

**PPS1 Digital Changes and Impact on Residents for the Rural North**  
– **Area 1**

**PPS2 Community Hubs - Esk Moors Lodge (Abbeyfield Society)**  
– **Conservatory**

**PPS3 ‘Home Improvement Agencies - Learning from good practice in rural areas’**  
– **Area 2 (This Room)**

**PPS4 Strategic Planning & Using the Planning System to Deliver Housing for Older People**  
– **Main Room**

Presentation by

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Rural Housing for  
an Ageing  
Population  
Conference  
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# Home Improvement Agencies - Learning from good practice in rural areas

**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England



**Foundations**

# Background

## Sheila Mackintosh

- Research Fellow - University of the West of England in Bristol
- On Foundations Advisory Board
- Involved in monitoring the first home improvement agencies in the UK. Recent evaluation work: good practice, hospital discharge, falls prevention
- Work on the Disabled Facilities Grant – improving local services

## Foundations

- National body for home improvement agencies and handyperson services
- Tasked with improving the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)
- Just completed a Review of the DFG for the Department of Health and Social Care (with Sheila Mackintosh, BRE, Ferret Information Systems and Rachel Russell an Occupational Therapist)

# Rural context

- Nearly ½ of rural households will be aged 65 and over in 20 years time - rural population ageing faster than other areas
- 80% of older people in rural areas own their own homes
- Homes in rural areas are less likely to be adapted for ageing
- Higher incidence of fuel poverty: 12% rural areas; 10% urban
- 36% rural homes off the gas grid in 2010



# Homes in England



- Steep stairs
- Small, upstairs bathrooms
- No downstairs toilet
- Narrow corridors
- Stepped access
- At least 80% of the properties we will live in by 2050 are already built
- Only 7% of homes in (1.7 m) have all four basic accessibility features (level access, flush threshold, downstairs toilet, and wide doorways / circulation space)

Picture by Emma Brownjohn - used with permission of the artist

# Impact on health and care services

Long term limiting illness:

