

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair

Annual Report 2008/09



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



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ABERDEENSHIRE CARE & REPAIR ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

1 INTRODUCTION

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair was established in June 1997 and operated in the areas of Buchan and Formartine until January 2005 when the project was expanded to cover the whole of Aberdeenshire. The project is funded by Aberdeenshire Council and managed by Castlehill Housing Association.

This is the fourth full year of the Service operating over the whole area, and statistics have been provided for each of the six areas within Aberdeenshire. There are some notable differences between the areas, most obviously in the level of grants paid out.

This has been a difficult year for all involved, as due to a high demand for grant assistance, the Grant scheme had to be curtailed in July 2008. This resulted in all submitted applications being held on a waiting list, and grants being approved monthly on a prioritisation basis. We were also no longer able to submit any new applications for repairs and Improvement works. Unfortunately, a number of Repairs and Improvement grant applications on the waiting list were subsequently refused due to a lack of funding.

Whilst a few of the Improvement Grants for water supplies were transferred to Aberdeenshire Council's Water Grant scheme, the majority of clients were unable to meet the cost of the works without assistance. We were able to help with costs through charitable funding for some clients, and a few were able to pay for the works themselves.

The restriction in funding has also meant that all applications for Disabled Improvement works are taking an average of 6 months to be approved, with a shorter waiting time for urgent and high priority adaptations. A number of clients were able to opt for an "early start", and therefore have the works carried out before grant funding was approved. Unfortunately, as this system relies on the clients paying for the work themselves on completion, many clients are not in a position to be able to afford to pay for the work upfront without grant funding.

Despite this, the value of grants paid out by Aberdeenshire Council was over £1 million for the first time. The total value of all works completed was just under £1.7 million, an increase of almost £¼ million from the previous year. This year saw an increase in all types of works carried out by the Project, and demand for the service continues to grow year on year.

2 COMPLETIONS

The project received a total number of 3,049 new referrals over the year, in addition to cases received before but not yet closed. Some cases were simple telephone advice only, but the majority resulted in some forms of work being carried out.

The total number of jobs completed during 2008/2009 is as follows:

1501	Minor Adaptation Service	£ 185,700.73
765	Small Repairs	£ 69,362.21
84	Other Works	£ 120,924.12
<u>209</u>	<u>Grant Works</u>	<u>£ 1,321,190.90</u>
TOTAL:	<u>2,559</u>	<u>£ 1,697,177.96</u>

The project assisted in a wide range of works, from repairing dripping taps to complete re-slates and a large number of level-access showers. Funding of these works comes from several sources such as grant capital funding, charitable donations, Social Work funding and clients own money.

3 GRANT FUNDED WORKS

3.1 Background

Aberdeenshire Council have a dedicated grant fund for Aberdeenshire Care & Repair by means of the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG). This funding enables many clients to have work carried out in their house that they would not be able to fund themselves. Clients were able to access grants of up to 100% to a maximum of £15,000.00. The level of award is dependent on a financial assessment of the applicant.

Unfortunately, due to a very high level of demand for grant assistance, the scheme had to be restricted in July 2008. Aberdeenshire Council were no longer able to accept new applications for Repairs and Improvement grants. In addition, a working group was established to meet and prioritise grant approvals on a monthly basis. The group consists of the Senior EH Specialist Officer (Housing & Pollution), the three OT Team Managers from North, Central and South, the Strategic Development Officer (Private Sector) and C&R Project Manager.

