

## **Handyperson Support Discussion paper for market testing**

August 2012

### **Why is handyperson support a good idea?**

People place great value on "that little bit of help" and Handyperson support is perhaps one of the best examples of this.

Traditionally, Handyperson services have often been part of the wider package of services provided by home improvement agencies, often located in local authorities or by housing associations or third sector organisations.

These services assist older, disabled and vulnerable people with small building repairs, minor adaptations such as the installation of grab rails and temporary ramps, 'odd' jobs (such as putting up shelves, moving furniture), falls and accident prevention checks, and home safety and energy efficiency checks.

### **What support are we looking for in Barnet?**

We would like to discuss the type of support that could be provided for the amount of funding available. Also, there are other services within the Borough such as Care & Repair and we want to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication.

### **How much funding is available for this type of support?**

The annual funding for this support is £35,000 per annum with a total contract value for 3 years of £105,000. There will be an option to extend the contract by a further 2 years.

### **What would we want included in this type of support?**

The below list gives an idea of what could be included in a handyperson service:

The service would offer:

- Small building repairs;
- Minor adaptations (such as installation of grab rails or temporary ramps);
- "Odd" jobs (for example, putting up curtain rails and shelves, moving furniture);
- General home safety checks with remedial action (for example safety checking or repairing/replacing appliances);
- Falls/accident prevention checks with remedial action (for example, securing loose carpets or putting up grab rails);
- Security checks with remedial action (for example, checking and replacing window and door locks);
- Energy efficiency (for example installing low energy light bulbs, draft proofing);
- Advice on accident prevention, crime reduction, energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty
- Signposting to other services

Additionally the service could facilitate:

- Surveying and estimating
- Post inspection of works, checking contractors' invoices and dealing with complaints / disputes
- Advice and assistance for people to apply for grants
- Larger works
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- Post inspection of works, checking contractors' invoices and dealing with complaints / disputes
- Advice and assistance for people to apply for grants

Operationally the service would:

- Provide / publicise information on the service, its eligibility and any costs (for materials) the service user may incur
- Provide the administrative work related to the service, including taking referrals and signposting people, with their consent to other services; invoicing / taking payment from service users for materials and chasing for non-payment
- Manage any costs relating to sub-contracting of the service or specialist services (although these are likely to be charged to the service user)
- Cover training costs (including health and safety, safeguarding)

### **Are there different ways of delivering this type of support?**

We are interested to hear if there are new and innovative ways of delivering this type of support. Some ideas that we have considered are:

- a. A 'handy neighbour' service, i.e. no technical expertise required. This would have to be clearly defined and any works subject to health and safety regulations would be excluded. A central co-ordinator would refer people needing practical help to a handy neighbour and all arrangements would be made between the parties.
- b. A training / re-training programme for older people who previously had the technical and practical skills and are able and willing to carry out minor works (again subject to health and safety regulations);
- c. A referral and checking service only. Many older people have been subjected to 'rogue traders' and may like to be referred to a list of approved or tried and tested contractors, (eg similar to the on-line Trust-a- Trader.com service). A professional post-works checking service could be offered before the bill is paid.