



Care & Repair Cymru

# Managing Better the first year

Improving homes, Changing lives

**RNIB**  
Cymru

Yn cefnogi pobl  
â cholled golwg  
Supporting people  
with sight loss



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**



# Foreword



It is my pleasure to introduce the 'Managing Better - the first year - Improving homes, Changing lives' report. This project highlights the benefits that can be achieved for the people of Wales through committed collaboration.

The strong partnership approach of Care & Repair Cymru, RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru has developed an initiative which provides invaluable support to older people to retain their independence and remain living in their own homes.

The Managing Better service integrates the impact of sight and hearing loss into home improvement and can significantly improve the lives of older people by putting in place mechanisms to help them manage the impact of sensory loss. The project also tackles issues of isolation and loneliness, which can have a significant impact on physical and mental well-being.

I am pleased that the three partners were able to develop such a valuable service through securing three year grant funding under the Welsh Governments Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant. The grant scheme was developed to support the delivery of our ground breaking Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 when it came into force in April 2016.

This ethos of prevention and early intervention is at the heart of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Established to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, the Welsh Government recognises that this ambition cannot be achieved in isolation; the support of the third sector, organisations such as Care & Repair Cymru, RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru, is vital to its success. I am pleased to support the Managing Better project which enables the Act's aims and objectives to be fulfilled and in so doing improve the quality of life for older people in Wales

I wish all involved with the Managing Better project continued success and look forward to working with you to deliver better outcomes for older people in Wales.

**Rebecca Evans AM,**  
Minister for Social Services and Public Health

# Stronger Together

We are pleased to report the findings of this first year impact report for the Managing Better service. The first year has passed very quickly, and we are proud to share the successes and outcomes of this brand new service. The fact that success is so clearly based on genuine collaboration between three large Welsh charities is in itself a significant achievement. Most important for us though is that older people in Wales can access a service where both their housing and sensory needs can be addressed. Integrating the impact of sight and hearing loss into home improvement and in support of independent living has had a crucial impact on the lives of older people. Ultimately, keeping older people safe in their homes and enabling them to manage better is what we all aspire to in terms of real opportunities for healthy and active ageing.

As much as we can demonstrate strong outcomes for older people, we can also demonstrate outcomes that are impactful for the NHS and Primary Care. Both in terms of primary prevention and prudent health, Managing Better can lay claim to significant innovation. New partnerships with hospitals, clinics, GP surgeries and social services teams can in a more meaningful way focus on the wellbeing of older people as a 'shared patient-client journey'. In recognising the hard work and commitment of frontline staff that has led to the service exceeding its goals, we are also proud of leading a service that provides clear evidence of a return on investment that reduces pressures on the NHS. Shared expertise has ensured improved access to services for the most vulnerable and has created real opportunity to transform lives. As we go into year two we can confidently use the wide ranging impact of Managing Better to inspire us to ensure its successes are sustainable for future generations.



**Chris Jones**  
CEO,  
Care & Repair Cymru



**Rebecca Woolley**  
Wales Interim Director,  
Action on Hearing  
Loss Cymru



**Ceri Jackson**  
Director,  
RNIB Cymru

# What is Managing Better?

The Managing Better service is a 3-year project, funded from the Welsh Government's Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant. The service is led by Care & Repair Cymru in partnership with RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and Care & Repair Agencies across Wales.

The Wales-wide service is delivered out of the 13 Care & Repair Agencies, by 13 Managing Better Caseworkers who work proactively with Health and Social Care locally, to identify vulnerable, frail older people in need of help to achieve a safe, healthy home environment before they reach a crisis point and enter the statutory system of hospitals, GPs or residential care.

Sight loss affects people of all ages, but especially older people. In Wales, one in five people aged over 75, and one in two aged 90 and over are living with sight loss, and the numbers are set to double in the next 25 years. We know that people with sight loss are at greater risk of falls and depression.

There are currently 575,500 people in Wales who are deaf or have hearing loss, that's equivalent to one in six people. This number is set to grow as the population ages.

People who are deaf or have hearing loss are more likely to be isolated and as a result suffer with mental health problems such as depression. People with hearing loss are also twice as likely to develop dementia.

There are approximately 250,00 people in the UK who are deafblind or have dual sensory loss. Of these 220,000 are aged 70 or over.

This strong partnership approach in delivering the Managing Better service means older people in Wales can now have access to much needed support to enable them to live safely and independently at home.

