



Foundations

DFG Case Study #2

Somerset My Home My Life



Delivered by Aster Living
and Millbrook Healthcare

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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Signed approval forms are filed in the Management section of the project files.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
P Smith		Director	11/01/16	1.00



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.uk.com

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



About Somerset

Somerset is a rural county covering 5 districts in an area of relative affluence interspersed with pockets of deprivation. The population is approximately 530,200 with one in four living in the 3 largest towns Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgewater. People over 65 make up 21% of the population and the largest percentage of population expected to rise is the very elderly (Age 90+) rising from 5,100 to 18,700 by 2033.

The main challenge facing the area is an ageing population in a largely rural area. How do you meet the demands of a growing population of self-supporting older people and still retain the element of state support for the most vulnerable?

The Vision

The purpose of My Homes My Life service is to support those vulnerable people in need of housing related support in promoting their independence, health and well-being in their chosen home for the foreseeable future. By thinking ahead it will reduce the need for more costly adaptations and as a consequence save resources. It also fulfils the governments drive to integrate health, social care and housing through the Care Act, reaching out to all residents of Somerset and face the financial challenges caused by rising demand.

The vision

The vision for the service is to create a joint organisation offering a more holistic approach through increased innovation, fewer visits and improved efficiency.

The service will create an environment promoting self-help and supporting self-funders to think ahead to preserve their independence and remain in the community. It will provide a range of choices of which a DFG is only part allowing for more innovation and self-support.

By combining equipment and adaptation services it brings together 2 elements seeking to provide the same thing, independence at home. What is creative about the vision is that advice and information is at the forefront of all delivery enabling people to make a choice and consider their options at an early stage. The service is based upon prevention and early intervention both of which support the government agenda of reducing demand for acute services by encouraging people to plan ahead rather than act only on emergencies.



Good Practice

How it Works

Information, advice, signposting and advocacy – This is a free offering to all customers designed to prevent and defray need for more costly services.

Independent Living Centres- 2 fixed centres have been established in the East and West of the county to be supplemented by ongoing sessions, piggy backing on existing events. These centres offer a range of support from funded equipment services to self-help and advice to self-supporting customers. OTs will use the centres to demonstrate and check the suitability of equipment offered. Aster are also purchasing a van to demonstrate equipment and offer advice and information, going into rural areas attending events and places of interest such as supermarkets.

Equipment- Including advice, sourcing and procuring. Using a county appointed contractor allows the contractor to secure the best rates for all customers.

Retail and online services, Home Safety Checks, Security Checks, Minor Repairs, Energy Checks, minor adaptations and decent home surveys, heating and insulation and advice and information fulfilling the local authority duties under the Care Act. These services are at the heart of prevention, checking the homes of vulnerable people reducing the need for more intensive support further down the road.

Home from hospital service works closely with local hospitals facilitating speedy discharge where housing issues can cause significant delay.

Aster operate a Moving On service that can manage all aspects of a move where someone has chosen to move home rather than have a DFG. People will also be encouraged to plan ahead and move before the need arises for a DFG.

Somerset have developed an innovative approach to adaptations that involves top slicing the DFG budget allowing them to provide minor adaptations up to £2k without a means test ensuring quick delivery. They approached the Capital Planning group for consent and employ a Trusted Assessor approach for simple adaptations, saving time and resource.

Adaptations – Major and minor. These are offered to all at the point of need. For those self-funding the service can advise or take someone through the entire process according to demand. Aster manage the minor adaptations service on behalf of the Council either allocating work to external contractors or carrying out jobs via their handyperson service. The work is carried out to agreed timescales.

Innovation

- Combined ICES and Adaptation delivery based on a single vision for delivery of home independence.
- Housing advice and information provided at an early stage.
- Support for self-funders- A joint vision of delivery.
- Top slicing the DFG monies to provide fast-track adaptations.
- A joined up Handyperson Service of qualified trusted assessors able to assess and fit minor adaptations, carry out energy efficiency and hospital discharge work all within a single visit.
- An innovative portal system available to Local Authority Housing Departments and Health professionals who wish to make referrals into the system, track progress 24hrs a day and approve works, DFG applications/Plans etc and send messages and files regarding clients securely without the need for encryption.

What the manager says

Becky Bell, Aster Living service development manager, said:

“We’re delighted to have been chosen by Somerset County Council to provide this exciting new service. We have a strong track record of delivering Home Improvement Agency services already across southern England and are very much looking forward to bringing that expertise to Somerset My Home, My Life. “

What the Councillor says

Councillor William Wallace said at the launch event:

“Most people in Somerset want to remain in their own home and stay independent for as long as possible. And this service supports people to do just that - by giving them the practical things they need to keep active, doing the things they love and living where they want to live. Walking frames to hand rails, hoists to level access showers are now available through a new countywide equipment and home improvement service.”

Adaptation case study

Miss Z's rapid Multiple Sclerosis has left her needing a bespoke wheelchair with her legs permanently in extension. The landlord had made limited adaptations to enable access and egress, however Miss Z was unable to use the rest of her house and was bed bound and trapped in the living room.

Miss Z's condition is such that it would not be safe or practical for her to be resident during the works. Delays with Miss Z's new chair and initial difficulty experienced by Adult Social Care (ASC) arranging respite care through their usual provider was creating significant problems with progressing the works. The technical officer and caseworker, working with Aster colleagues from the Extra Care housing side of Aster Living, were able to offer the client and ASC an alternative respite solution by agreeing with the Scheme Manager that accommodation could quickly be located and furnished at one of the Aster Group Extra Care housing schemes.

After a joint visit with the occupational therapist and a subsequent meeting, a layout was agreed to give Miss Z access to all the rooms of the house with use of the bespoke moulded wheelchair, bringing Miss Z the ability to access the shower room and bedroom. The nature of the work did mean the loss of the existing carpets to the hallway and living room. With the assistance of the caseworker, an application was made to the MS Society, who will be funding the replacement of the carpets to these rooms.

During the landlord agreement process, it became clear that the landlord's planned maintenance department was scheduling a kitchen replacement. Potential overlaps and conflicts between the kitchen work and the work being arranged by the agency were identified between the landlord's surveyor and the technical officer. Appropriate arrangements were made with both contractors to enable works to be undertaken simultaneously during the three week window of respite care at the Extra Care scheme. This ensured maximum effective use of the time available for disruptive work to be undertaken and completed in preparation for Miss Z's return.



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AND HANDYPERSON SERVICES

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