- 43% of the 65+ age group
- 61% of those over 80

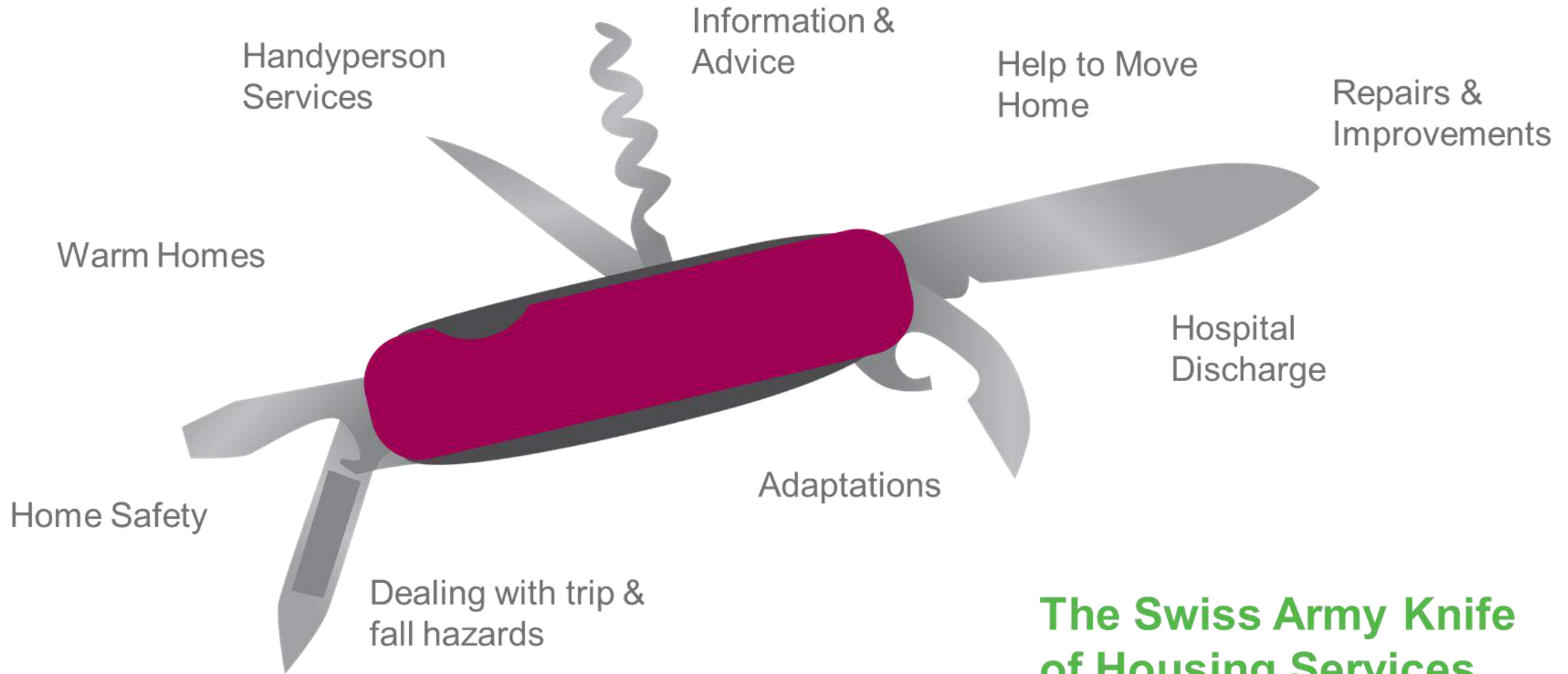
## Falls

- A third of people over 65+ and half of people over 80 fall each year
- Fragility fractures in older people cost NHS/social care about £4.4b pa
- Negative impact on people's independence and quality of life

## Dementia

- The majority of people with dementia remain living at home
- They account for 20% of all hospital admissions, occupy 25% of beds and tend to stay in hospital 25% longer.
- If admitted in an emergency 40% will be discharged to a place other than home.

# Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)



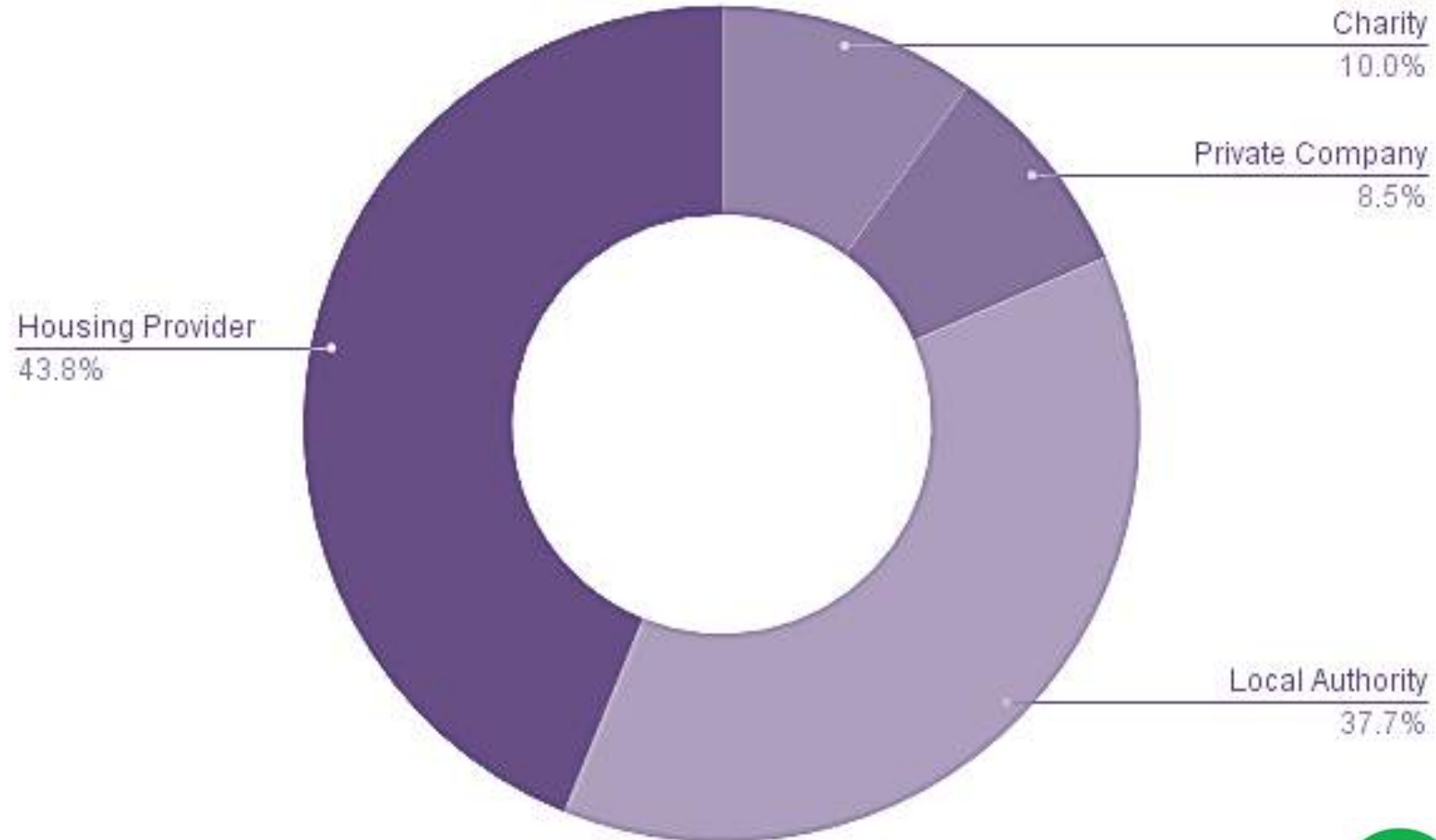
**The Swiss Army Knife  
of Housing Services**

