

Manchester Care and Repair – Independent improvement agency

Good practice themes

- 1. Linking RRO Policy to wider home improvement objectives**
- 2. Pro-active outreach to improve health of older and disabled people through home modifications**
- 3. Integration with health and care**

Context

Manchester City Council (population 563,600) is a unitary authority within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area. According to the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation Manchester is the 5th most deprived local council area in England, although not only does Manchester have some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, it also has some of the most affluent areas outside London.

The City Council operates an in house agency (Manchester Service for Independent Living – MSIL) which manages the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme. This DFG delivery is complimented by the wide range of services offered by Manchester Care & Repair, an independent, not for profit charity and one of the largest independent home improvement agencies in England.

Manchester Care & Repair's aim is to improve the homes and lives of older and disabled people. It aims is to increase people's independence and improve their quality of life. It offers a wide range of housing related services in Manchester City, ranging from practical support with home repairs, handyperson and home from hospital, to information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues. It also delivers some services in Wigan Borough.

1. Manchester City Council's Home Improvement and Relocation Assistance Policy 2017

The City Council has taken an innovative lead in setting a wide-ranging **policy** for provision of help with home adaptations/ modifications and innovative use of the increase in DFG funding from national government (paid through the Better Care Fund).

The council's policy states that:

'In providing Discretionary Assistance, the Council aims to adopt a holistic approach, supporting a number of innovative solutions, aimed at reducing dependency and assisting vulnerable individuals to live safely and comfortably in their homes'

The policy sets out provision for improving living conditions for people in Manchester through three types of assistance:

1. Home Improvement
2. Home relocation
3. Home Adaptation

Information about housing options, plus a range of financial support for direct provision of help with home repairs, maintenance and adaptation are covered by the policy. Advice and practical help with repairs, energy efficiency and home security are also included.

2. Outreach to older and disabled people with health conditions

In addition to the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants, the Council will provide Discretionary Assistance to support disabled residents and vulnerable residents who have urgent health related housing needs.

It has worked with Manchester Care & Repair (MC&R) to identify people with significant health conditions (particularly those who have had works carried out using a DFG in the past) whose homes are potentially detrimental to their health.

MC&R carries out 'Home Health Checks' and where householders meet the eligibility criteria, grant assistance is available to remedy the housing defect(s). Examples include

- Defective or inadequate heating, including central heating systems/ boilers
- Defective doors, windows, roofs
- Works required to remedy dampness
- Works required to improve the safety and security of the occupant(s)

The grant process is fast and simple, with a short application form and a streamlined process to evidence household income and residents' health conditions.

In addition, in order to meet a range of individual circumstances, the authority offers a mix of interest free loans, minor works assistance (grants/ interest free loans of between £2,500 to £7,000), relocation grants/loans.

For small jobs in the home Manchester Care & Repair is funded to provide a free HandyHelp service for anyone over 60yrs (clients pay for materials).

3. Integration Innovation – Home from Hospital

Manchester Care & Repair is funded by NHS Manchester CCG and MCC to offer practical help to every older person (over 60yrs) who is discharged from hospital. The core Home from Hospital scheme operates from North Manchester General Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary and Wythenshawe Hospital.

MC&R Care & Repair dedicated staff telephone older people upon their discharge from hospital to offer:

- A free Handyperson Service – for small practical tasks
- A home visit from a trusted caseworker for advice and support with services or welfare benefits
- Advice on home safety and falls prevention
- Technical support with home repairs

MC&R also operate an enhanced Home from Hospital service at North Manchester General Hospital and Manchester Royal Infirmary. This is a 7 day a week service which escorts vulnerable patients home and settles them in, checks the home is safe and warm, shops for essentials etc. It dovetails well with the range of practical housing services that MC&R can offer, as well as making connections to the DFG and other housing financial and practical help that the City Council supports

MC&R is also able to access emergency welfare grants to meet urgent needs such as crisis cleaning, emergency boiler / heating/ hot water repairs, essential household goods (e.g. cooker), home adaptations to reduce risk e.g. falls, all of which can help to keep older people safe at home and reduce the risk of hospital readmission and/ or general health deterioration.

Awareness raising, outreach and providing accessible information

Through their caseworker service MC&R raises awareness of the housing help on offer, including DFG, home adaptations and wider support services.

Whilst the work with hospitals has helped to raise awareness amongst health professionals, the pro-active Hospital to Home intervention avoids the need for time-pressed health sector staff to make individual referrals.

Contact

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