3.2 Grant Spend

The breakdown of grant Funding for the six areas is as follows:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	283,060.06	38,657.29	321,717.35	57
Buchan	237,011.29	38,833.02	275,844.31	49
Formartine	132,475.67	34,049.17	166,524.84	25
Garioch	118,146.23	102,998.57	221,144.80	29
Kincardine & Mearns	56,705.54	20,045.06	76,750.60	17
Marr	<u>177,848.06</u>	<u>81,360.94</u>	<u>259,209.00</u>	<u>32</u>
Total	<u>£1,005,246.85</u>	<u>£315,944.05</u>	<u>£1,321,190.90</u>	<u>209</u>

Grant spend has always been high in the original area of Buchan, and this year has also seen a high demand in Banff & Buchan and a large increase in Marr where the amount of grant money paid in this area has more than doubled from the previous year. However, there has been a slight decrease in Garioch, and a significant drop in Kincardine & Mearns.

3.3 Types of Work

Grant funding from Aberdeenshire Council, for repairs, improvements and disabled adaptations, assisted a total of 209 completions. This represents 71% disabled improvement work and 29% of repairs and improvement. 36% of the total grant money was spent on Repairs and Improvement work, and 64% on Disabled Improvement works. Disabled adaptations usually have to be supported by a Community Occupational Therapist following an assessment of the client's needs.

A total number of 48 houses were classed as below the tolerable standard (BTS) before the works were carried out. The main reasons for BTS classification by the local EHO inspecting the property were an inadequate/unsatisfactory water supply and significant dampness/water penetration. The project has worked with the Local Authority in their aim of targeting BTS property and 48 more households now no longer live in below tolerable housing. For many clients, they were unable to carry out the work without the Grant funding made available by Aberdeenshire Council.

3.3 Breakdown of Works

A Adaptations

Showers	111
Ramps/step work	19
Extensions	4
Stairlifts	18
Through-floor lift	2
Track-hoist	2
Central Heating	1
Door widening	1
Kitchen	1
W.C./Closomat	<u>7</u>
TOTAL	<u>166</u>

B Repairs/Improvements

Re-slate	17
Flat-roof replacement	13
Roof/Guttering Repairs	25
Damp/Timber Treatments	12
Water Supply/Septic tank	4
Lead pipe replacement	4
Windows /Doors	9
Re-wiring	7
Re-pointing/Harling	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	<u>100</u>

The total breakdown comes to more than the 209 completions, but this was because some houses had two or three different types of works carried out e.g. level access shower and lead piping replacement; shower, central heating and ramp; wet rot treatment and re-slate; roof and window replacement, mains water supply and re-wiring.

3.5 Funding

The grant system is financially assessed, although there are minimum 50% grants available for certain works if the client does not wish to reveal their finances. There are differences within the six areas e.g. in Banff & Buchan 33 out of 57 grants were maximum 100% and only 3 minimum 50% grants were paid. In Garioch and Kincardine & Mearns, over a third of the grants were minimum 50%. The overall average grant across Aberdeenshire was 80%. The average grants awarded in each area detailed below:

	<u>Average Grant</u>	<u>Average %</u>
Banff & Buchan	£4,965.97	91%
Buchan	£4,836.97	87%
Formartine	£5,299.03	84%
Garioch	£4,074.01	72%
Kincardine & Mearns	£3,335.62	71%
Marr	£5,557.75	76%

In addition, the project currently has over £1 million grant works in progress or awaiting approval as well as a high number in the pipeline. This highlights the increasing demand for grant assistance across the area.

3.6 History

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Total</u>
2008/2009	209	1,005,246.85	316,944.05	1,322,190.90
2007/2008	216	869,898.21	286,929.99	1,156,828.20
2006/2007	104	532,426.78	236,999.55	769,426.27
2005/2006	154	539,438.83	167,643.23	707,082.06

4 SMALL REPAIRS SERVICE

4.1 Background

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair operate a Small Repairs Service, funded through the PSHG and Social Work. The project pays the labour charges and clients have to pay for any materials used. This service is important to many clients who find it difficult to find qualified tradesmen to carry out small jobs. It also means prevention of larger works in the future e.g. guttering repairs or cleaning out guttering – work which some clients request annually.

