

Title:	Pilot Countywide Handyperson Service
Purpose:	Paper to support the introduction of a Countywide Handyperson Service to be managed by ECL
Authors:	Rob Sach/ Sam Payne/ Rhona Gilder
Presented by:	Rob Sach

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Background

The Handyperson Service Working Group is made up of representation from District and Borough Councils, Essex County Council Occupational Therapy and Essex County Council Commissioning Team. It is a Task and Finish group established by the Essex Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The Group was instructed to explore the need and options for an Essex-wide handyperson service that could be supported through the integrated Better Care Fund (iBCF) under the Joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Task and Finish Group confirmed that there was a gap in service provision relating to small works that would help vulnerable people return home from hospital without avoidable delay and promote independence at home.

Various options for the scope and delivery of a Handyperson Service have been explored.

Handyperson services provide a range of support; these can include any work that might involve use of a ladder, works that would remove tripping hazards or improve lighting, provision and fitting of Key Safe and other small works that would benefit the home safety, security and efficiency for a resident of Essex that otherwise would be unable to co-ordinate this work themselves or with the assistance of informal support network.

It was determined that a general handyperson service would be unsustainable across Essex and that many of the traditional handyperson works would not meet the criteria for support through the Better Care Fund. It was therefore determined that the scope of the Essex-wide service should be limited to:

A rapid response service to undertake works necessary to facilitate the return home of someone in hospital or under hospice care.

The Essex Handyperson service should operate as a 12-month pilot and that over this time, the operation would also gather information about a property that would identify:

1. Immediate home improvements that might be eligible for mandatory or discretionary financial assistance under a District Council's Housing Assistance policy

2. Areas of concern including minor works that would fall outside the scope of any current assistance with a view to establishing the need of a broader scheme after the pilot is complete.

When considering whether someone can be safely discharged from hospital, the immediate concern is that they discharged to a safe 'micro-environment' within the home, in which their care and support needs can be met by formal or informal care and support.

The work that will be undertaken by the handyman will be to carry out works required to facilitate safe discharge into an environment in which the individual can receive care safely, not merely removing risks that may cause harm. This may include (but is not limited to) the removal of tripping hazards, works/repairs to doors, thresholds and windows, repairs to lighting, supplying and fixing handrails, the provision of temporary ramps and the provision and fitting of a Key Safe.

The handyman would have the option to call on additional support if the activities involved the movement of furniture.

Current provision:

The current provision of support services commissioned by Essex County Council is the ATS (Assessment Technician Service) provided through a contract held by Essex Cares Ltd (ECL). This service has trained assessment and support staff that undertake a range of small works for Essex residents that have been referred through Essex Social Care. This service includes assessing for and providing Mechanical Bath Seats, Grab Rails, Furniture Raisers, Raised Toilet Seat and other similar small works. This service consists of 4 vans throughout Essex and therefore does not have the resource to provide a rapid response, the majority of the work is scheduled within 5 working days, therefore is unable to facilitate the discharge process from Hospital or Hospice. The service does not include an assessment of hazards or repairs, efficiency improvement or the installation of key safes. It does however refer to the OT services if more substantial works are required or a further, more complex assessment is required.

Handyman Options Explored

For the purposes of a County-Wide scheme, the task and finish group decided that using the existing referral method to the ECL's ATS service would be an efficient means of moving the project forward, due to the service infrastructure being in place. Meaning the current ATS contract, which is being renewed, may be developed to include a "Rapid Response Handyman Service".

Once the above service infrastructure was deemed suitable options regarding the provision of a Handyman service through ECL were developed, as detailed below with some of the primary positives and risks illustrated, but not exhausted:

1 Self-employed Handy Person

ECL would identify self-employed Handy Persons to be trained in line with Assessment Technician Service to complete work on demand.

Risks:

- The self-employed handy person not primarily committed to the project and may not have capacity to fulfil commitments in required rapidity.
- Unknown level of demand at present due to no previous pilot.
- Quality Assurance required due to unknown Quality of work/pricing
- Reputational risk to all stakeholders with unknown quantity of Sub-contractor.

Positives:

- Zero-hour contract, therefore no fixed commitment.
- Low capital risk to ECC or LAs as no outlay is required in the first instance.

