



Foundations

Helping vulnerable people maintain their independence

Annual Report 2013





Welcome from Andy Chaplin

I am particularly pleased that despite the challenging funding landscape, commissioners in more than 80% of English councils have a recognised HIA (home improvement agency). With the emergence of the Better Care Fund to underpin the closer integration of health with housing and care, I hope this development, and the local plans that arise from it, continue the recognition given to the social, personal and economic benefits gained from supporting the more vulnerable to stay living independently for as long they are able. That is what HIAs bring about through the advice information and practical provision they deliver.

I am in little doubt that the need to exercise tight financial controls is causing commissioners, especially in the new paradigm of CCGs, to place greater reliance on trusted and quality assured interventions which deliver value for money. HIAs do this day in, day out.

This is why the Department of Health were keen to work with our charitable arm Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT) and HIAs to make a significant difference during last winter, with the Warm Homes Service. 6,469 beneficiaries are testament to this.

Sir Michael Marmot highlighted the importance of the home and its role as a major determinant of health and I hope you will be as excited and optimistic as I am about the opportunities ahead for HIAs. It is down to us to seize the moment as there has never been a more opportune time for commissioners to have the courage to invest in preventative services. The evidence is there for all to see that it makes sense.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Chaplin' in a stylized, cursive script.

Andy Chaplin
Director - Foundations

Enabling people to remain independent at home for longer

Home improvement and handyperson service providers are local organisations dedicated to helping older people, people with disabilities and vulnerable people to live in safety and with dignity in their own homes.

Service providers are focused on ensuring that existing housing is fit for purpose and that vulnerable people, predominantly homeowners, are able to continue living independently as long as possible. Their work contributes to the objectives of the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health and other government departments.

There are currently some 200 home improvement and handyperson service providers in England covering over 80% of Local Authorities. Locally they may be known as Care & Repair or Staying Put agencies.

The majority of providers are operated by housing associations, a lesser proportion are provided 'in-house' by Local Authorities, while others are small independent organisations, usually with charitable status.

Together, home improvement and handyperson services provide support for around 240,000 people every year. This includes housing advice and information, the co-ordination of adaptations, repairs and improvements including energy efficiency measures.

Many of these services contribute to enabling the homes of vulnerable people to be improved and make decent homes possible for more people.



Helping those who need advice and support

HIA services often provide housing options services or 'moving on' services for those people who are no longer able nor want to stay in their current home. They provide impartial advice, information, support, advocacy and practical help to people who are considering moving home and enable older people to achieve the outcome best suited to their needs.

Our providers offer holistic services to their clients, improving a person's wellbeing as well as offering practical solutions around the home. They do this in a number of ways including:

- Home safety inspections and practical assistance (securing rugs, provision of emergency and improved lighting, fire guards, snow and ice clearance)
- Installation of carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms
- Joining up with Local Authorities to assist victims of domestic abuse through 'Sanctuary Schemes'
- Distraction burglary and home security measures for example keysafes, remote door openers etc.

Salford Home Improvement Agency, who won the award for 'Excellence in providing a housing options service' in 2013, manages referrals from up to **400 people** every year. Salford helps clients to make decisions about their future housing and supports on average **100 households** to move into housing better suited to their needs. Along with practical assistance in moving home, the Salford Housing Options scheme also manages a small fund which is made available to clients who are unable to finance their move.



Promoting energy efficiency and alleviating fuel poverty

Our providers are successfully reaching those at risk of falling into fuel poverty by:

- Forming successful partnerships with local NHS teams, social services and third sector organisations to ensure that a holistic service is provided.
- Providing a rapid response service to repair and replace boilers often at no cost to the client.
- Professional advice on how home owners and private tenants can make their homes more energy efficient, this often includes installing insulation, energy efficient light bulbs and other measures to keep fuel and electricity costs down.
- Providing trusted and reliable information about the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to help those people who aren't eligible for grant funding.



FILT Warm Homes Service

- Over four months in winter 2012/2013, the FILT Warm Homes Service and HIAs reached **3,728** homes containing **6,469** people, across 160 Local Authority areas. Each home received a one-to-one visit during which all the key aspects of winter warmth and fuel poverty were covered. Many of the people visited had conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, COPD, heart disease, dementia, depression and asthma.
- Visits identified levels and types of need, referral options and cases where hardship grant could be used to fund warm homes work. **83%** of people who had the advice and information sessions were aged over sixty and **61%** had mobility issues. At least one third had their health being made worse by cold in their home.
- **12%** had faulty heating and **34%** had draughty doors or windows, **19%** wanted advice on possible benefits and there were **1,184** referrals for further advice, support or repair work.
- The service levered in **£2.10** in other funding for every **£1** spent. HIAs were there for some very vulnerable clients when there was nowhere else for them to turn. Impacts include not just warmer homes, but also improved health and wellbeing, improved energy efficiency and improved safety at home.