4.2 Breakdown of Funding

	<u>Project</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	9738.28	982.40	10,720.68	125
Buchan	21,732.00	2,548.78	24,280.78	244
Formartine	13,243.29	2,186.29	15,429.58	170
Garioch	5,365.67	526.18	5,891.85	64
Kincardine & Mearns	4,775.90	717.82	5,493.72	83
Marr	6,567.21	978.39	7,545.60	79
Total (All Areas)	£61,422.35	£7,939.86	£69,362.21	765

4.3 Breakdown of Trades Used

Electrician	117
Plumber	222
Joiner	76
Tiler	2
Slater	295
Builder	14
Glazier	23
General	16

Demand for the Small Repairs Service increases annually, as more people become aware of the service and also contact us again for additional works. The average cost of a job is £90.67, of which the client had to pay £10.38 for materials. A number of clients also had their material costs met by our Hardship Fund, due to being on low incomes. Many of the jobs are labour only e.g. cleaning out guttering, with no cost to the client. The works were carried out mainly by local contractors or Building Maintenance, particularly in areas where it is difficult to find reliable contractors who are willing to carry out small repairs.

4.4 History

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Total</u>
2008/2009	765	61,422.35	7,939.86	69,362.21
2007/2008	710	57,218.30	7,600.85	64,819.15
2006/2007	496	34,363.21	6,315.96	40,679.17
2005/2006	408	27,597.19	4,484.62	32,080.81

5 MINOR ADAPTATION SERVICE

5.1 Background

The Social Work Department of Aberdeenshire Council fund the project to manage a minor adaptation service across Aberdeenshire. The main type of adaptations is fitting grab rails, additional banisters, external blacksmith rails and step adaptations. A high number of works are urgent in order to facilitate hospital discharges and the type of work is also instrumental in preventing falls and increasing safety for the client.

5.2 Breakdown of Funding

	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	31,498.02	265
Buchan	39,689.37	305
Formartine	27,836.14	239
Garioch	38,059.29	292
Kincardine & Mearns	23,801.09	150
Marr	24,816.82	250
TOTALS	£185,700.73	1501

There has been a high increase in spend for Banff & Buchan and Buchan for the second year running. There has been an increase across all areas in Aberdeenshire, with the exception of Kincardine & Mearns. An additional 201 jobs were carried out compared to 2007/2008 and there are also a further 232 jobs in progress but not yet invoiced.

5.3 History

	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Units</u>
2008/2009	185,700.73	1501
2007/2008	154,980.32	1300
2006/2007	83,384.44	796
2005/2006	163,464.82	1278

6 OTHER WORKS

6.1 Background

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair also assist clients with arranging and funding other works. This includes the following types:

- Referral for Warm Deal/Scottish Executive Central Heating Programme
- Work which is not grant eligible
- Charitable fundraising
- Arranging contractors for clients happy to pay the cost of works in full

6.2 Breakdown of Funding

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	16,401.32	9
Buchan	35,606.96	25
Formartine	25,416.28	19
Garioch	6,061.78	5
Kincardine & Mearns	19,704.88	17
Marr	<u>17,732.90</u>	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	<u>£120,924.12</u>	<u>84</u>

7 QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

7.1 Grampian Fire & Rescue Service Partnership

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair has established a joint working partnership with GFRS and an official launch was held in August 2005. This resulted in extensive publicity and GFRS hope that this will act as a blueprint for services across Scotland. GFRS has provided smoke alarms, which are fitted through our Small Repairs Service or by relatives if the clients so wish. In addition, we are now also fitting specialist smoke alarms for people with severe hearing impairment. These are provided via the Community Safety Partnership following an assessment from a specialist worker.