2 Hourly paid

Similar to the above self-employed option and the below fully employed option. However, this approach could be problematic as the Handy Person is often required for small works that might not be cost effective on an hourly rate

Risks:

- Jobs too small to warrant hourly rate subsequently been turned down
- Cherry-picking of the high value jobs
- Poor time efficiency encouraged with jobs due to pay per time.
- Reputational risk to all stakeholders with unknown quantity of Sub-contractor.

Positives:

- Zero-hour contract, therefore no fixed commitment.
- Low capital risk to ECC or LAs as no outlay is required in the first instance.

3 Full-time employed

For this to be viable the LAs would fund upfront the full costs of the Handypersons and vans for a year. 2 full-time persons and 2 vans including on costs (salary, management, recruitment & retention and insurance.) Appendix 4. Equipment and materials would need to be paid for separately either by District and Borough or by the service user.

Risks:

- Materials and equipment must be funded in addition to make capital investment worthwhile*
- No past pilot to provide expected works budget

Positives:

- County wide approach to single service ensuring all Councils participating are receiving uniform service
- Easy to monitor outputs and outcomes against discharge
- Least administrative means to start pilot, as it could be added in to current service specification.
- Quarterly monitoring of “Material invoices” in order to maintain provider-D&B-ECC clarity.

*Material costs are in addition to the upfront cost for service. Costs are dependent on material required and range from £0 (equipment move/Decluttering) to maximum £1000 (Minor works/boiler repairs), jobs greater than (amount to be agreed) will require approval from D&B prior to works commencing. Example costs Appendix 4

4 Price matrices

This option would use the pricing matrix Appendix 3 that identifies specific items and costing for every likely small works required. Some works would come out very cost effective and some others would not, creating a balance.

These prices are inclusive of two handy persons and a van (depending on predicted need/demand).

Risks:

- Due to no previous pilot demand is unknown, meaning either too much demand on service and money running out, or overspend or too little use meaning service not viable.
- Unknown cost from outset.
- Likely to be costly due to price per job, therefore less sustainable in the long-term.

Positives:

- OT team to implement/manage
- Cost of works change due to external factors (raw materials, political climate etc)

5 Utilise existing ATS service

Establish what the gaps are in the current ATS service. Look in detail at what population needs and work with each District and Borough to pursue agreement either with ECL or develop their own service.

Risks:

- Lack of uniformity across Essex for Handyperson services.
- Ineffective use of service from hospital staff that are unable to monitor which postal code does or doesn't have a handy person, increasing delayed discharges

Positives:

- Identified need at a local level and tailor approach best suited for that District or Borough.
- Each LA will have responsibility for what happens in their area

Discussion has involved options that would feature within the service that would be available for vulnerable Essex residents living in Owner-Occupier properties, Privately Rented Properties, Housing Association/Social Landlords (with exceptions), to allow people who are either in hospital, hospice or temporary care to return home safely and without undue delay.

Recommended Option (3. Full time employed)

The recommended option for the handyman pilot across Essex is that it is provided by extending the existing Essex Cares Ltd (ECL) contract with ECC which currently covers procurement of equipment and minor adaptations services. This negates the need to tender for a new provider, by arranging a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with ECL. The primary benefits of this option are that the service infrastructure is already in place, there is resource resilience within the current ATS service to cope with sickness, holiday or injury, the timely manner with which the SLA can be arranged ensures momentum and appetite for this service is maintained.

By upskilling the current ATS service technicians in the enhanced element of the service, i.e. property assessment and falls risk prevention, the service develops an already successfully utilised service. Avoiding the risk of an unknown quantity from a new provider.

ECC and ECL have an effective working relationship currently around the equipment and adaptation service. In which ECC (the controller for the proposed service) assist operationally and in a performance monitoring capacity to ensure the current services are provided in line with the needs of the Essex population and budgetary constraints. This therefore, will reduce a potential risk of Budgetary inefficiency as outlined in Option 3.

Costs and Funding

Whilst mandatory DFGs remain a priority for District and Borough Councils, an Essex-wide agreement, by way of the joint Memorandum of Understanding between Essex County Council and District and Boroughs in the Essex Disabled Facilities Group, allows for an innovative use of funds for Services that support key objectives, one of which is “reduce the cost to the NHS of delayed discharges from hospital”.

