

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES

CORE (MINIMUM) SERVICES

(Ref: 'Home Improvement Agencies - Development and Reform' Sept 2003)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)

The core functions of Agencies - that is, those functions which relate to the improvement of the fabric of a dwelling and are therefore eligible for ODPM grant are:

- To help older, disabled and vulnerable people to remain independent in their own homes by identifying necessary repairs and improvements, finding suitable contractors and ensuring the work is properly carried out.
- To help people access public resources, including disabled facilities grants, where available; and
- To help people make use of other sources of funding through information on loans, insurance and equity release.

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS

(Ref: ODPM Letter to Local Authorities, 29 August 2003: Appendix 3)

1. General Advice

To assess the client's needs HIA staff will visit, usually in their own home, and offer appropriate information and advice on:

- Problems relating to the property
- All their housing options
- Completion of necessary forms
- Legal entitlements
- Other available support services

2. Finance

Clients will also be given information about various financial options including their implications and practical assistance in raising funds. This will include:

- Availability of grants from statutory bodies
- Releasing equity and accessing loans
- Accessing charitable funding
- Benefit entitlement - and the effect certain options may
- Insurance claims
- Savings

3. Technical

Reliable technical information will be available which will include:

- Home visit and inspection
- Advice on scale and cost of necessary works
- Help with choosing a reputable and reliable builder
- Monitoring the builder's performance
- Appropriate contracts and documentation