

Annual Report

Aberdeen Care and Repair

01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009

Introduction

Aberdeen Care and Repair works with Aberdeen City Council, through local housing strategy to assist owner- occupiers with repairs, improvements, adaptations and heating issues. The client group are older people, people with a disability or long- term health problems within the private sector and/or experiencing fuel poverty.

The service comprises of the 5 elements identified below along with the number of new referrals received during the reporting period:

Service	No of Referrals
Advice	160
Trusted Traders	453
Grants Aided (Repair/Improvement/adaptations)	174
Affordable Warmth	182
Non- grant aided (Repair/improvements/adaptations)	167
Handyperson Service	2159

The service assists client's carry out repair's, improvements and adaptations allowing them to remain independent, safe and secure within their own homes. Since July 2008 an in-house handyman service is in operation, employing 4 tradesmen direct to assist older and disabled people within the city of Aberdeen carry out small repairs or small tasks within their home at a fixed charge. We also provide through a service level agreement a handyman service for the Homecheck scheme to install safety measures in client's homes for the prevention of trips and falls. Examples of these are grab rails for the elderly and stair gates for young families.

Each year the numbers of requests and referrals increase and the need for the type of assistance care and repair provides becomes more demanding. The project over the years has adapted and changed to meet the demands of both funders and service users. 2007/2008 was a particularly challenging year, which saw the removal of private sector housing grants for repair and improvements to properties, leaving our client group having to meet the full costs of these works. This has resulted in an increased need for Officers to identify alternative funding routes, one of which is accessing charitable funding for low - income households. Charitable funding, although effective is very time consuming, which may result in work being delayed and condition of property worsening.

This year we have worked with Aberdeen City Council through the HECA strategy on a few projects within the city

- Warm Zone – this was a project within the city centre consisting of mixed tenure block of pre 1919 tenements where fuel poverty was known to be prevalent. Our Affordable Warmth Project took the referrals for the heating negotiating with contractors to obtained fixed rates for heating upgrades or installations. Our Handyman service carried out the draught-proofing work to front and rear entrance doors at competitive rates.
41 referrals for heating were received, and 50 referrals for draught-proofing work
- Act as an agent to deliver the central heating programme for a 3-month period. Delivering the chp package to 22 households in Aberdeen consisting of clients over the age of 80.
- Loft clearances – for homeowners who are physically unable to clear their lofts to allow for energy efficiency measures to be carried out. (23 properties)

By organisations joining together to deliver projects throughout the city the outcomes can be improved in many ways, namely

- Cost effectiveness
- Greater coverage
- Controlled delivery

Referrals to the service increase yearly due to the ageing population within the city. Many of these clients live in designated regeneration areas within the city. During the last financial year 33.34% of our clients lived in regeneration areas.

**This figure does not include identified 'at risk' areas within the city*

We actively participate on many networks and committees to ensure that the voice of our client group is heard and continually lobby both local and national bodies for changes in service provision as well as identifying unmet needs within the city of Aberdeen. Staff within the service attend/support local community groups to provide talks and information on the service and work closely with other local organisations in the city, in particular through the Healthy Living Network where a bespoke referral system to other organisations is in place.

Project Statistics

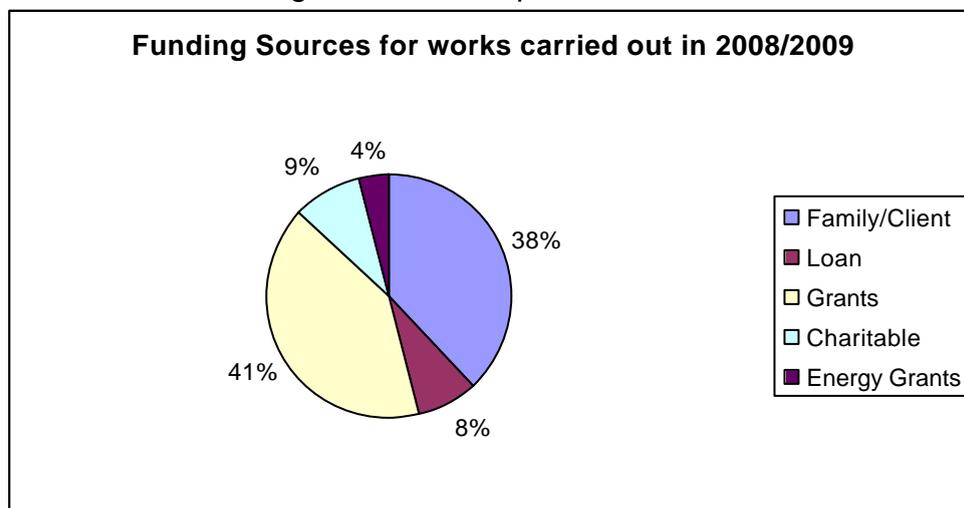
Aberdeen Care and Repair received a total number of 3259 referrals over the year.