Managing Better has built on the expertise of the traditional Care & Repair service and has embedded:

- Bespoke sensory loss training for Care & Repair staff provided by our partners RNIB Cymru, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru and other sensory loss specialists;
- Bespoke training on cognitive impairment and the impact on sensory loss from the Stroke Association and the Alzheimer's Society;
- The ability to consider and address any issues which are a barrier to effective two-way communication;

- Assessment of the potential impact of sensory loss issues on traditional areas of home adaptations, home safety, welfare benefit checks, digital & financial inclusion and enabling access to other services;
- New protocols that enable referring on to specialist services around sensory loss and cognitive impairment, for example referrals from and into Managing Better from Rehabilitation Officers Visual Impairment (ROVI's) and referrals into Managing Better from Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLO's) based in hospitals across Wales;
- The ability to advocate for clients needing low-level aids and adaptations to RNIB Visibly Better standards;
- The ability to provide timely good quality information to clients with a sensory loss;
- The skills to advocate on behalf of clients experiencing barriers to accessing services;
- Championing the need for sensory loss to become an integral part of packages of care and housing adaptations.

**“I am absolutely delighted with the lighting and can't believe the difference it has made to my home”**

**- Mrs P, Bridgend**

# Why is Managing Better so important?

There is increasing demand on our National Health Service and Social Care. Taking a preventative and prudent health approach when providing housing solutions for older people ensures they can Manage Better at home, lead more fulfilled lives in a home that is safe, warm and meets their needs, and takes pressure off the NHS and Social Care.

Poor quality and inaccessible housing are often the root cause of falls in the home and a huge factor in admissions to hospital and delayed transfers of care. The impact of a fall can contribute towards feelings of loneliness and isolation affecting people's quality of life and their health and well-being.

All these come at an enormous cost to the NHS, social services and other public services. At a time when social care budgets for people over the age of 65 are under pressure, there is a strong case for continued and innovative investment in services which support people to live fulfilled lives in their own homes, and in providing a broader range of housing options.

Through relatively small scale investments in housing adaptations and improvements, Managing Better helps to reduce easily preventable falls and poor health, increasing people's personal safety, confidence, independence and well-being at home. Taking such a prudent and preventative approach helps to reduce people's visits to the GP, admissions to hospital and their reliance on Social Care.

Managing Better provides a comprehensive Healthy Home Assessment. This is a person-centred assessment of housing risk, threats to independent living and the barriers to opportunities people face. The assessment leads to a bespoke service package based on personal need that supports wellbeing. In short, it enables older people to meet challenges, overcome barriers, maximise their life opportunities and Manage Better at home.

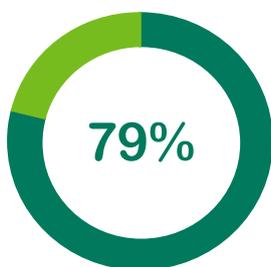
**“ I am very pleased the steps have been done, it is much safer for me ”**

**- Mrs J, Neath Port Talbot**

# Achievements and impact

In the first year (2016/17) Managing Better helped **1,425 people** with a Healthy Home Assessment resulting in a bespoke problem-led service package that supports wellbeing. We have:

- Carried out a wide range of home adaptations to help people remain living independently in a home that is safe, warm and accessible;
- Ensured that any adaptations to a person's home considered any sensory loss challenges they face, for example providing specialist lighting that is specific to the needs of people with sight loss and any works are properly colour contrasted to RNIB Visibly Better standards;
- Worked with Audiology departments, other partners and clients to ensure specialist equipment for people with hearing loss is fitted correctly, e.g. fire alarms adapted to accommodate sensory loss and loop systems;
- Provided welfare benefits assessments and referred on to other specialist services.



**79%** (1129) of the people we helped with a Healthy Home Assessment had a sensory loss



**12%** (176) of the people we helped were referred to Managing Better directly by GP's or Hospitals



**36%** (516) of the people we helped were referred to Managing Better by Health and Social Care



We helped 76 people to access additional welfare income worth over **£96,966** per year



We facilitated adaptations and home repairs in the homes of the people we helped worth over **£342,647**

# Managing Better – Making A Difference for the NHS & Social Care



We prudently estimate that **5%** of clients may have fallen if not for a Managing Better intervention

**£8 saved for every £1 invested –**

This is a combination of hospital stays and residential care costs for 2.5% of clients and hospital stays plus rehabilitation for the other 2.5%.