There are 2 District and Boroughs that already provide a handyman scheme (Epping and Braintree), creating a non-uniformity of provision across Essex and creating a gap in current services providing this type of support. This often negatively

effects the speed in which someone can return to their home environment from hospital or hospice.

The pilot project will provide 2 rapid response vehicles (Appendix 3) funded by District and Borough councils. Funded with either the voluntary return of funds from their DFG allocation to ECC or by other agreed means.

Materials required for the completion of the small works jobs will be logged by ECL, collated, audited by ECC and invoiced quarterly to the District and Borough Councils for re-imburement.

Limitations

The pilot is for a rapid response handyman scheme that can undertake a range of minor works and improvements to a property to enable safe discharge home from hospital or hospice. However, the responsibilities of Registered Social Landlords to their tenants would mean that the service will not extend to RSL property for which there will need to be a mechanism for referral.

Works that affect properties in the private rented sector will have to be carefully assessed to make sure that property is being maintained by landlords according to their responsibilities, and landlord consent obtained for any equipment that requires for fitting and fixing.

Summary of recommended proposal

There is a need for a Countywide Handyman Service to be available with focus to be given to minor works, that fall outside of the DFG and other funded services. These are often required to facilitate discharge and enable safe and timely return home from hospital or hospice, whilst also preventing hospital admissions and promoting an individual's independence.

The recommended proposal is to have 2 Handymen with two vans, working in pairs when required, to attend Adults' homes and undertake agreed work to allow safe and timely discharge from hospitals and hospices, throughout Essex.

The following to be agreed:

- 1 Mechanism of recording and referral to D&Bs of homes requiring more significant work,
- 2 Frequency of invoice from ECL to D&B's for re-imburement of material costs incurred,
- 3 Reporting mechanism and outcome monitoring to capture works carried out and outcomes for residents of Essex,

4 Detail of referral criteria and mechanism to “The Countywide Handyman Service”.

For this pilot to be a viable option all District and Borough councils will need to sign up to an agreement to work in partnership with ECL. This type of innovative use of DFG sits within the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) and may be funded by the District and Borough Councils’ DFG allocation as agreed in the joint Memorandum of Understanding

Conclusion

Based on the evidence and information provided in respect of the cost of delayed discharges for those because of the need for housing related support, although set costs are difficult to obtain the delays are likely to be because of the home environment not being suitable. The ability to quickly obtain support for the minor works as listed would contribute to significant savings by providing the early intervention and support necessary to ensure an efficient and effective pathway that prevents delayed discharge and improves the service currently provided and supported by the Disabled Facilities Grant.

By demonstrating service wide cost savings and quality of life marker improvements it is thought that the position can be presented for ongoing funding at the end of the pilot scheme. A pilot service allows the joint D&B, ECC and ECL task and finish group to ascertain lessons learned and ensure the future service has built in efficiencies in line with the result of the pilot.

In the recommended option (3) there is an element of unknown cost for materials, however this will be closely monitored over the first quarter and transparent discussion held between all D&B, ECL and ECC task and finish group, and will be monitored at regular intervals throughout the pilot. Due to the historic, ongoing working relationship between ECC OT service and ECL it is expected that no issues will arise through this process, however any queries and concerns regarding invoices and Handypersons service will be handled by the Task and Finish group.

Appendix 1

Positive Effect of a Handyperson Service

Delays to a person being discharged home are costly to all partner services, particularly when the works that are required are low cost and low risk, e.g. general safety checks, installation of a key safe, working light bulbs, moving furniture to allow for equipment provision and use.

Cost of delayed days from Acute and Non-Acute Hospitals:

Total Delayed Discharge Days (over a 6-month period - Nov 2017 to Apr 2018)	1,069
Average cost per day	Hospital - £400 Non-acute home - £200
6/12 total	£352,342.40
Annual Cost of delayed days related to housing delays	£704, 684.80

Number of days spent in temporary placements

Area	Total placements Oct 17-Oct 18
Mid	79
North	60
South East	69
South West	49
West	19
Total	284

Average length of each temporary placement is 45.6 days with a total 12,974 days countywide per year. Temporary placements to facilitate discharge from hospital when an adult requires 'physical support' for reasons "mobility and access".