The total number of jobs completed is as follows:

Small Repairs/Handyman	£ 70,562.54
Affordable Warmth	£ 203,705.65
Repair/Improvement/Pilot ProjectGrants	£ 522,712.74
Disabled Grants	£ 37,719.24
Non-grant eligible works	<u>£ 153,158.32</u>
Total Costs of Works Carried out	£ 987,858.49

It should be noted that a further 77 cases with estimated works cost totalling £343,955.80 did not proceed. A large proportion of these cases were for work that prior to April 2008 would have received grant assistance. 43% would have qualified for repair/improvement grants and 35% for the affordable warmth heating grants. The removal of these grants for 2008/2009 impacted on these cases.

The graph below illustrates the sources of funding which covered the works carried out through Care and Repair in 2008/2009.



£74,371.94 of charitable funding was raised for individuals in 2008/2009.

The Service

Free advice/Trusted Trader Scheme

One of the barriers for owner-occupiers carrying out work within the home is the lack of technical knowledge and the ability to find trusted tradesmen. The advice service has always been seen as an important part of the service, but over the last 18 months the number of advice cases has increased with vulnerable clients requiring immediate advice. As a result the project have arranged for an officer to be on duty between 9am and 5pm in order that any calls for advice can be dealt with immediately and clients can get the information they require thus reducing their concerns. The service is registered as an advice service with Homepoint and all administration staff and officers have completed gained level 1 accreditation for housing advice.

A formalised 'trusted trader scheme' has been in operation for the last 6 months. This is a list of local reputable contractors used by Care and Repair and their clients. In order to be part of this scheme contractors have to submit copies of their public liability insurance, accreditations, and details of their hourly rates. Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out to ensure that these contractors are providing a professional and reliable service. Contractors are removed from the lists if they do not meet care and repair standards of service. To date 41 of the 78 contractors approached have registered with the scheme.

During 2007/2008 our web site was launched providing information on our service provision. Details of our Trusted Trader Scheme are available on this site, which can be accessed by all residents in Aberdeen City. www.aberdeencareandrepair.co.uk.

During 2008/2009, 613 clients received immediate advice or information on our Trusted Traders to enable them to carry out the work.

Repairs and Improvements

The Care and Repair service assist homeowners and private rented sector tenants carry out improvements, repairs and adaptations in their own homes. Clients are visited in their own homes and given advice on the options available to bring the property up to standard. This includes drawing up specifications, obtaining quotes from selected contractors and helping organise the financing of the works required. During 2007/2008 this work received grant assistance through PSHG but this was not available in 2008/2009 for new applications, although grants that are already approved as at 22nd April 2008 were honoured. Clients still received assistance from Care and Repair staff with obtaining quotations etc, but this had a huge financial impact on some of our client group many of which are not in a position to meet the costs of the repairs themselves and charitable organisations will have to be approached. These changes has already had an impact on the length of time taken per case, as well as a reduction in the level of repairs carried out by householders, many of whom choose to carry out the minimal repair required.

Types of work undertaken: roofs, roughcasting, rewiring, window replacement and dampness.

During 2008/2009 households were assisted through Care and Repair for this type of work. Total cost of work carried out being £522,712.74

Affordable Warmth Project:

The Aberdeen Affordable Warmth Scheme was established in October 1999. It is targeted at householders in Aberdeen who are owner-occupiers, are on low fixed-incomes and have little or no capital assets except the house they live in. Since the project has developed and the recent rises in energy bills the target group has widened and now includes anyone suffering from fuel poverty.

The main barrier, which prevents people from this group carrying out energy efficiency measures, is their lack of capital, ability to borrow money or repay a loan on a low fixed income. . The scheme works with individual householders to identify the energy efficiency measures required, access any grants available both locally and nationally and if necessary approaches charitable organisations on their behalf.

The service administers a loan fund to provide loans for energy efficiency measures. This fund offers low fixed interest loans to clients where no alternative source of funding is available. The service arranges to have the work carried out by reputable contractors and ensures that work has been carried out to client's satisfaction.