All our visiting officers also underwent training by GFRS to enable basic fire safety advice to be given if required. The project also refers back to GFRS if more specialist advice is needed. This year a further 16 smoke alarms have been fitted in 11 properties. This included 8 smoke alarms for the deaf, which were provided via Community Safety. These are the last of these types of alarms to be fitted as clients with hearing difficulties are now provided with wireless alarms that do not need an electrician to fit them. This was to houses, which either had no smoke alarms previously, or the existing ones were broken. The Joint Partnership Agreement is also in the process of being extended so that clients contacting the Project are offered free fire safety advice from GFRS if they are classed as a high risk.

7.2 Benefits

As part of our holistic approach, a benefits check is carried out for all clients who provide us with financial information. The visiting Officers assist with the completion of claim forms where entitlement to additional benefits is found.

In the financial year of 2008/2009, the Project helped clients across Aberdeenshire to claim an additional 68 Welfare benefits. This meant a total weekly increase in income of £3753.95 and represents a total annual increase of £195,205.40. The average increase in weekly income was £55.21, and most clients also received a lump sum in backdated money. We also assisted clients with applying for one-off grants from the Social Fund e.g. Community Care Grant and Funeral Payment.

7.3 Charitable Funding

The project has assisted with funding of works for individual clients by accessing money from various charitable organisations. This funding has helped with shortfall in grant funding and also for works that are not grant eligible but the clients cannot afford to fund themselves. During this financial year, a total of £59,344.19 was raised for 34 clients. This is a significant increase on the previous year. Other charitable funding has been secured for works not yet completed.

The project has close links with several charities, such as the Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RSABI) and SSAFA Forces Help. Both these organisations have a local worker, who refers clients to the project as well as assisting with our referrals for funding. Several clients have also been made annual beneficiaries, where they receive an annuity of approximately £600.00. This extra income does not affect any benefits they may be in receipt of.

7.4 Summary

It is very difficult to assess the impact of the work completed and the assistance provided by the project. However, the project carried out a high number of disabled adaptations. It is unlikely that clients could have continued staying in their own homes without the larger adaptations being carried out. The Minor Adaptation Service is also invaluable in assisting with hospital discharges, increasing safety and preventing falls. Many clients comment on their enhanced quality of life as a result of the various levels of help from Aberdeenshire Care & Repair.

The Project also carries out a comprehensive review of the Service by issuing satisfaction surveys to clients. A high number of clients have stated that the work carried out has resulted in a significant increase in their enjoyment of their home.

Some of the comments we have received are detailed below:

- I have recommended Care & Repair to my friends
- Everything was very well organised from the paperwork to the tradesmen doing the work
- The staff we dealt with were very attentive. I don't think you could improve on it
- I don't think you could improve this service. Very satisfied
- I would say no. You already go the extra mile
- I think they do a very good job – so you can't improve on that!
- A special thanks for her visits and the way she explained all the works to be done. I now have my home wind and waterproof and am worry free
- Most helpful with forms etc and made things so easy for us under difficult circumstances
- I was very pleased with all the help I got from Aberdeenshire Care & Repair
- The assistance I got from Care & Repair was first class, very happy with the service
- I was very pleased with the work carried out. I would not have managed without it. It has made a big difference to my life. Thanks again for all that you did for me
- As far as I am concerned, the service I received was very good indeed. Thank you very much
- We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff we were involved with, and always felt that we received a first class personal service. Many thanks
- Nothing was too much trouble. The all round service is excellent
- We would not have managed without your help and thank you all most sincerely

8 CLIENT AND PROPERTY PROFILES

8.1 Age of Client

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Under 60	4%	16%
60-69	26%	25%
70-79	30%	34%
80-89	38%	23%
90+	2%	2%

8.2 Disability (some clients are in more than one category)

Mental Health Problems	3%
Dementia	2%
Learning Difficulties	3%
Mobility Problems	74%
Chronic Illness	40%
Physical Disabilities	24%
General Poor Health	21%
Healthy	6%

8.3 Length of Residence

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Less than 5 years	15%	5%	8%
5-10 years	10%	16%	10%
10-20 years	20%	31%	29%
20-30 years	20%	20%	21%
30+ years	35%	28%	32%