Appendix 2- Cost of delays

Delayed days from Hospital

Month	F) Awaiting community equipment and adaptations	I) Housing – patients not covered by NHS and Community Care Act
Nov 2017	126	44
Dec 2017	97	42
Jan 2018	83	65
Feb 2018	62	116
Mar 2018	110	64
Apr 2018	98	162

Table 1. The total number of delayed transfers of care that are due to Housing related issues in a 6 month period. The data is shown in “Delayed Days”

Hospital Bed	average £400 per night.
Non-acute Hospital	Average £200 per night (approx.)
Nursing Home Bed	average £108 per night
Residential Home Average	£80 per night
*Home Care	£68.65

Table 2. *Home care cost worked out as the median of the range that can be paid. Max £129.20 Per day (2 people for 4 care calls) and minimum £8.09 (one person for 30 mins). Non-acute hospital stay a low estimate based from NHS data.

Acute	Non-Acute	Total
1,993	1,249	3,242
2,086	958	3,044
1,934	892	2,826
1,555	774	2,329
1,891	956	2,847
2,015	1,403	3,418
11,474	6,232	17,706
64.80%	35.20%	

Table 3 . The total number of delayed days with the acute and non-acute ratio calculated as a percentage of total. To allow application to sub categories related to housing F & I.

	Acute	Non-Acute
Total Percentage	64.80%	35.20%
Total delayed days 6/12	692.712	376.288
	400	200
Total cost of delayed days 6/12	£277,084.8	£75,257.60
Total 6/12		£352,342.40
Total cost of housing/adaptation related delays over 12 months adjusted to the acute and non-acute ratio		£704,684.80

Table 4. Cost of delayed days in relation to housing delays

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/delayed-transfers-of-care/delayed-transfers-of-care-data-2017-18/>

Explanation of Figures:

Total Annual cost relating to housing delays = **£704,684.80**

This is **2,138** total days over 12 months (**1,069** days per 6 months) **64.8%** from acute settings **35.2%** non-acute setting (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/delayed-transfers-of-care/delayed-transfers-of-care-data-2017-18/>)

Acute: 692.712 multiplied by cost of night in acute £400 = **£277,084.8**

Non-Acute: 376.288 multiplied by (approx.) cost of non-acute £200= **££75,257.60**

Total 6 monthly =£352,342.40. Total 12 monthly **£704,684.80**

Temporary placements

	IRN Placements	Nomination Placements (Excelcare)	Spot Placements	Grand Total	
Mid	61		6	12	79
Braintree	29		2	4	35
Chelmsford	22		4	4	30
Maldon	10			4	14
North	46		1	13	60
Colchester	28			7	35
Tendring	18		1	6	25
South East	43		2	24	69
Castle Point	24		1	11	36
Rochford	19		1	13	33
South West	35		4	10	49
Basildon	32		3	5	40
Brentwood	3		1	5	9
West	15		1	3	19
Epping Forest	8			1	9
Harlow	4			1	5
Uttlesford	3		1	1	5
(blank)	4		1	3	8
(blank)	4		1	3	8
Grand Total	204		15	65	284

Appendix 3- Option 4- ECL Price matrices

A pricing matrix for works, labour cost and materials under option 4. NOT cost of materials for option 3.

Job	Tenant to supply material	Council to provide materials	Cost (ex VAT)
Key safes		✓ see note 1	£38.50
Moving furniture e.g. bed from upstairs to downstairs	✓		£38.50
Bulb Changing	✓	✓	£25.00
Decluttering of rooms to aid hospital discharge			£38.50
Minor electrical repairs e.g. fixing plugs		✓ see note 1	£76.50
Minor boiler repairs (maximum £1,000)		✓ see note 1	
Telephone extension cable running	✓		£76.50
Radiator bleeding	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Altering timers for heating	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Tap washers		✓	£38.50
Shower holders (that work off taps)	✓ see note 1		£38.50
Shower curtains and poles	✓ see note 1		£38.50
Lavatory seats	✓ see note 1		£38.50
Sink, basin and bath plugs		✓	£38.50
Blocked drains, sinks, toilets, baths and pipes	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Plumbing in washing machines	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Repairing loose tiling over baths or sinks	✓ see note 2	✓	£130.00
Cupboard doors that are loose or off	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Tightening door handles	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Door and window locks		✓	£38.50
Spy holes		✓	£38.50
Door chains		✓	£38.50
Draft exclusion		✓	£38.50
Foil backing to radiators		✓	£38.50
Hot water tank jacket		✓ see note 1	£76.50
Loft clearance to enable loft insulation to be installed	Not required	Not required	£130.00