Two Care and Repair Officers are fully qualified NHER Assessors and 3 have qualifications in energy advice.

Fuel poverty is on the increase with the local house condition survey identifying that currently 16.7% of households in Aberdeen are in fuel poverty. When the most recent fuel prices are included it is estimated that this figure has risen to 21% resulting in more people falling into the client group who will have need of this service.

During 2008/2009, 174 households were assisted through Care and Repair for this type of work. Total cost of work carried out being £203,705.65

Disabled Adaptations/Other Works

Over the last financial year 182 of our cases have required assistance with work that is not grant eligible. Some of the adaptations carried out through Care and Repair is not grant eligible for various reasons. Many of these cases are for clients with a mental health disability, rather than a physical disability or homeowners wishing to prepare their properties for their senior years. This means that these cases can be very complex and attracting financial assistance for these individual clients is labour intensive. Generally works are funded by 100% by clients or with both contributions from the client and various charitable organisations.

Over the last 6 months, Care and Repair have been acting as an agent for grant eligible disabled adaptations working closely with the Occupational Therapists, contractors and clients to ensure work is carried out with the minimum distress to the disabled person. This can sometimes involve arranging temporary accommodation for the occupants whilst work is carried out. To date £37,719.24 of disabled grant eligible adaptations has been carried out.

During 2008/2009 182 households were assisted through Care and Repair for work that was not grant eligible. Total cost of work carried out being £153,158.32.

Small Repairs Service/Handyperson Service

An increased demand for the small repairs and handyperson service over the past few years resulting in the project carrying out at review of service provision, which included a customer survey to obtain our service users views .The out come of the review was additional Tradesmen were employed to deliver the service in-house and the project had to generate enough income through its charging policy to meet shortfalls in statutory funding. At the same time a fixed charged of £25.00 for up to 2 hours work including travel was introduced.

This service has been operational since July 2007 and 2008/2009 saw the first full year of operation with the service meeting its target of income generation. This service has proved to be beneficial to our clients for the following reasons:

1. Project can cover joinery, plumbing and electrical work
2. Safety/Security – all Care and Repair Staff have full disclosure Scotland
3. Continuity – Same person turning up to do the work
4. Cost effectiveness – Clients are advised of fixed charges before work carried out.
5. Appointments are arranged to suit clients whilst they are on the telephone
6. Staff can be flexible, i.e. meet social workers/carers at appointed times
7. Staff have knowledge of other assistance that may be available through Care and Repair and other agencies
8. Small jobs are often more complex or involve more than one type of tradesman,
9. Customer satisfactions surveys are carried out to ensure quality service is delivered.

“Handyperson service helps and encourages independence for vulnerable people to remain in their own homes promoting home safety and security thus reducing the risk of accidents and addressing security matters ”

During 2008/2009, 2159 households were assisted by Care and Repair through our Handyperson Service.

Type of work carried out

Electrical	380	Plumbing	500
Joiner	647	Slater/builder	33
Security Measures	38	Small Tasks	158
Safety Measures	351	Other	48

Homecheck Service

This service is available to all residents within the city of Aberdeen irrespective of age or tenure. Officers from the Homecheck service visit residents in their own homes to carry out a safety check and advise clients on measures that can be taken. If there is a need for safety equipment to be installed a referral is made to our service to carry out the installation of the equipment safely.

A service level in agreement is held with Aberdeen City council to provide the tradesman to carry out the installation of safety equipment in client's properties within the city of Aberdeen.

Referrals

Total number of referrals to service 367
 Total number of completions during reporting period 339

Type of work undertaken

102 Grab Rails fitted	35 packs of safety catches fitted
453 Safety gates fitted	12 Thresholds/Mat wells made safe
5 metal rails fitted	7 additional security measures fitted

On average work is completed within 12 working days, but if staff identify priority cases an early visit is arranged.

Results of Customer Satisfaction Survey for our in house Small Repairs/ Handyperson Service

After initial contact did you think you had a long time to wait?

No 88% Yes 12%

Were you satisfied with the work carried out?

Yes 98% No 2%

Were you satisfied with the manner of the Handyman/SRS Contractor? Yes

99% No 1%

Were your needs met by the Handyman/SRS service?

Yes 97% No 3%

(Percentages based on an 85% return rate)

The feedback from customers using these services is a positive one. Although a high number of clients would like the service extended to cover other needs.

