

# SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT


## Evaluating Preston Care & Repair's Handyperson Service

Sue Adams

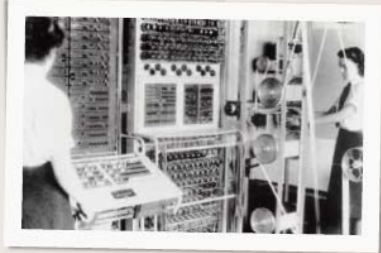
Care & Repair England

# CATCH 22: IMPROVING THE EVIDENCE

- Providers lack resources & skills to do robust research
- Few academic bodies are undertaking general housing research
- *Resulting lack of independent, quantified jeopardises the future of housing services*



## Catch 22: Improving the Health, Housing and Ageing Evidence Base



**The Evidence Dilemma**


In an era of unprecedented reductions in public expenditure higher standards of outcome evidence are being demanded. Faced with difficult choices, service commissioners in particular require robust evidence that demonstrates the cost benefits of services.

However, there has been a lack of investment in high standard academic research into the housing, health and ageing connections, particularly using randomised control trials, and especially in mainstream<sup>1</sup> housing.

This low level of research investment means that the housing sector has primarily used individual case studies to illustrate how their services can save money, which is often rejected as inadequate proof of savings.

The providers of housing services for older people may find themselves in a Catch 22 situation i.e. unable to provide academic standard evidence, services may be decommissioned, further diminishing the opportunity to develop such an evidence base.

<sup>1</sup> Mainstream homes are properties that have been built for anyone to live in, whereas specialist housing for older people has been built specifically for that age group e.g. sheltered, extra care, retirement housing.



# REDRESSING THE BALANCE

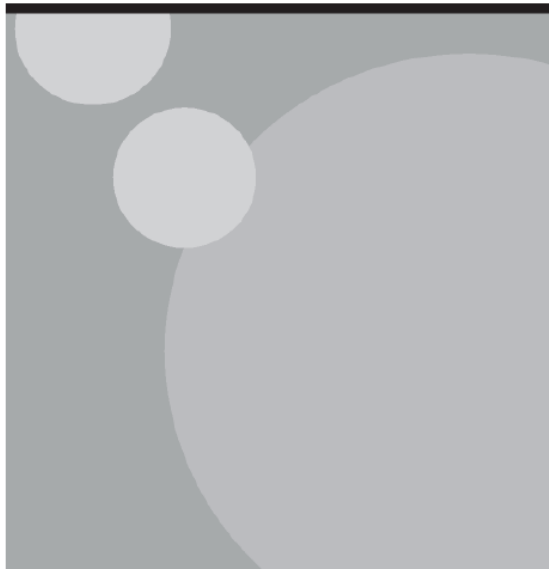
- **Stimulate interest** in undertaking research in the health/ housing/ ageing field, particularly for mainstream housing adaptations and repairs
- ***Forge new partnerships*** between researchers and stakeholders, including housing practitioners & service users
- .....
- **Focus to date** – primarily adaptations, falls prevention, housing, disrepair (*Off the Radar* publication), now handyperson
- Would like to encourage/ support new research into handyperson/ small repairs impact



# NATIONAL EVALUATION FINDINGS



National Evaluation of the Handyperson Programme



- Govt. funded HP initiative, York Uni, 2012
- Noted high outputs, key role maintaining independence, highly rated by users
- Cost benefits esp. to Social Services
- *“valued for trustworthiness, reliability, quality, and crucially for the skills and respectful attitudes of the staff”*



# HEALTH & CARE INTEGRATION

## Handyperson Services role today ?

- **Hospital link** - reduce delayed transfers of care/ readmissions/ reduce risk of admission
- **Health Link** - preventative/ pro-active eg. *falls prevention, LTC self management*
- **Care Link** - enable greater independence eg *self care, ADL – bathing etc, reduce falls )*



This report has been sponsored by:



Care Services Improvement Partnership **CSIP**

Health and Social Care  
**Change Agent Team**

## OTHER QUESTIONS POSED

- **Added value through:**
  - **Volunteering**
  - **Possible apprenticeship link**
- **Keeping the breadth of the HP offer** - in context of shrinking criteria/ more tightly defined funding
- **Value to the service user**



A decorative vertical bar on the left side of the slide, featuring a gradient from dark blue to light blue, with several thin vertical lines and a large orange circle at the top. Below the circle are several smaller orange circles of varying sizes, arranged in a descending staircase pattern.