# USPs of HIAs

- Tenure neutral - usually the only housing support service for owner occupiers and private renters.
- Staff with a range of skills, knowledge and experience
- Links to associated organisations for referrals, sign-posting or access
- Skilled in delivering repairs, improvements and home adaptations



# HIA Managing Agents



# HIAs in Numbers

## Each year HIAs in England:

- Receive 300,000 enquiries
- Carry out over 150,000 handy person visits
- Support over 20,000 people to be discharged from hospital
- Assist with over 30,000 Disabled Facilities Grants
- Support over 40,000 self-funders

# Good practice - rural examples

# Integrated services - Dorset

- The Districts and Counties in Dorset recognised the need to integrate services to meet the needs of an ageing population in a rural area.
- **Dorset Accessible Homes Service** merged existing services:
  - Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)
  - Administration of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)
  - Telecare services and assistive technology
- Two integrated offices now provide services across the rural area of Dorset (Bournemouth and Poole have a separate service)
- Two Independent Living Centres - plus a mobile demonstration vehicle delivering pop-up events across the county.

# Cornwall Home Solutions

- Cornwall is now a unitary authority
- In-house Home Improvement Agency (HIA) - Cornwall Council
- 66 staff in three locality teams covering the whole of Cornwall
- Range of housing solutions for older and disabled people, including: minor adaptations & equipment, major adaptations, handy person services, access to finance (such as grants & loans), general information, advice and signposting, energy efficiency advice, winter wellness campaigns, support to relocate & housing options advice, linked wheelchair assessment to home adaptation assessment.

# Other integrated services

- **Warwickshire HEART** – a partnership between the county and the districts has resulted in two integrated teams operating across the north and south of the county. They have reduced a 220-step customer journey to 22 steps, a drop-out rate from 35% to 3% and drastically reduced the time taken to deliver home adaptations.
- **Lincolnshire Home Independence Agency** has just won HIA Service of the Year. Played a leading role in delivering Lincolnshire County Council's Wellbeing Service helping to reduce falls, tackle social isolation and fuel poverty and dealt with more than 5,000 referrals in 2017-18. They have gone through an ambitious restructure to accommodate greater numbers of self-funders and new partners in service delivery.

# Preston Care & Repair

- Independent HIA covering four Lancashire Boroughs: Preston, South Ribble, Chorley and West Lancashire
- New Lancashire 'Healthy Homes' contract:
  - Aimed at people with a long term health condition affecting mobility in the home; and/or registered disabled; and/or where works prevent immediate/likely hospital or residential care admission
  - Specified list of eligible works that fits within a defined 'Healthy Homes Assessment'.
- Outcomes:
  - Falls risk reduced for 37% of older people who had work carried out
  - 77% said they would not have jobs done if the handyperson service was not there due to worry about finding a trustworthy builder



<http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Small-but-Significant-Handyperson-Evaluation-CRE-2018.pdf>

# Dementia grants - Worcestershire

- Integrated working between six local authorities: Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest
- Top-sliced DFG allocation to provide non-means-tested dementia grants
- In 2017-18 over 500 people assessed and over 380 received the grant
- Maximum grant is £750 – but average cost only £150 for those living alone and £132 for those living with partner.
- Being evaluated by the University of Worcester – report due out later in 2018.



