



Foundations

## DFG Case Study #3

# Revival Home Improvement Agency

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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.uk.com](http://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](http://www.findmyhia.org.uk)



## About Staffordshire

Staffordshire is a large county with a mix of rural and urban communities. The population has changed considerably over the last 10 years with a 25% increase in the numbers of people over 65. There are 171,000 people over 65 projected to become 212,400 an increase of 24% by 2023. A total of 42,415 are affected by fuel poverty, higher than the national average and driven by housing conditions. There are 400 excess winter deaths for people over 65.

Revival services work with older, vulnerable and disabled people to help them to remain independent in homes that are warm, safe and well-maintained:

They successfully tendered for the county-wide **Home Improvement Service** contract with Staffordshire County Council and its partner District/Borough Councils, and have been delivering the service across the county, since 1 October 2014.



## The Vision

- Maximising the number of older and disabled people helped to live at home
- Promoting a holistic approach to their needs and aspirations
- Enabling people to understand their housing options and exercise control in where they choose to live
- The service provides DFGs as an integral part of a wider vision of promoting independent living



# Good Practice

## How it Works

**Home Improvement Agency single point of contact and advice hub:** provides a single point of access to all Revival's services as well as offering a light-touch information and advice service for people considering their housing options. This is a universal service available to all residents. The service is provided through a well-established specialist Advice Hub team staffed by dedicated and expert Advice Officers. The hub operates Monday-Friday 8.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m. with an out-of-hours answerphone service.

The service also provides a website [www.revivalhia.org.uk](http://www.revivalhia.org.uk) offering:

- Information and signposting on issues relating to repairs, improvements, adaptations and housing options
- Case studies showing positive outcomes from using the HIA service
- Facility to make on-line enquiries

The service has developed and maintains a network with a range of different service providers ensuring that the varied needs of people using the service are met. These include:

- Staffordshire Trader Register
- Staffordshire Cares Purple Pages
- FirstStop Advice for Older People
- District/Borough Councils and Housing Departments
- Citizens Advice

**Home Improvement Agency - 'Support for choice':** offers more intensive support for those most at risk allowing them to consider their options and make decisions about their future needs. This service alongside enhanced support is focused particularly on:

- Older people
- People with a disability including children
- People on a low income

Among the issues customers may be facing are:

- Isolation
- Transportation to access the community
- Care needs
- Crime and safety issues
- Maintenance of their existing home (including cold and dampness)
- Social interaction

- Personal financial issues
- Poor health

### **The Caseworkers help people to exercise choice and control by:**

- Listening to, and understanding, a person's aspirations and their circumstances
- Explaining the various potential sources of funding that may be available depending on personal circumstances
- Offering a range of possible solutions available either through Revival and/or through other services
- Working with the person to make an informed decision and agree the chosen solution which may include moving on to a range of alternative housing options or staying put with a range of alternative options for increased independence and well-being

We use the Independent Living Outcomes Star™ to assess need and risk and to develop a Support Plan, ensuring a holistic approach covering all aspects of a customer's well-being.

**Enhanced support:** is for people who need help to implement their chosen options, and maximise their independence. The service is provided by Caseworkers supported by our expert Technical Officers. We seek to secure funding and arrange for any changes to the physical fabric of the house to suit the needs of the person. We maintain an approved list of contractors including local area sub-panels, and support customers with:

- Providing advice and information on the adaptations, repairs and other work they need to maintain their independence at home
- Submitting funding applications where required e.g. Disabled Facilities Grant, charitable source of funding, Local Authorities, trade bodies etc.
- Design, specification and procurement of any works
- Appointing and site supervision of contractors
- Agreeing timescales and site meetings to ensure work is completed in a timely and responsive way
- Confirming that work has been completed to the customer's satisfaction and within the agreed budget
- Liaising with third parties on behalf of the customer

### **Innovation**

The entire focus of the service is on early intervention so that people can make real choices prior to any crises occurring. Clients are triaged through the system so that people receive the level of support they require. The majority are supported through the advice hub, those with a need for greater support receive a caseworker to take them through their choices and lastly those with the greatest need can access enhanced support to help implement all their choices.

For Lichfield and South Staffs District Councils, Revival manages the Disabled Facilities Grant budgets. They have delegated responsibility from the districts to approve the grants and payments.

To do this, the agency:

- assesses each application against the specified criteria in the district's housing assistance policy
- ensures all elements of the application are complete, accurate and meet the criteria
- calculates the applicant's contribution where applicable
- calculates the grant to be approved ensuring quotations provide best value
- manages the budget to ensure sufficient funds are available to complete the work
- informs the applicant of their eligibility or not
- if a land charge is needed, ensures that the relevant authorities are advised.
- provides reporting to show budget spend and timescales that are being met

Benefits for customers:

- Speedy decisions on approvals
- Speedy decisions on additional, unforeseen work so that work can continue on site without delay



# Foundations

THE NATIONAL BODY FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY  
AND HANDYPERSON SERVICES

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