

Appendix 9

Evidencing the value of housing related support by Home Improvement Agencies

National Policy Initiatives

Home improvement agencies (HIAs), sometimes known as Care & Repair or Staying Put schemes, help vulnerable people to maintain their independence and live comfortably in their own homes. They are commissioned by authorities, health services and various other commissioning bodies to help meet the housing, health, social care and support needs of vulnerable people.

Home Improvement Agencies can provide a range of services including:

- visiting clients' homes to give advice about any problems with the condition of their home
- setting out the options available and helping clients decide which is best for them
- helping obtain other available support services
- checking whether clients are entitled to any financial help (for example disability benefits or money to help repair or adapt homes)
- helping with all aspects of work carried out in clients' homes (for example, drawing up plans, getting estimates from reliable builders)
- working closely with others who might be involved in the work, such as council grants officers and occupational therapists
- additional services such as a handyperson to carry out small jobs around clients' homes, help with gardening, or coming home from hospital, and
- helping to make homes more energy-efficient.

There are a multitude of national policy initiatives to which HIAs can contribute, due to the varied nature of their work and the requirements of commissioning bodies. The following list is not exhaustive but gives some indication of the policies that affect the work and objectives of the HIA sector.

The Supporting People Programme has been a key policy initiative for the HIA sector. The programme has been central in delivering government's objectives to support independent living, a key feature of the work by the sector.

The [Decent Homes Programme](#) is a government initiative aimed at improving the standard of social and local authority housing. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee on Decent Homes has recommended future policy should be based on a clear long-term target to bring all homes in the private sector up to a decent standard rather than just those occupied by vulnerable people.

[Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society](#) highlights the importance of good quality, well-designed, safe and secure housing and the positive contribution good housing makes to health and wellbeing - such as reducing falls and excess winter deaths and supporting people to return home after a stay in hospital. The white paper draws particular attention to Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations. As a result £33 million has been made available for the development of handyperson services.

Prevention, support and independence are key themes running through the [Building the National Care Service white paper](#), which guarantees that older people who want to receive care in their own home will be able to do so. The proposals of joint assessment and commissioning across health and social care, coupled with personalisation, provide opportunities and challenges to the HIA sector.

In 2009 the government launched a refreshed ageing strategy, [Building a Society for All Ages](#). The strategy sets out proposals to change society's attitude towards older people and meet the challenges of an ageing society.

The Independent Living Strategy seeks to realise the aim for all disabled people to be able to live autonomous lives, and to have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. The strategy and further information can be found on the Office for Disability Issues [website](#)

Further Information Sources

The [Future Home Improvement Agency](#) report was produced by Foundations, the national body for home improvement agencies. The report provides an overview and five sub-reports setting out what clients and commissioners can expect of home improvement agency services in the future, and indicating how home improvement agencies should respond to the changing environment. The report can be accessed on the Foundations website. A free subscription is required to access parts of the site.

The [Foundations Policy Resources](#) webpage provides links to a range of sector specific reports, bulletins and responses to policy consultations and proposals. A free subscription is required to access parts of the site.

The government published its 'UK Fuel Poverty Strategy' in 2001, setting a target to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households in England by 2010. Foundations' [Energy Efficiency Resource Guide](#) contains information on the assistance available to vulnerable households, targets and policy expectations placed on energy providers and local authorities that HIAs can assist with.

National Indicators

Communities and Local Government has worked alongside the national body for HIAs, Foundations, home improvement agency providers and local authorities to develop a framework specifically for home improvement agencies.

HIA interventions deliver a range of outputs and outcomes, many of which contribute to National Indicators.

NI	Description	Significant Contribution	Partial Contribution
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police		y
NI 49	Number of primary fires and related fatalities and nonfatal casualties		y
NI 124	People with long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition	y	
NI 125	Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation/intermediate care	y	
NI 131	Delayed transfer of care from hospitals	y	
NI 134	The number of emergency bed days per head of weighted population		y
NI 136	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)	y	
NI 137	Healthy life expectancy at age 65		y
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood	y	
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live in independently in their home	y	
NI 142	Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	y	
NI 187	Tackling fuel poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating.		y

The full list of National Indicators and guidance as to their rational and definitions can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/finalnationalindicators>

To find out the priority NIs agreed between each Local Authority and the Regional Government Office visit: <http://www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk/default.aspx> and <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/10958567>

Resources Evidencing the Value of Home Improvement Agencies

[Home improvement agencies - The key to independent living](#) provides statistical information and case studies demonstrating the value of Home Improvement Agencies.

[The Future HIA report](#) provides evidence on the effectiveness of the sector. To access the materials a free subscription service is required.

[Better Outcomes, Lower Costs](#) is a study conducted by Bristol University on behalf of the Office for Disability Issues. The report outlines the cost savings and benefits to service users and commissioning bodies from increased investment in housing adaptations and provision of equipment.

The **CLG** have commissioned a tool to enable local authorities to evidence the financial benefits of housing related support. National research has demonstrated considerable savings as the provision of housing related support services can prevent the use of most intensive costly public services. The tool can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/financialbenefitsguide?view=Standard>

The [Handyperson Financial Benefits Toolkit](#) uses evidence on the outcomes and benefits of handyperson services and similar interventions to demonstrate the financial benefits of investing in handyperson services locally. Ongoing support for providers and commissioners around the toolkit is provided by Foundations. For more information visit the Foundations website [here](#).



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