FILT Warm Homes Service reached

6,469

people, many of whom had conditions such as dementia.

Aiding people living with long term conditions

In England, more than 15 million people have a long term condition - a health problem that can't be cured but can be controlled by medication or other therapies. This figure is set to increase over the next 10 years. Examples of long term conditions include high blood pressure, depression, dementia and arthritis. Long term conditions can affect many parts of a person's life, from their ability to work and have relationships to housing and education opportunities.

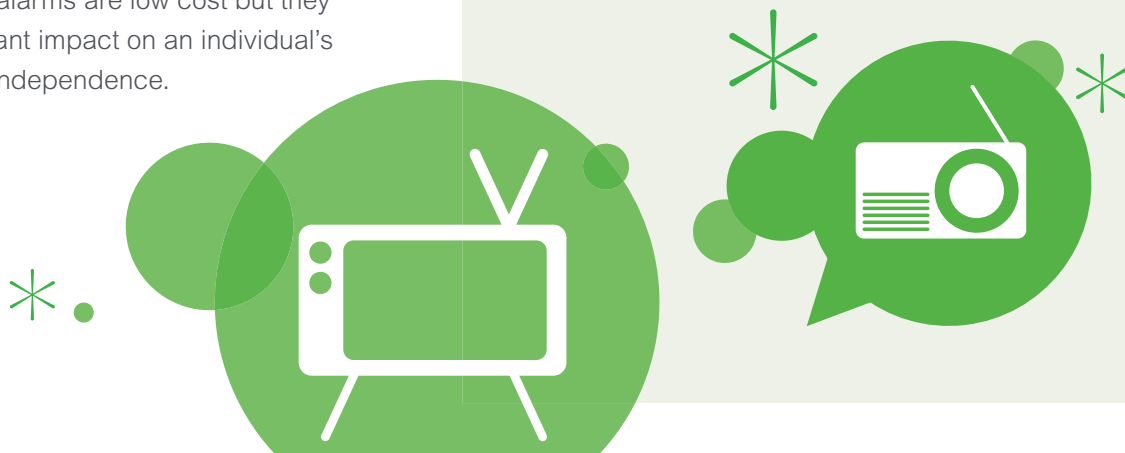
Care of people with long term conditions accounts for **70%** of the money we spend on health and social care in England. Up to **25%** of hospital beds are taken up by people with dementia and reducing the number of beds by **10%** could save **£1billion**.



Foundations and HIAs have been working hard over the last year to raise awareness and get dialogue going in the sector about how HIAs are well placed to be able to offer home adaptations and assistance for non-medical interventions for patients with dementia. In 2012/2013 Foundations had a number of articles published in national publications such as The Guardian, Inside Housing and in the Journal of Dementia Care, talking about these new techniques.

Small practical adjustments such as see-through drawers and flood alarms are low cost but they can have a significant impact on an individual's life, boosting their independence.

Hyndburn Homewise was one of the first HIAs to adopt dementia care strategies rooted in the home. Strategies such as 'Retro Decorating', 'Dementia Proofing' and life experience homework are low cost and have reduced the need for anti psychotic drugs and hospital admissions. The team help residents choose vintage furniture and items that bring back memories of happy times, such as old transistor radios, 1960s holiday posters or mid century chairs.



Trusted handypeople - getting small jobs done quickly

Handyperson services are often at the heart of the HIA and their services are highly valued. Often older clients access a handyperson service to do an 'odd job' that they are no longer able to do themselves. The handyperson is also able to identify further needs and can refer to other services ranging from benefit checking, through to referring onto occupational therapists.

TrustMark

- In 2012/2013 Foundations worked closely with Trustmark to ensure quality within the handyperson sector and to refer older and vulnerable people to other Trustmark endorsed tradesmen. We now have the Trustmark search engine on the Foundations website, so we know that our clients always have access to reliable and trustworthy tradesmen in their area.

