

First Annual Review
2012/13



Better Together



Cambs Home Improvement Agency works in Cambridge City,
Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire
www.cambshia.org



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council



Message from Lead Councillors

Cambs HIA broke new ground as the first shared service across our three council areas. We want to see this service leading the way in joining up what we do to enable people to remain living independently in suitable homes. This includes responding to the needs of a growing number of frailer older people.

This Review presents the starting point for Cambs HIA. We look forward to its future success.



Cllr. N. J. Gyatt
Huntingdonshire



Cllr. C. Smart
Cambridge City



Cllr. M. Howell
South
Cambridgeshire

Introduction

Cambs Home Improvement Agency was set up in Spring 2012, bringing together three separate Local Authority Agencies from Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

The service is governed by a “Shared Services Agreement” and overseen by a Management Board with Senior Officers from all three councils.

The aim of this Report is to explain what we do, who benefits, our funding and plans. We hope you will find it worthwhile and informative to read.

What We Do

We project manage repairs, improvements and adaptations to enable people to continue to live independently. We work with people of all ages, including disabled children, adults, older people, those who have terminal conditions and people who are living in poor housing conditions.

We work mainly with people who own or privately rent their homes. Adaptation to council owned homes in Cambridge City and South Cambs are undertaken by council’s directly but adaptations to housing association homes (as in Huntingdonshire), tend to be done via Cambs HIA.

“I feel confident having a shower, no fear of slipping or falling down.”

“[I now have]... independence moving up and down the stairs.”



Disabled adaptations

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are available for qualifying people to carry out essential adaptations to give better freedom of movement into and around the home and to access essential facilities within it.

Anyone who could benefit from disabled adaptations should contact Cambridgeshire Direct to request an Occupational Therapy assessment.

Examples: paving and ramps, level access showers, stair lifts, hoists and ceiling tracking, door entry systems, wheelchair accessible extensions.

Case study:

Following a family move, assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and the necessary approval, we were able to provide low level kitchen worktops with an integrated hob, an accessible bedroom (by converting the garage) and level access shower facility for Mr C.



Repairs

Repairs Assistance grants or loans are available from local councils for qualifying people. These are discretionary and what is available depends on where you live. The funding available ranges from around £500 up to £20,000 depending on the nature of the works. Larger sums are generally given as a loan secured on the property.

Over the winter period we worked with partner agencies on a Winterwarmth programme funded by the Department of Health. This enabled us to assist older and vulnerable people get essential heating repairs done and access a wide range of services, support and information.

Examples: roof replacements, windows & doors, boiler repairs, electrical safety checks & related repairs, heating improvements, work on gutters, downpipes and soffits.

Case study:

Following an application under the Local Authority Repairs Assistance scheme, we were able to replace windows, doors (front and back), soffits and fascia boards on the house and porch and also replace the garage flat roof.



Other services information

We also offer a wide range of information and an extensive network of contacts about useful services.

Topics include: practical help and care, energy efficiency, finance & benefits, housing options, safety & security, keeping well, social & community.

Case study:

In one exceptional case Cambs HIA helped two vulnerable clients clear their garden with support from the Probation Service. This was a first step in a longer term project working closely with Occupational Therapists and the Physical Disability and Sensory Services Team to enable this family to remain living safely and independently in their own home. Further work will involve helping to clear the property to carry out electrical safety works and possible adaptations.



Current & Future Needs

The demand for adaptations continues to rise due to longer life expectancy, medical advance, the rise in people living independently with long term medical conditions or disabilities, improvements in pre-term care for babies and medical support for disabled children.

“Nearly 1m households in England require some level of adaptation.”

DCLG, English House Condition Survey 2011

In Cambridgeshire, the number of older people is forecast to rise steadily until at least 2021. Most older people are in good health but the number of frail older people is increasing especially people aged 85 or over.

Research evidence has shown a range of the benefits from adaptations including impact on quality of life and reduction in demand or avoidance of the need for health and social care services.

PSSRU Discussion paper 2831, London School of Economics, July 2012



About Us

We are a small, friendly specialist team with a strong customer focus and expertise in this field. We strive to deliver a quality and caring service. We project manage cases and support people throughout what can be a complex process.

We work closely together to deliver the Cambs HIA service. Administrators deal with enquiries, maintain our records and prepare documents. Caseworkers oversee cases, gather and complete required documents, monitor progress and deal with queries or concerns. Our Surveyors provide technical expertise on design and construction. They do technical design work and deal with regulatory requirements including planning permission and building control. In addition they liaise with contractors and inspect works.



The Cambs HIA Team, Grant Officers and representatives from the Private Sector Housing Team in Huntingdonshire at South Cambs Hall

“Thank you so much for all the help you have given me. When I lost my partner in August I felt quite desperate and not able to manage....I feel such a relief now my electricity is safe.”

The Board

Our Management Board meets quarterly and is responsible for overseeing and monitoring what we do. The Board members are:

Alan Carter (Chair),

Head of Strategic Housing, Cambridge City Council.

Stephen Hills,

Director of Housing, South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Trish Reed,

Housing Strategy Manager, Huntingdonshire District Council.

Key partners

To enable us to deliver our service we work closely with:

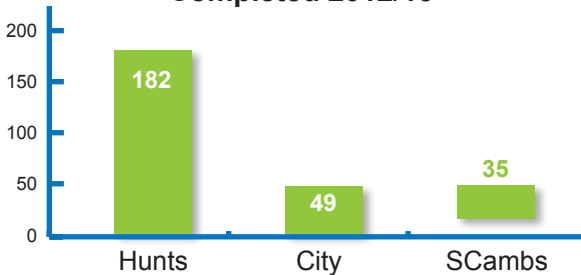
- Local Authority Grants Officers (and the Private Sector Housing Team in Huntingdonshire) - in each Local Authority area check and approve mandatory and discretionary grants for qualifying people.
- Occupational Therapists - assess people's need for adaptations and determine what will address those needs within the relevant legislation.
- Approved Contractors-who are trusted and experienced in this field complete building works. Our clients (or their representatives) are involved in selecting the contractors considered for their project.

“...the bathroom adaptation is completed and [I] am enjoying the benefit of it immensely. It has made such an enormous difference. The builders were absolutely great ... Thank you and your team for all your help and support ...”

What we did in 2012/13

Most of our work is disabled adaptations. More jobs are done in Huntingdonshire because we also project manage disabled adaptations works in Housing Association Homes. Elsewhere, most of our work is in the private sector for owner - occupiers or private tenants.

Disabled Facilities Grant Work Completed 2012/13



[Works have] ... “given me independence and able to get the car off the road and nearer the house...”

This work has enabled significant numbers of people to remain independent in their homes for longer.

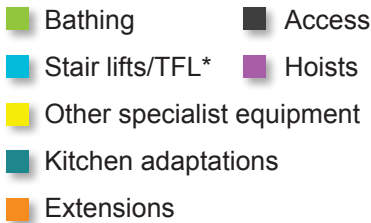
The need for this work remains high and is growing.

However Cambs HIA is keen to investigate, with our key partners, how we can achieve a more client centred, faster, less bureaucratic delivery of housing adaptations.

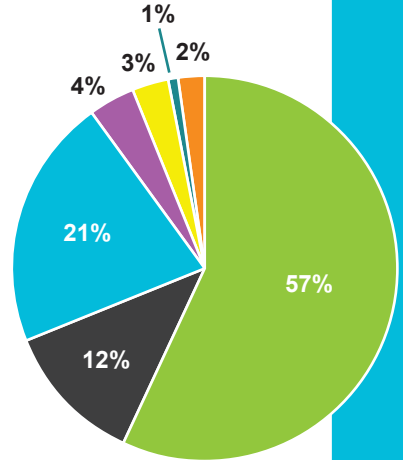


Types of DFG Work 2012/13

Over three quarters of our DFG work is for bathroom adaptations or access upstairs. We do a very small number of major extensions although these are the most costly works ranging between 30 to 60 thousand pounds.



* Through Floor Lift

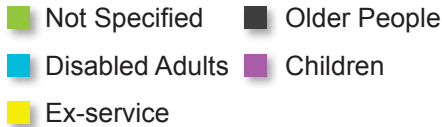


Home Repairs Assistance Work 2012/13



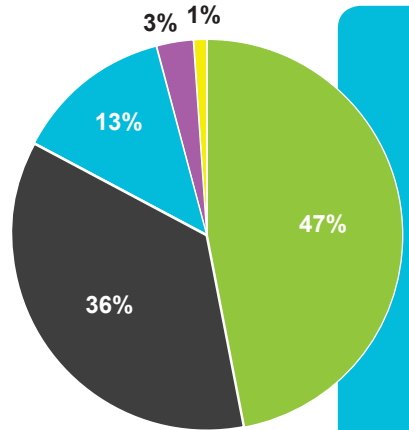
Repairs Assistance works in Huntingdonshire were exceptionally low in 2012/13 and measures have been taken to address this including a promotional campaign, review of procedures and additional surveyor capacity.

Clients helped 2012/13



Most of our work is with older people. Our most complex works are usually for children or disabled adults.

The reason we have a high proportion of unspecified works is due to data limits in our first year of operation. We expect this to significantly reduce.

