

REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, 11 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT BY: ALAN CUFLEY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

WRITTEN BY: ROY SCANLON, Housing Renewals Manager

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF THE HOMECHECK SERVICE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek the approval of the Cabinet Member to extend the range of services provided to include a fee charging home safety technician service for able to pay residents, living in private sector housing, previously excluded from help.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member approves the introduction of the extended Homecheck service.
2. That the Cabinet Member endorses the scale of charges set out in appendix 'a'

3. BACKGROUND

Homecheck have been providing home safety and electrical checks for vulnerable people in Portsmouth for many years. The service has evolved over the years to include home safety checks for under 5's through Surestart. We also have contracts to deliver the service to three neighbouring authorities.

In Portsmouth the service covers minor adaptations work for disabled people and during the last couple of years the Homecheck team have provided cover for the delivery of the Occupational Therapy Technician Service, installing stair rails and grab rails, and the installation sensory impairment equipment for Social Services. Homecheck will deliver this latter work as from the November 2008.

During the course of delivering these services it has become apparent that there are many residents who receive advice from Social Care on their disability needs but are unable to access the free service because they are not in receipt of qualifying benefits. This leaves potentially vulnerable people without assistance and needing to find a suitable person to install the necessary equipment for them. Additional stair rails and grab rails are provided for residents of local authority housing by the area offices.

4. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSALS

To support those residents it is proposed that the existing service be extended to offer, on a fee charging basis, the same level of assistance to able to pay clients that we currently provide free to people on benefits.

This would enable an equal service provision to all residents and would assist the Independent Living Service in their work as they could confidently signpost their able to pay clients to the service in the knowledge that same CRB checked technicians would be carrying out the work.

Demand analysis has indicated a need for this service, which could be provided within existing resources, following amendments to working practices and could help maintain the existing service. The new service provision will on a pilot basis and will be review after six months.

5. CONCLUSION

The introduction of this new service provision would enable all residents to access a service to meet their needs and contribute to their safety and independence in their home.

6. CITY SOLICITORS COMMENTS / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The City Solicitor is satisfied that it is within the Council's powers to approve the recommendations as set out.

As this report is within existing policy provisions an Equalities Impact assessment is not requires

7. SIGNING OFF THE REPORT

Signed.....
Alan Cufley Head of Community Housing

Dated.....

8. APPROVAL TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected by the Cabinet Member for Housing, on.....

Signed.....

Councillor Steve Wylie
Cabinet Member - Housing