- We have also worked during 2012/2013 with TrustMark to increase the visibility of the handyperson listing on their website. TrustMark have also recently agreed to set up a new listing for "Home Adaptations Elderly and Disabled" on the website and we are sure that due to demand for quality assured services, HIAs will use this as an opportunity to engage with older or vulnerable clients who are able to pay for repairs or adaptations to their home.

Every year, more than one in three (3.4 million) people over 65 suffer a fall that can cause serious injury, and even death. Falls and fractures in the over-65s account for four million hospital bed days each year in England, costing an estimated £2 billion annually.¹

¹ NHS Confederation, (2012) Briefing, Issue 234, Falls prevention

Integrated service delivery

There are some new approaches to delivering on the falls prevention agenda, and a number of HIAs are now successfully integrated into hospital wards, working closely with discharge teams to arrange rapid-response adaptations for those patients waiting to return home after a stay in hospital. Penalties are imposed on Local Authorities who fail to make arrangements for community care services for people who are ready to be discharged from hospital. Handy person services can prepare a patient's home properly for their safe return by:

- **Installing grab rails**
- **Installing ramps**
- **Widening a doorway**
- **Moving a bed downstairs**
- **Installing a shower or stairlift**
- **Completing general maintenance, such as installing central heating or plumbing repairs, which will facilitate the health of the individual.**

Preventing expensive hospital admissions and readmissions

In February 2012 Worcestershire Adult Social Care undertook an evaluation of a new service funded by NHS Worcestershire to Worcestershire County Council, to provide social care services that would prevent hospital admission and facilitate hospital discharge.

The evaluation showed that the service saved approximately £500,000. The budget awarded to Care and Repair Worcestershire for 2011 was £250,000 making a potential saving of £250,000. NHS Worcestershire/Worcestershire County Council were so pleased with the outcome of the scheme that they increased their funding to Care and Repair Worcestershire to £300,000 for the year 2012/2013.

The evaluation showed the service saved approximately

£500,000



Assisting those living at home with disabilities

We believe HIAs are meeting around **55-60%** of total DFG demand, which when extrapolated to all HIAs is equal to some **£130m** pa for all HIAs. Despite this demand, the average time from enquiry to practical completion has reduced by **33 days** in 2012/2013 compared to 2011/2012.

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory entitlement that helps disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their own homes through the provision of adaptations.

The grant, therefore, is key in delivering the Government's objective of providing increased levels of care and support to disabled and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes.



**Adaptations can
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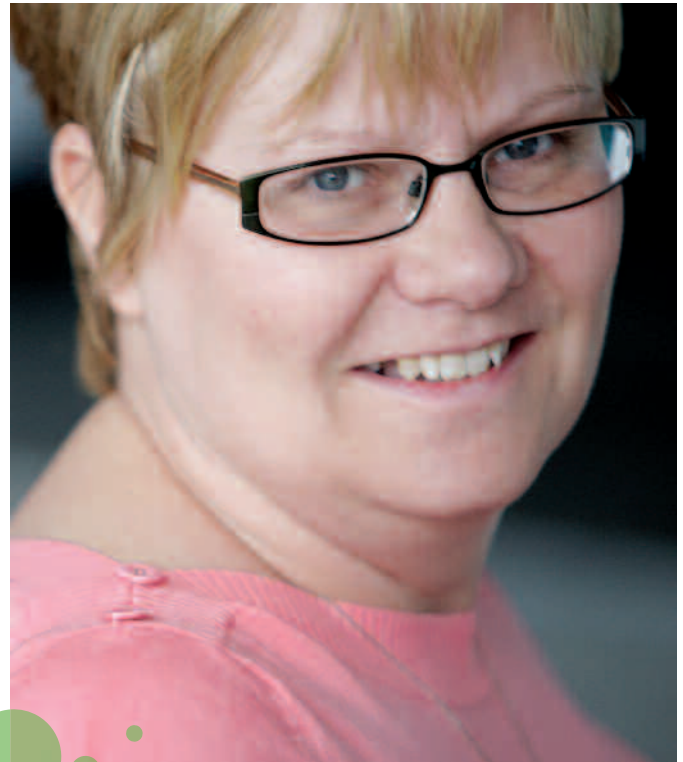


HIAs and Foundations are continuously working hard to set out the benefits of preventative interventions in the home and the cost savings that adaptations can have for health and social care budgets:

- Adaptations can prevent older people from having to enter residential care. Postponing entry into residential care by a year saves on average £28,080 per person².
- They can also help save money by reducing the risk of an older person falling in the home. Preventing a fall leading to a hip fracture saves the state £28,665 on average³.

