

Integration in Action

Small but Significant:
Evidence of impact and cost
benefits of handyperson services

Preston Care and Repair handyperson service



This brochure summarises the impacts and cost benefits to the NHS and Social Care of the Preston Care and Repair handyperson service based on the findings of an independent evaluation.

Outcomes include:

- improved older people's physical health
- improved mental health
- prevented/reduced risk of acute health episodes and unplanned hospital admissions
- reduced GP visits/calls on other health professionals' time
- extended safe, independent living at home
- improved wellbeing and quality of life
- High rate of Return on Investment - fiscal and societal
- For falls reduction alone ROI was 4.28:1 i.e. every £1 spent on the handyperson service health and social care saved £4.28

The NHS England view of housing

The 'Next Steps in the NHS Five Year Forward View' highlights the importance of keeping people healthier for longer, improving care, reducing health inequalities and working jointly across professional boundaries, including housing.

NHS England (NHSE) is signed up to a national Memorandum of Understanding as a commitment to support joint action across housing, health and care. NHSE's CCG Engagement Programme has published a 'Quick Guide to Health and Housing'

This brochure outlines how an independently evaluated*¹ local handyperson service is contributing to achievement of NHS, Public Health and Social Care outcomes.

“As I live on my own (with health problems) I sometimes feel vulnerable. I can trust Preston Care and Repair to send me a vetted, trustworthy worker” Mrs S, 89yrs

Why improve older people's homes?

Where people live - the quality, suitability and stability of their home - has a significant impact on occupants' physical and mental health. There are quantifiable costs resulting from housing disrepair, with annual first year treatment costs to the NHS and social care in excess of £1.4bn*²

A forward looking view of the NHS, which envisages not only a greater emphasis on prevention but also health care increasingly delivered at or closer to home, will only be achievable if patients live in suitable, decent and adapted homes where such care can be safely provided.

Health & Housing Links

- Each year around 30% of people aged 65yrs+ and 50% of those aged 80yrs+ experience a fall, most of which occur at home and with falls risk level linked to home hazards
- 2 million older households live in non-decent homes, 78% in the owner occupied sector
- Many long term health conditions have a causal link to or are exacerbated by poor housing e.g. respiratory conditions, arthritis, mental health problems, heart disease, stroke etc.

Preston Care and Repair handyperson service

- helping older people live independently and well at home

Covering four Lancashire Boroughs - Preston, South Ribble, Chorley and West Lancs - the Preston Care and Repair handyperson team carry out a wide range of small repairs and minor adaptations in the homes of older and disabled people. They offer everyone a 'Healthy Home Assessment' with remedial measures to reduce home hazards, particularly to reduce falls risk, and also alert Care and Repair caseworkers if they identify older people with other housing issues.

*¹ <http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Small-but-Significant-Handyperson-Evaluation-CRE-2018.pdf>

*² Nicol S, Roys M, & Garrett H (2015) *Briefing paper: The cost of poor housing to the NHS* Building Research Establishment

The Impact

Results of the independent evaluation of the Preston Care and Repair handyman service.

OUTPUTS

1,865 handyman jobs were completed for 929 older people in the year, with volunteer input into 268 jobs, in a year 8^{*3}

- Nearly half of those helped by the handyman service are over 80yrs (46%), older women (77%), living alone (72%) often living with chronic long term health conditions and disability.

OUTCOMES

Preston Care and Repair handyman service has a significant impact on older people's mental and physical health, wellbeing, independence and quality of life.

- Falls risk was reduced for 37% of the older people using the handyman service.
- Improved wellbeing was a key outcome for 90% of older service users
- Other outcomes include reduced risk of hospital admission, faster, safer hospital discharge to home, improved safety and security, reduced worry and stress associated with maintaining the home.

The handyman service provides older people with great relief from worry about their home, making them feel more independent and in control. It is exceptionally highly valued.

- 96% of older people said that the handyman service made them less worried about their home.
- 100% of older people said that they would use the service again and would recommend it to others.
- 77% said they would not have jobs done if the handyman service was not there due to worry about finding a trustworthy builder.
- Trust was a key factor. It was important to older people that the handyman service was delivered by a local, not for profit, trustworthy provider to which they had ready access i.e. a phone call away.

COST BENEFITS

For every **£1 spent** on the handyman service the saving to health and care from falls reduction alone is **£4.28**. *(This return on investment does not include many of the other fiscal and social gains e.g. improved wellbeing, reduced anxiety, hospital discharge etc.).*



^{*3} 12 month equivalent figures based on 9 months data collection. Additional handyman jobs were completed e.g. for younger disabled people (not included in these figures)

Time to act

There is a strong policy drive to encourage greater integration and partnership working across sectors, particularly with regard to prevention and extending healthy, independent later life. As this report highlights, older people identify handy person services as a very important resource to enable safe, independent living at home.

The impacts of handy person services straddle health, housing and social care aims and objectives. They offer a highly cost effective solution with significant cost benefits and a high rate of return on investment, both financial and social.

“My husband used to do everything, so it makes all the difference to me just knowing Preston Care and Repair are there. It makes me feel that I can manage. It is such a relief when you have never had to do these things and you don't know where to turn to.”

Mrs G, 84yrs



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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About Preston Care and Repair

Preston Care and Repair is an independent home improvement agency with charitable status (Registered Society 27847R). Over the past 20 years it has grown to cover Preston, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Chorley. It provides practical help and support with all aspects of being safe, secure, warm and independent including home repairs, adaptations and improvements as well as independent advice and information.

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