APPENDIX A

(Subject to volume and time spent)			
Trickle vents to prevent condensation and mould		✓ see note 1	£76.50
External security lights		✓ see note 1	£130.00
Security measures identified by Police		✓ see note 1	£130.00
CO2 Alarms		✓ see note 1	£38.50
Replacing curtain rails	✓		£38.50
Coat rails	✓		£38.50
Replace toilet seats	✓	✓	£38.50
Shelving, hooks and rails	✓		£38.50
Picture hanging	✓		£38.50
Replacement curtain rails	✓		£38.50
Carpet trimming	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Fix carpets where trip hazards have developed	Not required	Not required	£38.50
Anti slip matting for rugs and mats	✓	✓ see note 1	£38.50
Remove/lower thresholds between rooms		✓	£130.00
Flat pack assembly	✓		£130.00
Path clearance		✓ see note 1	£76.50
Putting up individual washing lines (not communal)	✓		£76.50
Replacing broken fence posts (*Only minor fencing work that the Handyperson can carry out single handed)		✓ see note 1	£76.50
Repair broken/uneven paths and steps		✓ see note 1	£130.00
Fitting locks to back gates (for secure access)	✓	✓ see note 1	£38.50
Replacing gate springs		✓ see note 1	£76.50

Appendix 4- Option 3- Full time Employed

ECL has calculated the pricing matrix which will allow for 2 Countywide Handypersons and 2 vans – with the doubling up of the workforce where necessary

One Person & Van	Small Van	Large Van
Assessment technician cost- one man	£ 65,548	£69,731
Technician cost - one man	£53,724	£57,907
Two Person & Van	Small Van	Large Van
Assessment technician cost- two man	£ 97,787	£ 100,970
Technician cost - two man	£85,963	£ 90,146

*the work is to be from the property boundary to the room in the home identified as appropriate for the purposes of discharge from hospital.

The client may be entitled to or pending assessment for a mandatory DFG or other discretionary assistance as provided locally by their District Council

The services would be available Monday – Friday between 0800-1600

Pricing of Material examples:

Item		Cost (Inc Material Handling Costs)
O10A	Permasafe Keysafe	£45.34
O13D	Police Approved Keysafe	£55.84
V02D	Tunstall Carbon Monoxide Detecto	£91.64
F01T	12" White metal rail	£1.54
F02T	Rails Metal White 18"	£2.05
F03T	RAILS METAL WHITE 24"	£2.36
F04T	Rails Ang Metal White 12"	£2.85
F05T	Rails Ang Metal White 28"	£6.83
F06T	Rails Grab Plastic 12"	£2.54
F07T	Rails Grab Plastic 18"	£2.92
F08T	Rails Grab Plastic 24"	£3.36
F08W	Rails Grab Metal White 36	£3.11
F09T	RAILS ANGLED PLASTIC 12	£5.97
F10T	Rails Newel Post Left	£3.97
F11T	Rails Newel Post Right	£3.97
F12T	Rail Mopstick 1Mtr Length	£3.04
F18T	Rails Devon Short	£18.58
F19S	Devon Rail + Folding Leg	£20.51
F19T	Rails Devon Dd Standard	£47.70
F24T	Devon Floor Mounted Rail	£37.27
B22S	Solo Shower Seat Std W/F	£36.89
F21T	Key Clamp Tube	£3.98
T02T	Toilet Frame Fix Kit	£8.71
F01J	GrabRail Plastic Blue 12	£2.54
F01K	GrabRail Plastic Blue 18	£2.92
F01L	GrabRail Plastic Blue 24	£3.36