Home Improvement Agency
Awards 2017

Winners and commendations

September 2017
Millbrook Healthcare’s Dorset Accessible Homes - winner

Dorset Accessible Homes impressed the judges with its efforts to champion the work of home improvement agencies, being pioneers in demonstrating the value of the HIA sector across Health and social care, through evidencing the economic and social value of the service.

It has worked with local authorities to make assessments for Disabled Facilities Grant more flexible and reduce processing times. This led to a 140% increase in the number of clients accessing funding via the Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grant, thus reducing demand for care services in the process.

To ensure the sustainability of their service, the HIA attracted further funding by increasing the volume of works for self-funders. These services now equate to 20% of their contract turnover. The HIA also introduced an automated system of work to increase capacity within the team and diversified into other service provisions, such as sensory impairment contracts.
West of England Care & Repair - winner

WE Care & Repair demonstrated a strategic determination to find new ways to deliver and extend vital services and have successfully helped more people with less funding. Through a combination of innovative growth and collaboration they have made the HIA more sustainable and have worked towards mitigating potential service risks.

The HIA also showed good examples of leadership, constantly seeking to promote the valuable work of the HIA sector through collaboration with statutory, private and third sector organisations, and acting as an active supporter of the Independent HIA Network.

This HIA is working closely with other 3rd sector organisations on multiple fronts, such as falls prevention, fuel poverty and hospital discharge. This has ensured efforts are not duplicated and efficient referrals systems are in place; it has also helped them gain additional funding streams.

Lincolnshire Home Independence Agency - commended

Lincolnshire Home Independence Agency helps Lincolnshire County Council meet its priority in reducing the demands of a rural and ageing populace on long-term by contributing to a holistic, person-centred and preventative Wellbeing Service. The social return is £4.15 per £1.00 invested, 10% above the national average. In 2016-17, 82% of customers met planned outcomes, the Service achieved a 94% customer satisfaction rate and glowing feedback.
The HIA have expanded their services and diversified into new markets. They have increased provision for self-funders by developing an online retail and advice facility, and promote self-funded adaptations and equipment services. The agency continues to secure new funding streams, including a three-year agreement with North Lincolnshire Council for property adaptations and funding from new partners - Lincolnshire Central Heating Fund, East Midlands Affordable Warmth Campaign and Smart Energy GB in Communities.

Handyperson Service of the Year

Revival HIA – winner

Revival HIA delivers a wide range of handyperson services responding to commissioner priorities. These services include hospital discharge, annual winter warmth schemes, target-hardening service for victims of domestic violence and crime or anti-social behaviour.

The HIA has demonstrated a clear understanding of business issues and risks.

The Handyperson Service provides a range of contracts with different commissioners across various sectors (health/social care/housing/police), minimising the risk of over-dependence upon particular funders.

A clear referral system is in place. The handypersons are often the first or only professionals to visit a client’s home and they play a key role in identifying if the customer could benefit from other vital services. All staff are Trusted Assessors and also undergo regular training to be able to provide the most appropriate support to customers.

Customer feedback has been excellent, with 97% of them saying they would recommend the handyperson service to others.
Middlesbrough Staying Put Agency - commended

In 2017, Middlesbrough Staying Put integrated its Handypersons Service into Social Care’s Reablement and Connect call handling centre. This encourages collaboration and partnership working, and ensures the agency can interact with customers before they are discharged from Reablement, and where customers are identified by Connect support workers as requiring adaptations.

The Agency’s Handypersons visit over 2000 people a year, many of whom are new customers. During their visit, the customer is provided with information on the “One-stop-Shop” services, including Telecare Care, Home Improvement Loans, Private Works and Winter Warm Campaign.

The Service is constantly looking to reduce costs to support sustainability. Examples include the in-house installation of external rails, a paid private works scheme for the wider community, providing repairs and installations, and delivering commercial contracts by carrying out adaptations and repairs for social landlords.

Care & Repair West Norfolk - commended

As part of the local Better Care Fund/Disabled Facilities Grant Plan, the Clinical Commissioning Group required the Agency to find new ways of joint working with the hospital. This aimed to better support the large number of over 65s living in West Norfolk and ease pressure on already stretched hospital services.

Care & Repair now offer a handyperson service working onsite, supporting the hospital based therapy team with hospital discharge. This new partnership approach enabled the service to not only highlight the benefits to the hospital and the patient in dealing with the immediate need, but led to multiple referrals for additional minor and major
adaptations. It also increased referrals into the agency’s Dementia Friendly Homes scheme and the Ask LILY advice and information service.

