

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) How to accredit your service

What is a Home Improvement Agency (HIA)?

HIAs are local organisations supporting vulnerable people to live independently at home through providing solutions to housing related problems.

What do they do?

HIAs offer a unique combination of practical housing support and advice & information to support independent living.

This includes services to help people repair, improve and adapt their homes.

How do I accredit my service?

Foundations in its role as national body for home improvement agencies and handy person services, is able to accredit, validate and approve home improvement agencies, which gives them the opportunity to use the official home improvement agency logo, and display their Quality Mark attainment. The hierarchy of accreditation, validation and approval is illustrated below:



Acquisition of the various awards is made only on successful completion of its previous stage except in the case of Accreditation which is the entry-point award.

The assessment contained in the document is for Accreditation as a home improvement agency.

What are the benefits of Accreditation?

Becoming an accredited home improvement agency demonstrates to your customers and commissioners that the agency provides a recognised level of service, and brings with it access to support from Foundations to help develop the service, access to training and learning events, reduced cost TrustMark membership and listing on the Foundations website.

Accreditation also brings with it eligibility to apply for funding through the Foundations Independent Living Trust, which can only distribute funds to accredited HIAs.



Accreditation Template

This section is to be completed by Foundations Development Support Team. If the service meets the requirements of individual clauses in ways not described below, Foundations will use discretion to determine if this appropriately meets the requirement.

Services to individual clients:

General Advice

To assess the client's needs HIA staff will offer appropriate information, advice and support with:

	Yes / No	Notes
DFG Applications		
Funding Advice		
Legal Entitlements		
Other Support Services		

At least 2 out of 4 services must be offered

Services will be provided by:

	Yes / No	Notes
Telephone		
Email		
Home Visit		

At least 2 out of 3 services must be offered, one of which must be by Home Visit

Finance

Clients will also be given information about various financial options including their implications, and practical assistance in raising funds. These services can either be provided in house or sign posted on to a partner organisation. This will include:

	Yes / No	Notes
Availability of grants from statutory bodies		
Releasing equity and accessing loans		
Obtaining independent financial advice		
Accessing charitable funding		
Benefit entitlement		

At least 3 out of 5 services must be offered

Technical

Reliable technical advice will be available from the HIA, which will include:

	Yes / No	Notes
Home visit and inspections		
Advice on the scale and cost of the necessary works		
Help with choosing a reputable and reliable builder		
Project managing contracts		
Appropriate contracts and documentation		

At least 4 out of 5 services must be offered

Quality Assurance

Standards of service quality for HIAs are assured through a number of mechanisms.

- We advise the provider to carry out a self-assessment of its HIA services against the core Foundations HIA Quality Mark during the first year of becoming recognised as a HIA. To formally achieve the Quality Mark award the agency has an external validation of its service. There are 2 levels of accreditation. An initial validation level, carried out as a desk top exercise looking at policies and procedures. The next stage is the Approved Level entailing a visit and assessment made by the Foundations area manager offering a detailed audit and informed business guidance to assist in developing the agency.
- Customer satisfaction surveys inviting feedback on the quality of performance of both the agency and contractors.
- Trustmark: Foundations is the scheme operator for the major adaptations section of Trustmark. Through joining the scheme, the agency can guarantee that all contractors are up to standard on current training, insurances and in addition are able to offer an insurance backed guarantee to all customers.
- Agencies might have their own local or organisational schemes for ensuring quality services.

..... **(The provider) hereby confirms that the HIA services it manages and delivers within the local authority area meets the above service description.**

Name..... Signature

Job Title



Foundations

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HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES