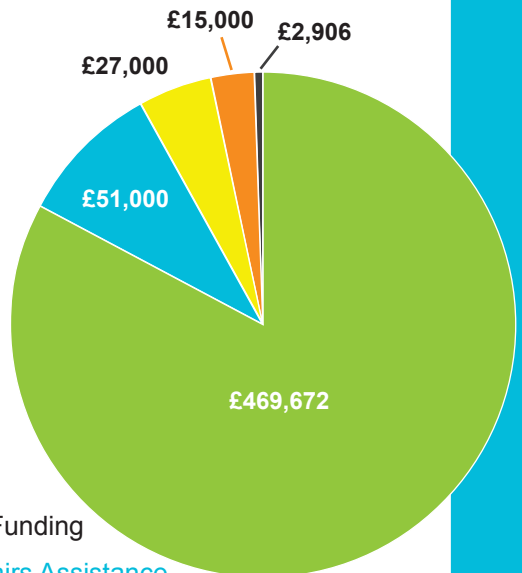


Finance

Funding For Works In People's Homes

The capital works done for the people who use our service are funded by:

1. Mandatory Grants-partly from central government and partly by local councils
2. Discretionary Local Authority grants or loans
3. Other sources of grant funding
4. Personal contributions for works that are partly or wholly funded by individuals because they are not eligible for grants or loans.

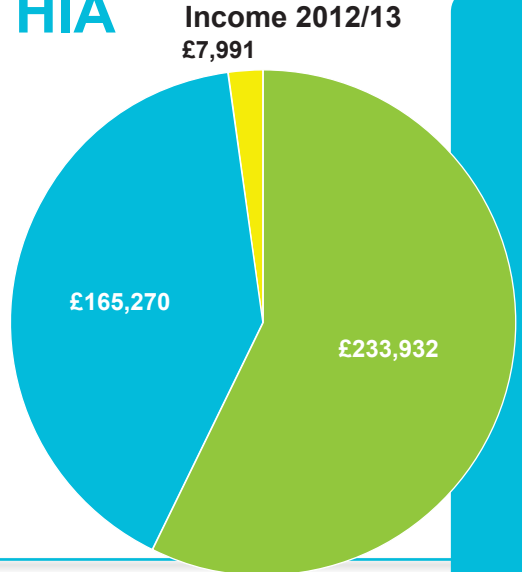


Running Cambs HIA

Cambs HIA has been set up to be a self-financing operation. The key sources of income to run the organisation are

1. Fees for project managing works
2. Grants from the County Council (Social Care) and Primary Health Care (Cambs Clinical Commissioning Group).

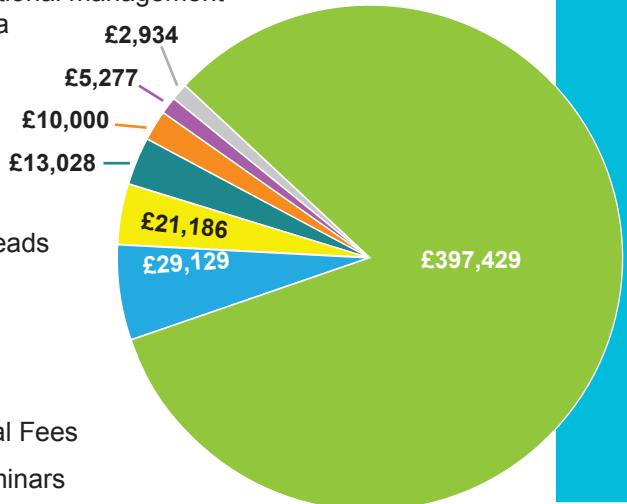
- External Funding
- HIA Fees
- Private Fees



Expenditure 2012/13

Over three quarter of our expenditure relates to staff costs. For this reason, it is essential that we make effective use of staff time. Our wholly electronic casework, filing and organisational management system is central to this. It is a major benefit to us that this system is also used by all the Grant Officers we work with.

- Staff Costs
- Office/AdminCosts/Overheads
- IT Costs
- Travel
- Rent
- Consultants & Professional Fees
- Training/Conferences/Seminars



Note: this diagram excludes one-off set-up costs

Our First Year & Plans

Establishing the Partnership

In our first year our focus has been on keeping the service running alongside setting up a centralised, shared service.

Key task included:

- Helping people with home repairs and adaptations
- Filling staff vacancies including the Manager and an Administrator
- Moving to a wholly electronic casework and file management system with centralised records
- Developing shared documentation and operational procedures
- Building a co-ordinated staff team
- Reviewing how we work with our key partners

Plans for 2013/14 and beyond

Our key aims by the end of March 2014 are to:

- Increase our service delivery, especially in Huntingdonshire where the council has committed extra funding to reduce waiting times
- Temporarily increase our staff capacity to meet the needs of more people and deliver a bigger works programme
- Launch a website for Cambs HIA
- Raise awareness about Cambs HIA and what we do
- Prepare a draft Business Plan to set our priorities from April 2014 for the next 3 years. This will include proposals to deliver greater efficiency and value for money.

Your Feedback

We welcome your comments about our first Annual Review and how you think it could be improved.

We also welcome your views about the work of Cambs HIA, now and in the future.

Please contact the Manager Pat Strachan, in writing or by phoning Cambs HIA.

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