Resulting in direct NHS/Social Care savings of **£3,268,923**



If we consider the loss of quality of life as a 'year one' post-trauma calculation (loss of income, fear, loneliness, anxiety, depression, primary care) then the savings are even bigger.

**£11.50 saved for every £1 invested –**

The Royal College of Physiotherapy and Age UK have researched the cost of quality of life. If, added to the potential costs from factors related to a depreciation of wellbeing the result in monetary savings is

**£5,741,859**

Clearly 5% of clients is a modest calculation and given the permutations of complex health, age, sensory loss and poor housing, these social return on investment calculations are equally modest.

# The difference Managing Better makes

## Mr & Mrs Woodward, Managing Better clients



“I was having difficulty getting into the bath as my legs are not so good now and I was afraid I would slip. I’d heard about Care & Repair and their office isn’t far away so I said to Robert “why don’t you pop down on the off chance and see if they can help?” They couldn’t have been more helpful, they called out to see us and carried out an assessment to see what could be done to help us.

“Following the visit by Claire (Managing Better case worker) they installed grab rails around the house and on the staircase which means we can both get around much more safely. This means so much as we were both so nervous particularly through the night when we woke to use the bathroom. We feel so much safer now.

“Claire was also able to help us secure a Disabled Facilities Grant so we could remove the bath and have a level access shower installed, so no more worrying about struggling to get in and out of the bath and falling.

“We also had help with the financial side of things which has taken a lot of stress off us. Claire helped us to apply for Attendance Allowance which was successful. We didn’t know these things were even available to us. As I’m hard of hearing it was really difficult to speak to them (DWP office) over the phone so Claire was able to speak to them on my behalf but I was still involved and answered all the questions through her.

“What we think is so good is that you (Care & Repair) are not just here to repair things, you really do care and the advice, information and support is just as important as the repairs”.



## Mrs Charles, Managing Better client

Mrs Charles has both wet and dry macular degeneration and after visiting the hospital she was put in touch with the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO).



An ECLO helps people to understand the impact of their diagnosis and provides them with emotional and practical support.

The ECLO referred Mrs Charles to the Managing Better service as the macular degeneration was having a huge impact on Mrs Charles quality of life and her safety at home. There were darker areas within the home, especially in the kitchen, which meant Mrs Charles could no longer distinguish between different types of food when preparing a meal and was overfilling containers with liquids, potentially causing slipping hazards. She was also having difficulty making out the steps when entering or leaving her home increasing her risk of falling. This was affecting her confidence and independence.

Catherine, (Managing Better case worker) visited Mrs Charles at home and carried out a Healthy Homes Assessment and recommended a number of actions to make the home safer and more accessible.

By accessing a Minor Adaptations grant the following adaptations were installed to enable Mrs Charles to live in a comfortable and safe home.

- A mop stick rail on the staircase
- Exterior lighting
- Grab rails to the door thresholds
- Improved steps at front and rear of house and painted so Mrs Charles can see them properly
- Under cupboard lighting in the kitchen to help with food preparation and other tasks

Following the works being carried out Mrs Charles feels a lot safer at home, more confident and better able to do the things she wants to do.

## Maureen Griffith, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

Maureen Griffiths is an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) at the Princess of Wales and Neath Port Talbot Hospitals. Her role is providing those diagnosed with an eye condition with practical and emotional support needed to understand their diagnosis, deal with their sight loss and maintain their independence.

“I speak to people of all ages and their families struggling with the impact of sight loss in their daily lives. People may also have additional disabilities or hearing loss and rely on lip reading to communicate.

“The Managing Better (MB) service is invaluable to the ECLO role. I’m hospital based so MB enables me to learn more about a person’s living circumstances and any need for further support. Working in close partnership MB case workers give me feedback about issues or concerns raised on a home assessment e.g. safety or falls risks.

“When referring to MB their response is swift giving priority where concerns are raised. People speak very highly of the professionalism and help they’ve received from MB”.

The MB service enables people with sight or hearing impairments to live safely and independent in their homes include.

“I referred a disabled lady who was housebound because there was no wheelchair access to her flat. The MB caseworker supported her to access a grant to fit a ramp so she was no longer housebound. In addition following a Healthy Homes Check the caseworker also arranged a number of home improvements which has greatly improved her living conditions.

“One comment, which is typical of many I’ve heard, is ‘I couldn’t have managed without all the help and support I’ve had from Sandy (MB caseworker) she’s been absolutely wonderful.’

