



Foundations

Carers Strategy - Evidence Submission

by Foundations

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Document History

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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	11/05/16	1.00



About Foundations

Our Mission

To share the magic about what makes good home improvement and adaptation services

Our Vision

A thriving range of home improvement agencies – supporting people to live safe, independent and happy lives in the home of their choice

Our Objectives



Identify and meet the training needs of the sector



Engage with stakeholders, providers and commissioners and facilitate networking opportunities



Represent and promote the sector



Develop tools and resources for providers and commissioners



Monitor activity, quality and performance and find out what good looks like



Develop and promote quality assurance systems



Provide an information management and workflow system

For more information visit: www.foundations.uk.com

Our Values

Our shared values guide our actions and describe how we behave:

Leadership:	The courage to shape a better future
Collaboration:	Leverage collective genius
Integrity:	Be real
Accountability:	If it is to be, it's up to me
Passion:	Committed in heart and mind
Scalable:	National solutions for a local scale
Quality:	What we do, we do well

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 handyman 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 handyman services is available at:

www.findmyhia.org.uk

About the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are grants provided by English local authorities to help meet the cost of adapting a property for the needs of a disabled person.

Foundations role is to lead on improvements the effectiveness and quality of the national DFG programme including:

- improving the end user experience;
- identifying and driving the take up of new DFG delivery models; and
- improving DFG delivery including reducing costs and waiting times.



Background

In March 2016 the UK Government launched a call for evidence to support a new Strategy for Carers. The overview summarises the need for a new strategy:

“Informal carers (also called unpaid carers) are people who look after family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or care needs related to old age. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment.

Carers freely give their time and energy to support friends or family members and many rightly take pride in providing essential support for those close to them. Caring for others should not be to the detriment of the carer’s own health and wellbeing and carers can receive support in a number of ways – including from social services, the NHS, or the benefit system.

We think that we need a new strategy for carers setting out how we can do more. One which reflects their lives now, the health and financial concerns they have, and gives them the support they need to live well whilst caring for a family member or friend.”

This document is Foundations’ response to the call for evidence issued on behalf of the home improvement sector.



The Evidence

Home Adaptations Reduce Informal Care

In 2015 Foundations researched the link between home adaptations and social care funded services¹ such as domiciliary care and residential care. While we found that adaptations can delay entry into residential care by 4 years we found only a small reduction in domiciliary care hours as a result. Indeed, only 17% of applicants for a Disabled Facilities Grant are also in receipt of state funded domiciliary care. This led us to surmise that informal carers must significantly benefit from the provision of home adaptations.

Previous research² has shown that supporting carers is a cost effective way of delaying admission into residential care – but focussed on a range of social care services rather than any physical adaptations made to the home.

Now, new research from Australia³ shows a significant reduction in the number of care hours (as reported by informal carers) following the installation of home adaptations. The study by Dr Phillippa Carnemolla reports the following average reductions in informal caregiving hours per week:

Adaptation	Hours Before	Hours After	Reduction
To assist with moving around the house	8.5	5.0	41.1%
To assist with toileting	1.7	0.9	47.0%
To assist with bathing or showering	2.7	1.0	63.0%

This suggests that home adaptations may be at least as beneficial for carers as they are for the person with the disability – and in turn prevent or delay admissions into residential care.

The Disabled Facilities Grant

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are available from local authorities in England and Wales and the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland. They are issued subject to a means test and are available for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes, and to give access to essential facilities within the home.

¹ <http://foundationsweb.s3.amazonaws.com/4210/foundations-dfg-foi-report-nov-2015.pdf>

² <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/dp2014.pdf>

³ <http://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/2016/04/07/home-modifications-reduce-reliance-care-study/>

As part of the 2015 Spending Review⁴ the funding for DFG has increased to over £500 million by 2019-20, which will fund around 85,000 home adaptations that year. This is expected to prevent 8,500 people from needing to go into a care home in 2019-20.

The legislation governing DFGs in England and Wales is the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996⁵. This is primarily housing legislation and sits aside from the provisions of the Care Act 2014 which strengthened the rights and recognition of carers in the social care system, including, for the first time giving carers a clear right to receive services.

However Section 23 of the HGCR 1996, which sets out the purposes for which a grant must be approved, includes making “the dwelling ... or the building safe for the disabled occupant **and other persons** residing with him”. This is an often overlooked provision, but there is some helpful case law to help explain the provision.

In this particular case (R(B) v Calderdale MBC, 2004) the parents of a boy with autism applied for a loft conversion. The boy had for years subjected his younger brother, with whom he shared a bedroom, to dangerously inappropriate horseplay and to violent interference with his sleep, day after day, night after night. The local authority declined the application on the grounds that the danger to the younger brother was not confined to the shared bedroom; so an extra bedroom would still not make the dwelling safe for him.

On appeal the judge ruled that any adaptation could not necessarily be expected to make the premises completely safe for the disabled person and other people he lived with. The question was whether it was enough for the works to make the premises (a bit) safer, or whether there was some threshold of safety that the works would have to get over, in order for them to be deemed ‘necessary and appropriate’.

The judge also held that so long as the safety of the disabled occupant is involved in some way, a grant would not be precluded; there was not a requirement that the principal purpose of the works be the safety of the disabled person. For example, a fire escape or cooking alarm might benefit several other occupants of a dwelling, and not just the disabled occupant.

From this reasoning it could be argued that works that would make the home safer for an informal carer could be considered as part of an application for DFG. It would then be for the local authority to decide whether those works were necessary and appropriate in that particular case.

In any case, since 2008⁶ local authorities have had significant discretion in how they administer their DFG programmes and could choose to offer grants that directly provide adaptations to support carers. The evidence outlined in this submission would suggest that this would be a cost effective way to help prevent the 8,500 people from needed to go into a care home in 2019-20

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015-documents/spending-review-and-autumn-statement-2015#a-sustainable-health-and-social-care-system-1>

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53>

⁶ <http://foundations.uk.com/resources/home-adaptations/dfgs-and-the-regulatory-reform-order/>



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