

Integration in Action

GP practices & hospitals:
Impacts of linking to housing services

Southwark Home Improvement Agency
and Handyperson Service



'Every £1 spent on adaptations to support quicker hospital discharge generates a £7.50 saving for health and care'

*Hospital to a Healthier Home
Evaluation (2019)
Care & Repair Cymru*

This brochure describes the benefits to patients, the NHS and social care of linking the Southwark home improvement agency and handyperson service to local GPs and hospitals.

Outcomes of the housing interventions include:

- Frail elderly reduced health risks
- Reduced delayed transfer of care and reduced risk of hospital readmission
- Falls prevention
- Extended safe, independent living at home for people with long term conditions
- Improvements to patient's health, mental health and well-being
- Increased resilience and ability to manage future life changes

Why connect GPs, hospitals and housing services?

Where patients live, the quality, suitability and stability of their home, has a significant impact on their health, and hence on demand for NHS and care services.

The NHS Plan emphasises prevention and delivering more health care at or closer to home. This is only achievable if patients live in safe, decent homes. Keeping people healthier at home for longer, reducing health risks, tackling inequalities and working jointly across professional boundaries, including housing, are all part of the vision for the NHS.

NHS *Quick Guide to Health and Housing* highlights three housing and health connections:

1. How housing can help prevent people from being admitted to hospital;
2. How housing can help people be discharged from hospital; and
3. How housing can support people to remain independent in the community

Ageing, Health & Housing Links

- Poor housing costs the NHS £1.4 billion p.a. in first year treatment costs alone ⁽¹⁾
- 96% of older people live in general housing i.e. not specifically built for older people ⁽²⁾
- 2 million older people live in a non-decent home, 78% are homeowners ⁽³⁾.

Southwark home improvement agency and handyman service

- helping older and disabled patients to live safely & well at home

The *Southwark home improvement agency and handyman service* is helping GPs, hospitals, older and disabled patients by reducing health risks through improving homes.

It is helping people who have problems adapting and repairing their homes by delivering;

- *home adaptations, including fast track for hospital patients*
- *home falls risk assessment with remedial works to make homes safer*
- *home repairs and improvements, including help to tackle cold homes*
- *handyman service for small repairs, minor adaptations and hospital discharge*
- *housing and related financial information and advice*



(1) Nicol S et al (2015) Briefing Paper: The cost of poor housing to the NHS, Building Research Establishment (BRE)

(2) Garret H & Burris S (2015) Homes and ageing in England BRE (4) ONS (2019)

(3) MHCLG 2017 English Housing Survey Data (2019 analysis by BRE)

Preventing multiple crises

Mr West (82yrs) has chronic and unstable diabetes causing frequent falls and blackouts, with resulting calls on the GP and hospitals. Mrs West (80yrs) is the main carer for both Mr West and their disabled son. They have all lived together in the same private rented flat for over 50 years. Mrs West also has several long term health conditions. They were all struggling to live in their home as it was poorly heated and unadapted. The Southwark agency organised installation of central heating, a level access shower and handrails, all of which have reduced risks to the health of the three occupants. The agency also helped the family to claim welfare benefits, increasing weekly income by £154 p.wk. leaving the family better able to eat decent meals and adequately heat their home.

SAVINGS

Reduced cost of unplanned admission to hospital (x3)	£9,228 ⁽⁴⁾
Reduced cost of hip fracture as result of fall at home	£14,163 ⁽⁵⁾
Avoidance of residential care for 3 people annual costs	£107,796 ⁽⁴⁾ <i>(annual)</i>
<i>Compared with</i>	
Cost of home adaptations <i>(central heating, shower, hand rails)</i>	£16,235 <i>(total)</i>

Independence at home = NHS saving

Ms East (36yrs) has Devics disease, a neurological condition which leads to loss of eyesight and eventual paralysis. Ms E had been in hospital for over a year and could not be discharged until her flat had been adapted. The Southwark agency service caseworker organised installation of a level access shower and automated door openers, paid for by a Disabled Facilities Grant of £8,573, enabling Ms East to be discharged from hospital to live independently in her own home.

SAVINGS ⁽⁴⁾

Reduced delayed transfer of care - daily NHS saving	£400 <i>(per day)</i>
12 month delayed transfer of care cost	£146,000 <i>(annual)</i>
Avoidance of residential care - <i>reduced annual costs</i>	£21,840 <i>(annual)</i>
<i>Compared with</i>	
Cost of home adaptations	£8,573 <i>(total)</i>

(4) Unit costs of health and social care 2019, Personal Social Services Research Unit

(5) Leal J et al (2016) Impact of hip fracture on hospital care costs

Health and Housing Links

Many of the most common chronic long term health conditions have a causal link to or are exacerbated by poor or unsuitable housing. These include;

- heart disease
- arthritis and rheumatism
- stroke
- respiratory conditions
- mental health problems
- sight loss

Older people, particularly **frail elderly, are more prone to falls**, most of which occur at home. Removing home hazards has been proven to reduce that risk.⁽¹⁾

Two thirds of people with **dementia** live in their own homes, and one third living alone. Modifications to those homes can make them safer places to live.

Southwark HIA – Improving Patients’ Lives

Last year’s action by Southwark home improvement agency and handyperson service.



Number of people helped	Homes Adapted	Repairs & Handyperson jobs
3,224	433	2,571



3 Hospitals		Number of people helped	
41 GPs			

Modifying Homes to Prevent Falls
Financial Return on Investment
financial return on investment
(1) of **£3.17: £1.00**



(1) Public Health England (2018) A return on investment tool for the assessment of falls prevention programmes for older people living in the community <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/falls-prevention-cost-effectivecommissioning>

About Southwark home improvement agency and handyperson service

Offers help with home adaptations, repairs and improvements, including an affordable handyperson service, plus information, advice and assistance with wider housing and finance issues.

CONTACT US: 0207 525 1873

home.improvementagency@southwark.gov.uk

<https://localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/housing/>

About Care & Repair England

Care & Repair England (Charitable Society Reg. No. 25121R) aims to improve older people's housing. It innovates, develops, promotes and supports practical housing initiatives & related policy and practice which enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they choose.

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“I live on my own with a lot of health problems made worse by being cold and struggling up and down the stairs. The repairs and adaptations have made such a difference”.

Mrs James

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