## Mrs Phipps, Managing Better client

Mrs Phipps has no sight in her left eye and premature retinopathy in her right eye, acute glaucoma and stigmatism. She is registered as severely sight impaired.



The lighting in her home was so dark that she was struggling to live safely due to her sight loss. She was not using a number of rooms in her home due to the poor lighting and fear of falling. She was also finding it hard to go out on her own due to the deterioration in her eyesight because she was worried about falling and ending up in hospital.

Mrs Phipps was referred to Managing Better by an Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO). The Managing Better caseworker visited to find out what was important to her and to carry out a Healthy Home Assessment, which identified a wide range of poor lighting issues which made the home unsafe. The caseworker arranged a joint visit with an electrician to complete a lighting assessment and Care & Repair were able to access Welsh Government Enable funding to provide:

- All new LED bulbs in the kitchen, downstairs toilet, lounge, dining room, hallway, landing, stairs, bedrooms and bathroom.
- Under-unit LED strip lights fitted in the kitchen.
- New LED fluorescent light fitted in the utility room.
- 2 Passive Infrared (PIR) sensor lights fitted in the garden and existing bulbs replaced.
- Edgings and nosing's highlighted on the steps in the garden.

The caseworker also provided advice and information about local support groups, social groups and activities. Now Mrs Phipps' home is safe she is due to start orientation & mobility training with a Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment (ROVI)

Mrs Phipps said "When you haven't got a lot of sight you think well, how can good lighting make that much difference? But it certainly has for me. It's changed my life. It means I don't need to rely on anyone and I can be independent and do the things I want to do, when I want to do them."

## Rebecca Carpenter, Senior Hearing Therapist

Rebecca Carpenter is a Senior Hearing Therapist for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board based in the Royal Gwent Hospital Audiology Department.

“One of the downsides for us in the hospital when ordering equipment is we don’t get to see the patient’s home environment. By referring to Managing Better the caseworkers visit our patients at home and spot other things that may not be related to Audiology so they can offer other help and support as needed.

“This is very good as a starting point for our patients as they get the help they need from Audiology but they also get additional help from Managing Better for other aspects of their daily lives as well.

“We may refer to the Managing Better service for a piece of equipment to be fitted but when the caseworkers go out to visit people they look at the whole aspect.

“Managing Better gives us an additional referral pathway. We give advice at the hospital and it tends to be general advice, so for example if someone was saying they were having falls our general advice would be you need to go and see your GP to discuss that. Or for example I often have patients who say they are struggling to find workmen to do jobs around the home.

“Knowing that the Managing Better service is there and knowing they understand the issues that people with hearing loss face gives me the confidence to refer people to the service. I’ve always known about the work that Care & Repair do and it’s something my mum has used. I’ve always advised people to contact their local Care & Repair agency for help and support.

“The patients we see are quite vulnerable, we are asking them to use the phone, and when you’ve got a hearing loss that’s not the most comfortable thing that people want to do. So the ability to refer to the Managing Better service means that our patients can get a wide range of help just by having a conversation with us”.



# What our clients and partners have told us

As many of our clients have a sensory loss (79%) we felt it was important to find a range of ways to collect people's views on Managing Better as traditional client surveys can be a barrier for many people with sight loss who want to share their views.

Participation Cymru was commissioned to provide support in our engagement of a range of stakeholders to gather views about the current service and identifying areas for improvement or development.

We invited feedback from clients and organisations we work with to deliver the Managing Better Service via three focus groups and individual survey forms.

## People told us

- The Managing Better Service provides a quality service and the professionalism, knowledge and efficiency of the Caseworkers was highlighted.
- Working in partnership with other organisations has worked well, for example putting in place two way referral systems and a reduction in waiting times for other services. It has also enabled ROVIs to concentrate on other matters related to independence while Caseworkers take care of matters inside the home.
- The preventative measures and early intervention work being undertaken by Care & Repair working in partnership with other organisations will have an impact in the long term by reducing the future demand on services and save money.
- There has been feedback that working with Care & Repair has helped to share knowledge and supports personal development.
- There are examples of how the Managing Better service has helped other organisations to identify and engage with seldom heard individuals who could benefit from the service.