The team continually review their training and development needs; all handypersons are Trusted Assessors, Dementia Friends, some are Dementia Champions and all have completed ROSPA training (reducing accidents) and Hoarding Behaviour training.

Adaptations Service of the Year
Cheshire East Care & Repair - winner

Cheshire East Care & Repair has streamlined the way they deliver Disabled Facilities Grants by reducing bureaucracy and focussing on how they can reduce admissions to hospital and residential care.

The HIA has developed a new Regulatory Reform Order policy that underpins their holistic approach to supporting people to live independently. Key features of this policy include increasing the maximum DFG to £50,000 so that large or complex adaptations can proceed quickly without delays trying to secure further funding; supporting people to move to a more suitable property (where that is appropriate) and providing grants to foster carers of disabled children.

A lean systems approach reduced timescales by 4 months, which were further reduced by introducing a framework for level access showers - target timescale for installations is within 6 weeks. The HIA operates a priority system for urgent cases such as end of life care, transfer of care and risk of injury.
Middlesbrough Staying Put - commended

Using discretionary powers under the Regulatory Reform Order, Middlesbrough Staying Put has introduced a Small Measures Grant, which offers financial assistance for provision of adaptations and repairs to enable customers who have needs falling outside the standard DFG to live independently, comfortably and safely in their own homes.

To support rapid hospital discharge, the grant application process has been streamlined for quick turnaround and to reduce delay in providing the adaptation. The Agency has also introduced a “Dementia Grant”, a non-means tested grant for people with dementia, supporting the Mayor’s vision of a dementia friendly town.

The Agency aims to provide seamless customer service and achieves this through integration with Social Care and Health. This has enabled them to gain swift approval for priority adaptations within one day and in partnership with their provider, the agency is able to install stairlifts within one working day.

Walsall HIA - commended

Walsall HIA works closely with Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, ensuring that the specific local priorities of commissioners are met - to help more people, provide a faster more bespoke service and at a lower cost.

The HIA officers (Technical and OT) are empowered and given the flexibility to work with customers using the system that best suits their needs. This could be hospital
discharge help / minor works up to £3k, fast-tracked and simplified DFG up to £12K, re-location support, top-up assistance to help above £30K or mandatory DFGs.

This flexibility is supported by a cost-effective schedule of rates, which helps to further drive down costs. The HIA has its own Independent Living Centre, in service OT support for specialist and rapid assessment, as well as their own detailed frameworks for lifts, hoists and all adaptation works.

Innovation Award

West of England Care & Repair - winner

West of England Care & Repair redesigned and relaunched their private pay bathrooms adaptation service in 2017. The service is affordable and accessible, underpinned by an occupational therapy assessment.

In the planning phase, the HIA carried out an in-depth market and competitor analysis to test their assumptions on future market size and achievable pricing. This helped them to make sound strategic and commercial assessments, identifying new supply chain partners, and identifying critical customer requirements to assist the HIA in further refining its USP.

The new service has provided demonstrable impact both to commissioners and service users, as well as significantly supporting the organisation’s long-term financial sustainability.

The financial surplus created by the service enabled the HIA to help more low income people via their ‘hardship’ fund, to return funds to commissioners via a ‘gain share’ agreement and grow their volunteer-led service for people with hoarding difficulties.
Guilford and Waverley Care & Repair - commended

Working closely with the local Clinical Commissioning Group, Guilford and Waverley Care & Repair have been central to the implementation of preventative community based falls prevention model, which would bring cost savings to the NHS.

The ‘Let’s Get Steady’ initiative would include information on the following elements: home environment, adaptations, strength and balance exercise, nutrition, telecare, hydration and sensory impairments. The in-house services - handyperson, telecare, home check officers – have been drawn together to contribute to the initiative. Examples include: a home hazard check by handypersons, grab rails and bannister rails offered free of charge, a six week free trial of the Telecare pendant.

To date, the Care & Repair agency has delivered regular monthly sessions to over 140 people, each session having a cost saving to the NHS of £3,153 per session and the potential to save £44,146 by March 2018.

White Rose HIA – commended

White Rose HIA and local partners have looked at how digital technologies can improve the delivery of services and support a joined-up approach across Health, Housing, and Social Care. Previously, service delivery was paper based and thus very slow, as works and processes had to be coordinated across a number of organisational boundaries.

