technology solutions (TECS)
- Minor repairs and adaptations
- Handyperson
- Safer Homes initiative
- Major adaptations

Millbrook Healthcare work strategically with Dorset County Council to continually innovate the approach to adaptations to ensure a fast and seamless experience. All staff are qualified Trusted Assessors and can assess for simple adaptations whilst occupational therapists are available for more complex assessments.

### **Innovation**

- Streamlined process for faster delivery speeds
- Ability to self-refer into the service and meet needs preventatively
- A bespoke IT system providing secure and transparent visibility on service performance
- Strategic relationships with other providers in Dorset
- Fast track delivery to facilitate hospital discharge

## What the manager says

Lee Davies, Millbrook Healthcare Director, said:

*“We are delighted to be working strategically with Dorset County Council and partners to continually innovate the contract. It is exciting to be able to evolve and redefine what services should look like so people we support get the best possible experience, quality and service.”*

## Adaptation case study

Mrs G made contact with Dorset County Council’s Adult Access team to discuss the difficulty she faced getting in and out of the bath safely.

The referral was taken, past into Millbrook’s Dorset Accessible Homes service and Mrs G was booked to attend an appointment at the Dorchester Independent Living Centre (Greenwood) the following day.

Mrs G had a bathing assessment from one of Millbrook’s OTs and it was agreed that the best solution for Mrs G would be the installation of a Level Access Shower. Immediately following the assessment, the OT made a social prescription for a Disabled Facilities Grant. In addition Mrs G, was supplied a Telecare falls system and supplied access to Millbrook’s 24/7 response service.

Two days after the assessment Mrs G had a fall at 11pm. Millbrook team was on hand to respond with 20 minutes, using specialist lifting equipment, Mrs G was picked up and supported to remain in her home. Without this intervention, Mrs G would have been on the floor until 9am until her carer arrived.

The innovative Dorset Accessible Homes delivery model, achieved full grant approval and installation of a level access shower within 6 weeks,

This adaptation meant that Mrs G was able to significantly reduce her care hours, as she was able to bathe safely without assistance.

*Everything was instant, from assessment to supply of Telecare and my new bathroom was completed quicker than my wildest dreams. I have friends who had a level access shower fitted a few years back and it took months. Millbrook Healthcare and their team have really made a difference not just to me, but the Dorset community since they took over the contract 12 months ago. They combine speed with compassion.*

*I am within their debt, thank you.*

Mrs G



# Foundations

THE NATIONAL BODY FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY  
AND HANDYPERSON SERVICES

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