



## Home Adaptations Consortium

# Home Adaptations for Disabled People *Integration in Action*

Addressing the 2015 Spending Review Questions posed by HM Treasury in  
*'A country that lives within its means'*

*A submission by the Home Adaptations Consortium\**

*\*The Home Adaptations Consortium is made up of a broad spectrum of national organisations working together to champion quality provision of home adaptations for disabled people*



## **SUMMARY**

The 2015 Spending Review's stated aim is to prioritise spending according to the following core outcomes;

- 1. promoting innovation and greater collaboration in public services**
- 2. promoting growth and productivity, including through radical devolution of powers to local areas in England**
- 3. delivering high-quality public services, such as the NHS**
- 4. promoting choice and competition**
- 5. driving efficiency and value for money across the public sector**

*This submission expands on the ways in which home adaptations for disabled people, and specifically the national government funding to assist with provision of such adaptations, contribute to achieving each of these outcomes.*

***Key Message: It is vital that the modest national investment in home adaptations (the budget for Disabled Facilities Grant) is at the very least maintained in the Spending Review in order to its achieve government priorities, deliver ambitious reforms (particularly to integrate services) and to achieve better outcomes for citizens.***

### **1. Promoting innovation and greater collaboration in public services**

- In a growing number of areas help with home adaptations exemplifies integration in action.
- An integrated, fast, streamlined, locally configured, single point of access system underpinned by a nationally defined framework is demonstrably the most effective and efficient means of providing help with home adaptations.
- The introduction of the Better Care Fund, including payment of funding for home adaptations through that fund, integrated planning and the re-location of public health within local authorities together offer an opportunity for greater collaboration and innovation in local home adaptation delivery
- The overhead costs of delivering help with home adaptations can be reduced through introducing more collaborative, streamlined, co-ordinated, timely and locally tailored systems which operate across housing, health and social care.

- There is potential for bringing down unit costs of some adaptations through innovation e.g. economies of scale via collective procurement, recycling schemes and social enterprise. Better planning and design of new homes also has the potential to reduce future adaptation costs
- A national framework for provision of home adaptations avoids duplication, enables savings through economies of scale and reduces geographical inequality. Innovation plays a key role in driving local improvement and the Home Adaptations Consortium is committed to promoting [local examples](#) of cutting edge practice.

## 2. Promoting growth and productivity - the substantial economic value of home adaptations

- In a world which is ageing and with rising levels of disability, there is substantial economic value to the UK's building, technology and commercial sectors in encouraging more widespread installation of home adaptations to enable independence in mainstream housing
- The UK is at the forefront of some of the technological developments in the field; there are economic benefits to be gained from expanding and developing the domestic and foreign markets
- Home adaptations enable more disabled people and carers to remain economically active

***“With the current demographic changes in society, any policy with the power to reduce the costs of health and social care for older and disabled people must be of interest to government”<sup>i</sup>***

## 3. Delivering high-quality public services, such as the NHS

- Fast, efficient provision of home adaptations plays a critical role in delivery of high quality NHS services and achieving efficiency savings.
- Modest capital funding for home adaptations enables rapid installation for urgent need which result in cost savings e.g. faster hospital discharge, prevention of admission to residential care.
- Whilst many people can and do pay for home adaptations from their own resources, the strong link between disability, poverty and poor housing and use of health and social care services means that this well targeted financial assistance from government plays an essential role in NHS efficiency.
- Home adaptations are relevant to a wide range of public service aims, including prevention of need; transfer of care; supporting carers; enabling disabled people and carers to work; self-management of long term health conditions; end of life care at home and dementia.
- Home adaptations allow people with severely restricted mobility to manage their own lives. Without home adaptations to enable access into and out of the home, people who have experienced a rapid decline in mobility may be unable to attend medical appointments without the assistance of an ambulance service, at an average cost of £231 per incident<sup>[i]</sup>.

## 4. Promoting choice and competition

- Home adaptations enable people help to promote choice in living arrangements that enable independence. What is key is to enable people to make a knowledgeable and informed choice whether they are paying for adaptations themselves or in receipt of financial assistance.
- Many home adaptations costs are already being met by individuals and the charity sector as well as the public purse, and there is a competitive market place already operating in the field of production and installation of equipment and adaptations.
- The private sector is a major provider of building work and equipment and there needs to be safeguards in place to ensure best use of both public and private funds. [Home improvement agencies](#) play a key role in ensuring best value for money and ensuring informed choice.
- [Occupational therapists](#) (OTs) provide critical specialist technical advice about adaptation suitability. A joint report with [Leonard Cheshire Disability](#) noted that 96% of OTs agreed that home adaptations reduce the need for social care, thereby saving on public expenditure by national & local government.
- Impartial, independent information and advice about home adaptations, alternative housing options and related financial advice for self-funders is absolutely key. This enables people to make best use of their limited resources and helps to ensure that there is sufficient consumer protection particularly for the many vulnerable people in this market place.
- The government backed [EAC FirstStop](#) initiative plays a key role in enabling informed decision making by older people and their families whilst independent living centres and similar provision is invaluable to disabled people of all ages.

## 5. Driving efficiency and value for money, including through radical devolution of powers to local areas in England

- Home adaptations for disabled people provide direct economic benefits to the state through reducing calls on the health service (e.g. delayed hospital discharge/ readmission, falls, hip fractures), reducing social care expenditure (through reduced care packages) and enabling independent living for longer<sup>i</sup>
- Just one example of the cost benefits arising from home adaptations is prevention of falls.
- Research by the Building Research Establishment<sup>ii</sup> quantified the annual cost of poor housing to the NHS as at least £1.4bn. The hazards of cold homes and falls are identified as those which have the greatest impact on NHS costs, whilst reducing falls hazards has the fastest payback because of the relatively low remedial cost.
- Evidence from a New Zealand RCT<sup>iii</sup> study that found that even minor home adaptations resulted in a 26% reduction in injuries attributable to home falls that needed medical treatment. Injuries specific to the home modification intervention were reduced by 39%.

**Falls by older people in the UK cost over £1 billion annually<sup>iv</sup>. One hip fracture costs in excess of £30,000<sup>v</sup>. Home adaptations reduce the risk of falls and fractures thereby reducing this expenditure.<sup>vi</sup>**

- Help with home adaptations for low income people is a cost effective use of government funds because a one off capital investment results in revenue savings year on year i.

**Keeping a disabled child in hospital whilst waiting for home adaptations costs £251,850 a year<sup>vii</sup>.**

- Home adaptations assistance is highly targeted through means testing and application of tight eligibility criteria

## References

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<sup>i</sup> National Audit Office (2011), *Transforming NHS ambulance services* [<http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/n10121086.pdf>]

<sup>i</sup> Heywood, F and Turner (2007) *Better Outcomes, Lower Costs: implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: A review of the evidence* Office for Disability Issues

<sup>ii</sup> Building Research Establishment (2015) *The Cost of Poor Housing to the NHS* [<http://www.bre.co.uk/page.jsp?id=3611>]

<sup>iii</sup> Keale MD et al Home Injury Prevention Intervention (HIPI) Study *The Lancet* (online) 23rd Sept 2014

<sup>iv</sup> Scuffham,P, Chaplin,S and Legodd,R (2003) '*Incidence and costs of unintentional falls in older people in the UK*' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 57 740-744. Price adjusted to 2009 levels in line with ONS inflation statistics

<sup>v</sup> Parrott, S (2000) *The economic cost of hip fracture in the UK* York: University of York

<sup>vii</sup> ODPM (2005) *Reviewing the disabled facilities grant: 21* (cost adjusted )