## Partnership working and sharing knowledge

Our Caseworkers were commended for their willingness to share their knowledge and experience with the partner organisations. Many of the participants said that this had increased their confidence and effectiveness and as a result now felt able to do their own job better

“[The caseworker] has really been a kind of mentor for everybody, it is their qualities as an individual that help to make the service the success it is.....they are very open, and communicate extremely well. This increases our confidence and always puts people at their ease”

## Better use of resources, leading to increased efficiency

All participants in one focus group agreed that the Managing Better service has led to a reduction in waiting times and made a significant difference to people's lives. The speed in which Care & Repair are able to carry out work is improving people's lives and allowing ROVI's (Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment) to focus on other areas.

“A lot of the time I visit someone, they'd had the Managing Better service before I get there. Some of the work which needed doing to make the home safe to live in and get around has already been done, so I can focus on other areas such as helping people with their daily living skills and mobility” (ROVI)

## Preventative measures and early intervention

Participants in one focus group highlighted how preventative measures and early intervention work well in the long-term by reducing the future demand on services and saving money:

“The impact we have, with the support of Care & Repair, it saves the county money. It stops people having accidents, needing to go to hospital or go into care.”

## The impact on peoples lives

“At last I have found an organisation that I can rely on when I need support. It's almost like a friend at the end of a telephone every time I get worried about something”

- Mrs A, Newport

“Thank you so much. I hadn't realised how much I missed the talking clock until you repaired it, I feel my independence has improved by helping with such a small thing”

- John, Cardiff

“I am absolutely delighted with the lighting and can’t believe the difference it has made to my home”

- Mrs B, Bangor

“I have more control on what support is available to me”

- Mrs H, Tregaron

“I just want to be able to use my kitchen and bathroom and get out of my front door safely without having to be picked up by an ambulance and live independently”

- Mrs D, Bridgend

“My house is lovely and warm, it hasn’t felt like this for years”

- Mrs Mills, Llanelli

“They put a rail on the stairs for us, which is really great. They also helped in other ways, they gave us simple advice, for example, my husband suffers from the glare of lights, and we were sitting in the dark, but they advised us that if we moved the chairs around, to a different position, that would help. And it really did! We also got a dimmer switch and that has proved really good.”

- Tom, St Asaph

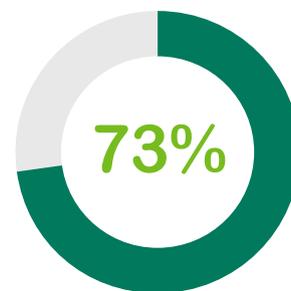
## Customer survey feedback



said their problem had been solved\*



said they were satisfied with the Managing Better service with 91% saying they were very satisfied\*



said their homes better suited their individual needs\*



82% said they received the right information to address their problems\*



99% said they would recommend the Managing Better service to others\*

\* figures from 136 customer surveys

# What next for Managing Better ?

Whilst the Managing Better service has made a significant impact to the lives of 1,425 older people across Wales in its first year, we intend to build on this success in years two and three and plan to:

- Work with Rehabilitation Officers, Visual Impairment (ROVI's) across Wales to develop closer working, in particular building on the lighting knowledge developed by MB Caseworkers. The Welsh Rehabilitation Officers Forum will map the capacity of ROVI's across Wales to carry out lighting assessments. Following this local protocols will be agreed for joint working between ROVI's and MB caseworkers
- Build on the Stroke and Dementia training delivered at the start of year 2 by working with the Stroke Association and Alzheimer's Society to explore possibilities of developing a learning pilot with Managing Better. The pilot will explore the needs of people with stroke and /or dementia and sensory loss to live more independently and safely at home.
- Work with RNIB Cymru to explore incorporating Visibly Better standards and/or RNIBs award winning Visual Impairment and Learning Disability expertise in Managing Better services provided to stroke survivors and people with dementia. Identify current research and good practice in this field.
- Develop the good practice and learning from year one and build on our positive working relationships with Health, in particular with Audiology and Ophthalmology departments and replicate similar approaches across Wales.
- Build on partnerships developed with Primary Care through GP clusters/networks to replicate similar approaches across Wales, and increase referrals from Health.
- Assess whether Care & Repair Agencies are facing barriers in accessing funding for sensory loss solutions.
- Explore opportunities for increased use of Welsh Government ENABLE funding for sensory loss solutions which a number of Care & Repair Agencies achieved in Year 1.
- Implement good practice guide based on the learning from year one.



Would you  
like to know  
more?

If you would like to know more about Managing Better please feel free to contact Stephen Thomas, Project Development Officer.

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