² Lang and Buisson (2008) Annual Cost of Care Home Report

³ Ibid



Responding to the challenge

HIAs are responding to funding pressures by adopting lean processes and more efficient delivery infrastructures.

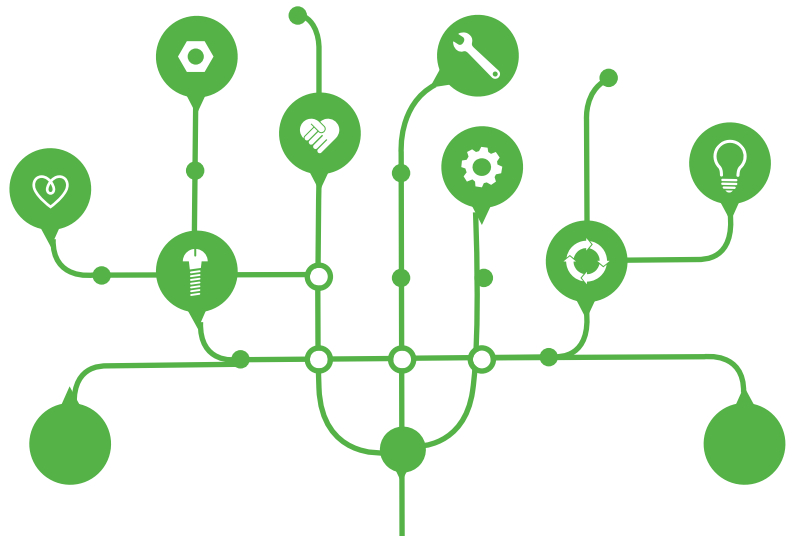
Operational improvements

Reviewing the full process or customer journey has allowed HIAs to pinpoint specific delays and allowed them to work with partners on redesigning and changing working practices to reduce timescales; examples include:

- Client self-assessment
- Reduced reliance on Technical Officers (TOs)
- The use of Trusted Assessors
- Adapted housing registers and housing options

Process or 'customer journey' improvements

Mapping the client's journey through the adaptations process has enabled HIAs to change the way they deliver their services. Mapping the journey from the customer perspective has enabled HIAs to discover areas where more client interaction was needed and where the use of Surveyors and Occupational Therapists (OT) could be implemented more effectively.



Equipment – what is installed and built

HIAs have explored a number of methods of reducing costs in relation to the purchase of equipment and reducing timescales for build activities:

- Contractors panel - The user panel has resulted in a reduction in delays and poor experiences with contractors.
- Product specification - Standard specifications for items such as level access showers result not only in a reduction in costs but also time.
- Collective purchasing - Consortium procurement generates substantial savings by harnessing the collective purchasing power of housing organisations. This has resulted in significant savings.

- Centre for Independent Living - HIAs have been able to establish a 'one stop shop' for people looking for information, advice and funding on adaptations. These centres have equipment on display where customers are able, through testing, to see what suits their needs best.



Developing and expanding home improvement agency services

Foundations Quality Mark

The Foundations Quality Mark is the accreditation process for home improvement agency services and assesses the performance standards of the HIA sector.

In 2012/ 2013 Foundations revised and re-launched the Foundations Quality Mark (QM) to reflect the changing commissioning environment HIAs now operate in.

The new HIA Quality Mark has been updated and refreshed to eliminate duplication and to give flexibility for HIAs.

Through the Quality Mark we aim to help HIAs to better meet the needs of its commissioners and ensure that it is offering real value for money to its commissioners and clients alike.

The new Quality Mark is now a two stage process:

Stage 1
Validation Level



National HIA
Quality Mark

Stage 2
Approved Level



National HIA
Quality Mark



Foundations Handyperson Quality Mark

This quality standard has been designed for those organisations who provide handyperson services and who are not HIAs.

Validation by Foundations will enable an organisation to critically assess the depth and breadth of its services, and provides a platform for continuous business development.



**National
Handyperson**
Quality Mark



To continue to help HIAs manage information and better manage caseloads, Foundations has been developing a new software package with IIZUKA software technologies as a progression from the previous Foundations Electronic Management System (FEMIS), where capacity had reached breaking point.

HIA Case Manager has been designed to support the case management process as well as support HIA reporting requirements.

