



# foundations

THE NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING BODY  
FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES

## Home Improvement Agencies – The Key to Independent Living

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) are small, locally based not-for-profit organisations. They help homeowners and private sector tenants who are older, disabled or on low income to repair, maintain or adapt their homes. Many of these people are unsure where to turn for help. They are concerned about letting people into their homes and worried about employing 'cowboy' builders.



### What do HIAs do?

HIAs provide client centred, cost effective assistance. They help people to remain in their own home, safe, secure, warm and independent. They provide:

#### ● Advice and Advocacy

HIAs help people identify and address problems with their home. This includes a review of all housing options, such as advice on legal entitlements, welfare benefits, financial matters and other support services.

#### ● Financial Issues

For many people, the cost of repairs or improvements may be covered by a grant from their local authority, or a charity, as well as from their own home insurance, savings or through equity release loans. HIAs ensure that people receive appropriate independent financial advice, and offer practical help, such as filling out forms, or checking that they are receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled.

#### ● Technical Issues

HIAs facilitate approximately 40,000 jobs a year, worth around £93 million. HIAs not only offer advice about what is needed, but also provide assurance that any repairs undertaken will be completed satisfactorily, to budget and on time. Jobs can range from small repairs, such as minor plumbing works, to major renovations, adaptations or extensions for a disabled person. The building work is specified by the HIA in consultation with their client, and competitive estimates are sought from good quality vetted contractors. The Agency's technical staff oversee all the work in order to ensure that the finished result meets the required specifications.

#### ● Making the Links

HIAs make the links and build partnerships in order to provide an effective service to their clients – working with, for example, local authority housing and grant officers, occupational therapists, health workers, social services and local voluntary services.



## Why do we need Home Improvement Agency Services?

We are an ageing population and therefore the call on health and social care services is continually increasing. Helping someone to remain in their home:

- Improves their own health, quality of life, security and independence
- Improves their neighbourhoods
- Reduces their call on Health and Social Care services

For more information on how HIAs are key contributors to national and local strategies in housing, health and social care, see Foundations Information Card 2 – ‘HIAs Delivering Government Strategies across Housing, Health and Social Care’.



### How are HIAs funded?

The Government contribute towards agency core costs through Supporting People. However, for the majority of their funding, HIAs seek contracts and partnerships with local Housing Authorities, Social Services, Health Services and other local statutory and charitable bodies.

### To contact my local HIA?

You can telephone the Foundations head office on 01457 891909 and we will give you the contact details for your nearest agency. You can also carry out a search by postcode on our website. Visit [www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com) and click on the link from our home page.

## Who is Foundations?

Foundations is the national co-ordinating body for Home Improvement Agencies. We have been appointed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to:

- Develop and expand HIA services
- Provide advice, training and support to HIA staff, managing organisations and sponsoring authorities
- Monitor the activity and performance of HIAs
- Represent the sector in discussions with Government and other Stakeholders

For more information about Home Improvement Agencies, please see the Foundations web site

[www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com), or call our Head Office on 01457 891909



**BLEAKLOW HOUSE**  
**HOWARD TOWN MILL**  
**GLOSSOP SK13 8HT**  
**Telephone: 01457 891909**  
**Facsimile: 01457 869361**  
**email: [foundations@cel.co.uk](mailto:foundations@cel.co.uk)**  
**website: [www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com)**