# Warm and Healthy Homes Gloucestershire

- **Warm Homes Fund** - Successful joint bid with third tier councils and Severn Wye Energy Agency
  - Over £5m for more than 1,000 Gloucestershire homes to be improved by the installation of heating measures
  - Urban and rural homes and communities will benefit - both gas and non-gas solutions
  - Programme from November 2017 – March 2020
- **Warm and well** - improving energy efficiency, reducing the risk of fuel poverty and associated health problems
- **GEEG+ (Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Grant)**, top up various heating and insulation measures throughout Gloucestershire for eligible clients
- **Build2Low Carbon** – EU initiative to reduce fuel poverty, Gloucestershire a key partner

## Warm and Healthy Homes -

- Warm & Well - Insulation and heating Improvement programmes & grants
- CAB - Energy saving and benefits advice and appropriate tariff and billing
- Access to home Improvement agencies
- Registration on priority services registers

### Frailty

- Housing expertise to support hospital discharge
- Support for frail residents with housing options
- Home sharing to support frail residents
- Benefits advice and support

### Falls Prevention

- Alternative Falls pick Up Service by Fireservice for non injurious falls
- Promotion of falls prevention
- Carry out small adaptations
- Focus on frequent fallers



### Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

- Integrated services and assessment with specific staff allocated to reduce waiting times for grants
- Top up funding for adaptations over £30,000



### Independent Living Centre

- Opportunity to test equipment
- Assessments carried out & self assessment available
- Range of items on show
- One stop shop for information



More accessible services through increased joint working across organisations including planners, commissioners and developers re: strategic housing needs into the future



# Affordable Finance

Many HIAs in the south west work with Wessex Resolutions CIC to offer their clients access to affordable loans - for example:

- If the main source of heating in a home relies on oil, Calor gas, LPG, wood or coal, a Somerset Fuel Loan may be available to help to spread the cost of a bulk buy over six months.
- Loans to fund repairs such as replacement boilers, installation of central heating, window replacement, roof and thatch repairs, electrical and plumbing work, structural work, damp remedy, and energy efficiency improvements. Typical 4.2% APR.

# Collaborative Hub – South Norfolk

- Integrated information and advice
- Flexible hot-desking space for frontline agencies (statutory and third sector) – facilitating greater information sharing and shared solutions.
- Currently 17 partners have staff operating out of the hub.
- The five district councils jointly funded a pilot hospital discharge service (District Direct). After successful evaluation the service will be funded by health and social care.

# Social prescribing

- **Forest of Dean Council** run a Community Wellbeing service and exercise referral scheme.
- Delivery is out in the community and they use rural locations and housing scheme rooms to allow for access for those that are older and more isolated.
- [www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/health-leisure/healthy-lifestyle-classes/](http://www.fdean.gov.uk/residents/health-leisure/healthy-lifestyle-classes/)
- Starting to develop dementia friendly communities.

# Lessons/issues

# Simple changes make a big difference



UWE/Centre for Ageing Better (2017) The role of home adaptations in improving later life. Better. <https://16881-presscdn-0-15-pagely.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-role-of-home-adaptations-in-improving-later-life.pdf>.