## BRIEF CONTEXT

Laura Holmes, Preston Care  
& Repair

# ABOUT PRESTON CARE & REPAIR

- Independent charitable home improvement agency
- Initially operating in the Lancashire borough of Preston
- Now delivering some services in nearby boroughs of South Ribble, Chorley & West Lancs

[www.carerepair.org](http://www.carerepair.org)





# PRESTON CARE & REPAIR



- Healthy Home Assessments
- Handyman & Minor Adaptations
- Major Adaptations & Repairs
- Housing Options for Older People (a Silverlinks project)
- Home from Hospital Support
- Dementia Support Service
- Info, advice & signposting incl. technical I&A



# HANDYPERSON SERVICE



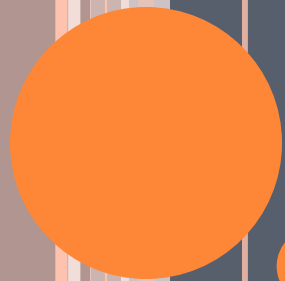
- Longstanding handyman team – provided free, non-means tested, ‘broad offer’
- New council contract resulted in tighter range of jobs which could be carried out at no charge
- Now have paid-for service + charity funds for outside criteria jobs



# HANDYPERSON SERVICE EVALUATION

- Change of contract, with new criteria (including focus on preventing falls /Healthy Home Assessment) prompted interest in evaluation
- Issue of how to help people with small repair 'odd jobs' that fell outside criteria, but where people couldn't afford the cost of the paid-for service
- C&RE offer of co-funding from Rayne Foundation to match fund plus pay for evaluation fitted with addressing issue and also looking forward to proving worth as funding became ever tighter





# THE EVALUATION



Sue Adams



# HANDYPERSON SERVICE EVALUATION

- Thanks to the Rayne Foundation C&RE were able to offer to
  - Co-fund the continuation of the full range of handyperson work, including 'odd jobs' where the outcome(s) could not be argued to reduce falls risk etc
  - Undertake the evaluation, using qualitative & quantitative methodology , including drawing on some input from independent academic advice
  - Aim to broker relationship with interested academics who might take this area of work further

*Duration – 1 year, from July 16 to Aug 17 (publ. report)*



# CHALLENGES

- Use existing data collection system as far as possible
- Short timeframe to recruit volunteers/ organise apprenticeship
- Competing priorities within the agency facing challenging times
- Finding interested academics



# OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES & QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

- **What - job details** – separated out work done by volunteer HP to quantify added value
- **Who - person details** – age, gender etc
- **Outcomes - about person** – agency staff record reduced falls risk etc. *Sample later independently verified / checked by academic volunteer advisers*
- **Outcome in terms of the home** - modified job sheet to capture prevention of deterioration of home (*used in previous reports*)
- **Client feedback** - 100% postal survey, devised new form, high rate of return to C&RE
- **Face to face interviews** – *academic input*



# INDICATIVE FINDINGS TO DATE

## ○ Who?

- Emerging picture of primary users 'older old' 80+ women living alone (nearly half of users), for whom service is a 'lifeline'.

## ○ What?

- **Wide range of work, esp small awkward jobs no-one else wants to do is v important**
- Helping person find good builder who can do the required job if outside the scope of the HP service is v. important
- Mostly 'general repairs' category, but security measures, grab rails, hazard removal also high





# INDICATIVE FINDINGS TO DATE

## ○ **Outcomes**

- Main impact re cost savings potentially for health sector - improved well-being & reduced falls risk

## ○ **Value to individual**

- Clear picture emerging from feedback forms and interviews of the high value put on the service as a trustworthy, reliable source of help as and when needed – gives enormous peace of mind

## ○ **How?**

- Added value of HP volunteer is significant, but key is quality not quantity - high output for minimal input if skilled volunteer vs trainee. Mutual benefit.



# 25 YEARS OF COMMON FINDINGS

## *More than bricks and mortar*

- **Peace of mind role absolutely key** – trustworthy, reliable, enabling self reliance for a growing number of households – single older women, usually widowed, living well into their 80s and 90s.
- **Competent, self reliant, determined to retain independence** – but worried
- **Added value of reducing that worry** by being the ‘go to’ service – human face, not just building job
- **Challenge – how to put a value on this?**



# COMMENTS & QUESTIONS?



- Report due out end of Summer/ early Autumn 17
- Keen to see more research in this area
- *Thanks to Rayne, Laura & PC&R staff, Rita and Rachel*



# WHO?

- **Care & Repair England**; *national housing charity aims to address poor and unsuitable housing conditions amongst the older population, esp. low income home owners (est. 1986)*
- **Pioneers of local Care & Repair services**, *Handyperson, Minor works grants, Healthy Homes, Older People's "Housing Activism", Housing Options I&A eg Silverlinks, Evidence creation - Catch22*
- **Policy shaping**: *Older people's housing – Chair Housing & Ageing Alliance, Home Adaptations Consortium, HCA, DCLG, DH & NHS England Integration Task Groups etc...*

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## DISCUSSION

*‘How can researchers and practitioners work together to help to gain greater recognition of the importance of practical housing help in later life?’*

Chaired by: Professor Debora Price

Panel Members:

Tom Luckraft, Dr Rachael Docking, Sheila Mackintosh, Sue Adams, Laura Holmes