Comments from Clients: - *1st Class service, Appreciate help very much, Good & efficient service, Staff very friendly, Very reassuring to know you can rely on Care & Repair for help*

Qualitative Assessment:

Income maximisation:

As part of our holistic approach a benefit check is carried out to all clients who receive a home visit from one of the Project Officers. If benefits are required clients are assisted with completing applications for the benefits highlighted below, but referrals are also made on to other organisations if it is a more complex cases. Another avenue for increasing household incomes, particularly with the elderly or disabled is to apply for Annuities from national/local or work related charitable organisations/trusts. This is seen by staff as another way to help those who may sit just above minimum income levels and find it difficult to deal with the unexpected expenses of housing repairs or unexpected increase in daily living costs.

Over the last 12 months:

54 Clients have received assistance in applying for additional benefits.

£3,279.27 a week of additional income has been secured.

Totalling £141,089.00 63 per annum of additional income for our client group.

Benefits Secured 08/09

Attendance Allowance	27	Pension Credit	5
Disability Living Allowance	10	Council Tax Benefit	3
Annuities	21	Carers Allowance	6

Additional Assistance – Referrals to other agencies

As part of the holistic approach taken by Care and Repair staff during this financial year, 594 referrals were made to other agencies/organisations on behalf of care and repair

clients for assistance. The table below identified the main organisations referrals were made to:

Aberdeen City Council – Various Departments	37
Trusted Traders	400
Re-housing (Various)	14
Income Maximisation (other agencies)	19
Scottish Executive CHP Scheme/Insulation Measures/Energy Advice	29
Occupational Therapists	53
Other	42

Customer Satisfaction: (Work Cases only)

The following response was received from clients who had work carried out in their home.

1. How did you find out about Care and Repair?

Local Authority Dept	14%	Social Work/OT	7%
Health/GP	4%	Neighbour	8%
Publicity	11%	Voluntary Sector	5%
Home Care	3%	Other	5%
Friend/Relation/Self	39%		

2. How did you contact Aberdeen Care & Repair?

Telephone	85%	Referred by other agency	7%
In person	5%	Can't Remember	3%

3. How long did you have to wait from first contact to first visit?

1 Week	24%	1 to2 Weeks	45%
1 month	11%	Can't Remember	19%

4. How satisfied were you with work done through Care & Repair?

Very satisfied	85%	Satisfied	14%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	4%		

5. How would you describe the assistance of the Care & Repair officer?

Very satisfied	87%	Satisfied	13%
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6. Describe the standard of work of the tradesmen with regard to:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Unanswered
Quality	68%	27%	0%	5%
Reliability	60%	24%	1%	15%
Customer Care	61%	21%	3%	2%

7. Would you have managed to carry out the work without Care & Repair?

No	74%	Yes	11%	Don't Know	13%
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8. Has the work carried out made a difference to your enjoyment of your house? Significant Difference (80%) Minor Difference (7%) No Difference (4%)

9. Would you be able to continue living at home if the work had not been carried out?
Yes (78%) No (16%)
10. Would you use the Care & Repair service again?
Yes (97%) No (0%)
11. Would you recommend Care & Repair to others?
Yes (97%) No (No%)
12. In overall terms how satisfied were you with the assistance given by the agency?
Very Satisfied (85%) Satisfied (10%) Not answered (5%)

The following tables show the profile of customers, their properties and the type of work carried out during 2007/2008 in percentages.

Customer Profile (All):

Age	Under 60	60-70	70-80	Over 80
%	12%	20%	39%	29%

Household	Female Single	Male Single	Couple	Single & Family	Couple & Family	Siblings
%	44%	8%	30%	6%	4%	8%

Disability	Physical	Mental	Learning	Chronic Illness	Mobility	Dementia	General Poor Health
%	22%	11%	3%	19%	31%	4%	10%

Property Profile:

Property Age	Pre 1919	1919 to 1944	1945 to 1964	1965 to 1982	Post 1982
%	21%	22%	29%	22%	6%

Tenure Type	Paying Mortgage	Own Outright	Social Housing	Private Rented
%	5%	82%	11%	2%

Property Type	Detached	Semi	Terraced	Tenement Flat	Other Flat	Multi Storey
%	6%	35%	19%	16%	10%	4%

Length of Residence	Less than 5 yrs	5 to 10 years	10 to 20 years	20 to 30 years	30 years or more
%	8%	10%	17%	27%	38%

Number of Cases & Type of Work (Completed)

(Does not include small repairs)

Window/Door	Roof/Walls	Bathroom	Electrical	Heating	Other Works
16%	15%	15%	6%	33%	15%