



Housing LIN

Connecting people, ideas and resources

Home adaptations – the importance of evidence

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As we grow older we spend more time in our homes and so our homes have greater impact on our health and wellbeing as we age. At the Royal College of Occupational Therapists we welcome a new piece of research currently being commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better.

The research aims to understand the role home adaptations have in improving people's experience of later life. It is designed to explore and compare practitioners' views on the impact of home adaptations to peoples' experience of living with the adaptations. Does the equipment or adaptation improve people's daily lives and in what ways?

In day to day practice, occupational therapists work with a number of partners to assess, provide and fund home adaptations. The intention of installing any equipment or making changes to the home is to improve people's independence and safety but is this always borne out by reality? How many of our interventions are at best ignored and at worst have a disabling effect – labelling people as old or no longer able to cope.

This piece of research sitting alongside the evidence review being conducted by the University of the West of England and BRE will, we hope, provide the opportunity to reflect and consider how we meet the needs of the population we serve.

Throwing up questions such as:

- *What can we learn from the people we offer services too?*
- *Does this research challenge our assumptions?*
- *Is our service targeting and applying resources correctly, are we listening to people and truly understating what they want, need to be able to do and how they live within their home?*
- *Are we communicating effectively; giving the right information at the right time in an accessible way?*
- *What can we do to improve our partnerships so that we are delivering equipment and adaptations in the most effective way possible?*

Services develop over time and are often shaped by historical factors. Delivering services using person -centred and co-production principles is a relatively new concept. The findings from this research has the potential for us all to take stock and challenge our assumptions about our practice.

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