We recognise that this has been a process with work required on both sides and we will continue to work together to ensure HIA Case Manager delivers all that it is capable of over the coming years.

Representing the sector and raising the profile

Reinvention and creativity need to sit at the heart of the vision for the sector. The strength of the sector has always been that it is rooted in providing practical solutions to the problems faced by older and disabled people in their own home. Therefore, in order to shape services for future years, planning should concentrate on those solutions capable of delivering practical benefit in an ageing society, within a very mixed economy.

What drives change in the sector is the demand for certain services and identifying areas of need currently not being met very well. In supporting commissioning processes across the country, Foundations has and will continue to respond to shifting demand for services and help people design new ways in which these are funded. This in turn has meant that increasingly Foundations has had to support services and integration.

During the past year, Foundations has represented home improvement and handyperson services both nationally and locally, presenting evidence across government departments, as well as profiling best practice with local commissioners.

Raising the profile with national media has continued to be a focus with articles and features in the likes of Inside Housing, Community Care and The Guardian to name a few. This will continue to be a priority in the coming months and years with emergence of new funding mechanisms and as new infrastructures begin to 'bed in'.



Raising standards and quality

Providing advice, training and support to home improvement and handy person service staff

HIA services are learning with their customers how to achieve their housing aspirations. Services can no longer view their customers as passive consumers of expert advice and information. Instead, the relationship between HIA services and their customers will be characterised by joint expertise and co-authoring of options and solutions.

Therefore, the next few years will see HIA services increasingly use forms of self-assessment and guided assessments as a way to agree the options and outcomes at the beginning and the effectiveness of services at the end.

During the past year we have been able to up-skill 1,982 HIA staff through technical workshops, Home Warmth Assessments to dementia guidance, and heavy lifting training. We are grateful to all of our partner organisations who have helped us to do this including the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF), Thomas Pocklington and Turn2Us.

In addition, throughout 2012/2013 a total of **1,100** HIA staff attended sessions including HHSRS, Income Maximisation and Trusted Assessor training, showing that there is continued commitment to improvement and development from HIAs, particularly at a time when there is pressure on budgets.

We hope that these partnerships and relationships continue to flourish as we look forward to the opportunities and challenges in the year ahead.

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Leverage of charitable funding

Foundation Independent Living Trust (FILT) is a registered charity that provides much-needed support so that older and vulnerable people can live safely in their own homes. FILT works with HIAs and handyperson services to help people repair, adapt and maintain their homes.



FILT's objectives are to provide:

- Financial help
- Practical support to home improvement agencies
- Research and events to help tackle the problems facing vulnerable homeowners and private sector tenants.

In 2012/13 FILT has:

- Helped more than **7,000** people
- Distributed more than **£580,000** in grants and funding
- Delivered FILT Warm Homes Service, a programme which helped people stay warm and well during winter
- Continued to provide hardship funding for heating, insulation and electrical safety improvements

Why is FILT needed?

Grants from FILT help people to make urgent and essential repairs when no other support is available. Providing support for these urgent repairs reduces risk and prevents vulnerable people from being exposed to harm, injury, illness or discomfort.

FILT can help organisations distribute Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and target hard to reach audiences.

FILT aims to further increase help for vulnerable and older people in 2014, and we welcome your thoughts about what is needed or your ideas for new programmes.



Leading the sector

Success depends on strong leadership. The sector requires people with strong management skills to drive the changes required with a clear vision of where HIA services need to go. We will need:

- **Clearly costed services able to demonstrate savings and value add which exceeds the cost of service**
- **Better marketing and promotion in order to attract more customers and funders**
- **Better integrated supportive networks**
- **The ability to drive cultural change**

When the money runs out you have to find inventive ways to meet the needs of the clients we serve, especially those living with long term conditions. And you have to try and do it at a lower unit price – that is the harsh reality of economics. It doesn't mean we have to lose sight of our social purpose – far from it. It is that which should also spur us on to be creative.

It is important that Foundations employ stronger leadership as we strive to build the quality, impact and reach of the sector as a whole. We want all our providers to step up to the same challenge. It is not going to be easy, but to earn the respect we deserve from commissioners in CCGs, from HWBB members, from housing and from Public Health it is what we have to do.

The reason is not just about economics, it is because if we do all these things we will not only deliver better value for money, but a better deal and experience for all our customers.





Foundations

For public enquiries and to find your local HIA,
call 0845 864 5210, email us at info@foundations.uk.com
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