# Importance of HIA services

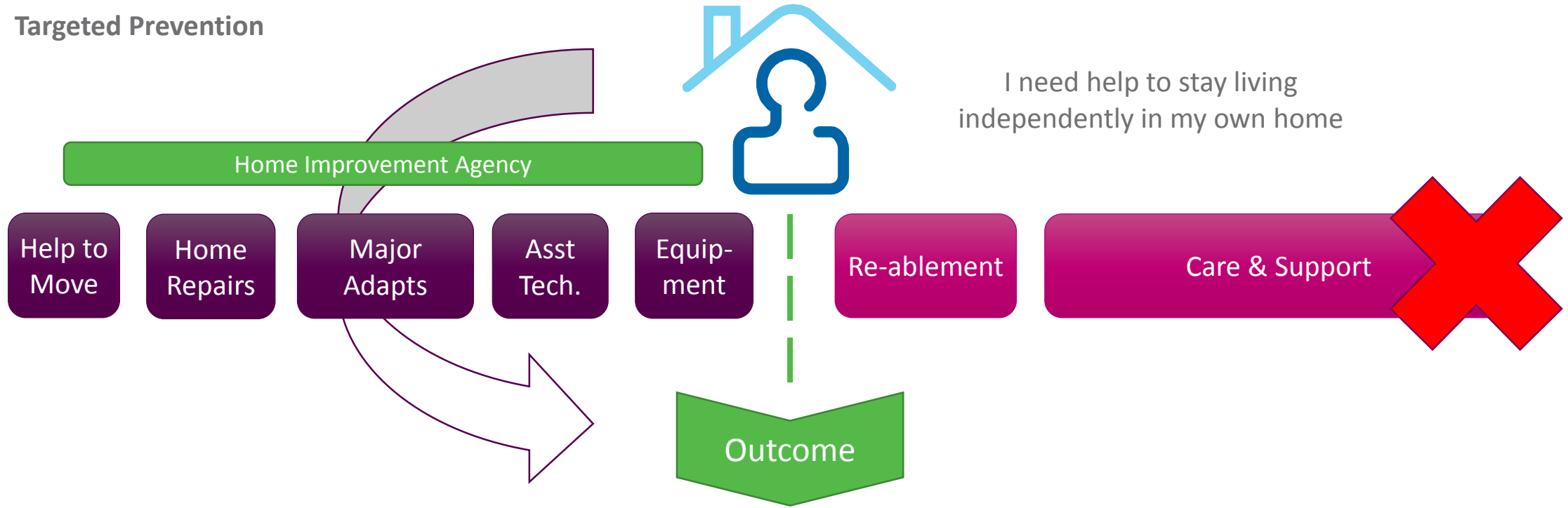
- Older people themselves place a really high value on having independent, trusted, affordable services.
- The challenge is to secure funding at a time of major financial constraints.
- *"Handyperson services remain marginalised, tending to fall between the cracks at a policy and commissioning level, perhaps partly because they are a practical housing intervention but the cost benefits mainly impact on health and social care."*

Adams, S. (July 2018) Small but Significant: The impact and cost benefits of handyperson services. <http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Small-but-Significant-Handyperson-Evaluation-CRE-2018.pdf>.

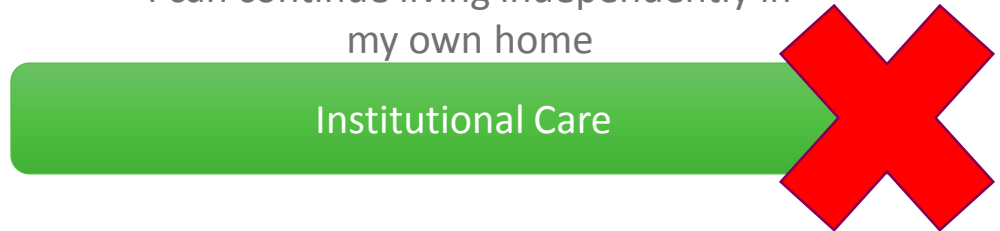
Primary Prevention



Targeted Prevention



I can continue living independently in my own home





# Changing the way services are delivered

- Challenge of providing services across large geographical areas and scattered populations
- Need to integrate services – wrap solutions around the customer
- Focus on prevention not crisis management
- Integrated ways of working – structural change, cultural change
- Using funding in more flexible ways – e.g. DFG RRO policies
- Leadership is vital
- Good communication
- Training and support required
- It takes time to restructure and embed new ways of working

# Q & A



Joining up services – role of districts and counties



Funding – partnerships, long-term funding



Prevention – how to make every contact count



Providing non-statutory services – handy person, housing options advice

# Contact details

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Foundations

<http://www.foundations.uk.com/>

#RuralAge



# Lunch and Networking



**PPS5 Funding Routes to Deliver Schemes**  
**- Area 1**

**PPS6 The Challenges of Developing Extra Care Housing in a Rural Setting**  
**- Main Room**

**PPS 7 Rural Housing Enablers**  
**- Conservatory**