To replace existing processes, new streamlined end to end processes were built. The HIA has developed joined-up, holistic, citizen-centred services by creating a shared digital workspace, and making remote and mobile working available to all parties.
Intelligent web forms ensure all necessary information is accurately gathered at the first point of contact. The information is securely and automatically processed from referral through to implementation.

As a result, White Rose HIA has significantly improved productivity and is now delivering nearly double the number of applications for DFGs with no additional administrative resource and only one additional technical officer.

Collaboration Award

Lincolnshire HIA – winner

Lincks HIA is a founding member of a local partnership established in 2013 in response to the county commissioners’ call for fewer, larger, integrated services and socially responsible procurement. To this end, five local charitable organisations joined forces to deliver a county wide Wellbeing Service. The HIA leads on the delivery of the service, which saw approximately 15,000 people referred since it was set up.

The HIA has also demonstrated excellent joint working arrangements, with a formal governance and risk framework in place. The Joint Steering Board is able to take informed, transparent decisions enabling it to mitigate not only financial risks but all those associated with service delivery.

Via the Wellbeing Service, the winning HIA has shown the value of third-sector collaboration in delivering better customer outcomes whilst reducing pressure on long-term and crisis services. The social return is £4.15 per £1.00 invested. The success of this partnership demonstrates that the collaboration model can be replicated elsewhere.
Lightbulb Project, Blaby Council – commended

The Lightbulb project was set up with the aim of linking up local services to deliver a holistic, tenure neutral, income generating, wrap around housing support service. The following services were brought together: First Contact, Aids and Equipment, Disabled Facilities Grants, Handyperson Services, Affordable Warmth Support, informal voluntary sector support, GP referrals, generic housing related support and assistive technology.

The project started in 2014 with a small group of organisations and now covers nine Local Authorities, Fire Service, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Leicestershire Partnership Trust, Public Health, and the Third Sector. The collaboration has enabled a standardised approach to service provision in the localities which had a ‘postcode’ lottery before.

A more holistic service is offered and outcomes for customers are visibly improved: 84% reduction in NHS costs for patients, over 12 months the projected housing DTOC costs would be potentially reduced by £450,000, two months post intervention saw adult social care costs reduced by 23%.

Family Mosaic Kent – commended

Family Mosaic HIA initiated conversations with the local authorities in Kent to raise the profile of increased DFG funding through BCF, sharing innovative practice examples and proposals for working differently. This resulted in funding for free, tenure-neutral handyperson service in five LA areas, for works to prevent hospital admissions or support hospital discharge. A scheme in West Kent funds a Health & Housing Coordinator (H&HC) based in the Tunbridge Wells Hospital Integrated Discharge Team, and a full time Handyperson who can provide a rapid response to assist the H&HC.
The Pembury project assisted 111 residents across three local authorities. These interventions saved at least 121 unnecessary nights in hospital, equating to estimated £54,450 savings to the NHS so far and reduced readmission rates.

Partnership working has significantly improved with discussions ongoing about expansion into other acute and step down hospitals. Customers who have received the service say their health & wellbeing has significantly improved, leading to more independence and a confident, happier lifestyle.

HIA Commissioning Award

Doncaster Council HIA - winner

Doncaster Council commissioned a study with Sheffield Hallam University which looked at the housing options for older people in the area. The study helped develop a housing options strategy for older people and informed on future commissioning. Setting up an accredited HIA was determined to be a priority, as this would have a significant impact on reducing falls within the over 65s and other vulnerable residents cohort and maximising residents' independence and well-being.

The council produced a robust business case, ensuring it is aligned with cross-sector strategic goals. Effective partnerships have been created, with the CCG being integral as a data provider, service shaper and peer support. The risk of poor take-up, poorly targeted services or over subscription were mitigated by consultation, a clear eligibility and referral route, population profiling and targeting.

Since being established, Doncaster HIA has set up a Rapid Response pilot to deal with falls in the home and a range of other initiatives designed to provide proactive support before a crisis situation occurs.
The Board of Trustees awarded has been earned by Paul Dilley, an officer whose key role is to offer extra support to those hit by the storms of December 2015, help them get back in their homes and protect their properties against future disasters.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for flood victims which can pay for things like flood doors, flood barriers, automatic airbrick closures, raising electrics and concrete floors. However, take-up has been slow, with only around 35% of flood victims accessing these grants. Paul is providing a lifeline to victims, helping them to access these funds and make their homes more resilient against future flooding.
The Old Co-op Building,
11 Railway Street,
Glossop,
Derbyshire, SK13 7AG