8.4 Types of Dwelling

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Terraced	14%	7%	16%
Semi-Detached	29%	31%	29%
Detached	45%	504%	41%
4 in a Block	1%	5%	2%
Tenement/Flat	-	2%	4%
Others	7%	5%	8%

8.5 Age of Property

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Pre 1919	24%	18%	35%
1919-1944	12%	7%	12%
1945-1964	16%	20%	17%
1965-1982	21%	29%	25%
Post 1982	27%	26%	11%

9 PUBLICITY

An official launch of the expanded project was held in January 2005, resulting in widespread publicity. Further publicity in the media took place following the launch of the Joint Partnership Agreement with Grampian Fire & Rescue Service. The project continues to promote the work of Care & Repair by means of leaflet distribution and talks to groups and other organisations. A high number of referrals came via word of mouth – family, friends and neighbours. We also have a number of clients who contact us for further assistance, having used the service in the past.

Referral Routes

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Local Authority Dept	7%	14%
Health/GP	2%	8%
Neighbour	14%	5%
Publicity	10%	3%
Friend/Family/Self	48%	19%
Home Care	3%	4%
Social Work/OT	6%	40%
Voluntary Organisation	3%	3%
Other	7%	4%

10 CLIENT SATISFACTION

The project continually monitors all aspects of the service provided by asking clients to complete a satisfaction survey once the works have been completed. The survey covers a range of areas such as the standard of work and tradesmen, Care & Repair staff/agency and whether they could have carried out the work without the project's assistance. We have an average return rate of 72% for large works, 78% for minor adaptations and 88% for small repairs.

A MINOR ADAPTATIONS

1 Standard of Tradesmen

Customer Care	Very Satisfied	80%	Satisfied	20%	Dissatisfied	-
Quality	Very Satisfied	80%	Satisfied	19%	Dissatisfied	1%
Reliability	Very Satisfied	76%	Satisfied	24%	Dissatisfied	-

2 Overall Satisfaction

Very Satisfied	78%
Satisfied	19%
Dissatisfied	3%

B SMALL REPAIRS

1 Standard of Work

Very Satisfied	80%
Satisfied	20%
Dissatisfied	-

2 Would you have been able to manage without Care & Repair?

Yes	7%
No	82%
Don't Know	11%

3 Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?

Significant	83%
Minor Difference	16%
No Difference	1%

4 Overall Satisfaction

Very Satisfied	89%
Satisfied	11%

C LARGE WORKS

1 Standard of Work

Very Satisfied	70%
Satisfied	29%
Dissatisfied	1%

2 Would you have been able to manage without Care & Repair?

Yes	7%
No	85%
Don't Know	8%

3 Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?

Significant	91%
Minor Difference	5%
No Difference	4%

4 Overall Satisfaction

Very Satisfied	81%
Satisfied	18%
Dissatisfied	1%

11 CONCLUSION

2008-2009 has been an extremely busy year for the project, which is reflected in the number of clients assisted and the cost of works completed. The report has highlighted the following areas:

- Over 2500 completions at a cost of just below £1.7 million
- 48 properties improved are no longer Below the Tolerable Standard
- A high level of adaptations which have enabled clients to carry on living in their own home in safety
- An annual increase in demand for grant funding across Aberdeenshire
- Just under £200,000 per annum in additional benefits successfully claimed
- 91% of clients reported a significant difference to the enjoyment of their home after work was completed
- Over half of households have lived in the property for over 20 years
- A quarter of clients are aged over 80
- 85% of clients could not have carried out the work without the assistance of Care & Repair
- 35% of the properties given grant aid funding were built prior to 1919
- Just under £60,000 raised in charitable funding for individual clients
- Only 6% of clients had no health problems, and 74% of clients have mobility problems

There are many challenges facing the project in the years ahead, including the future of grant funding. Following further changes in the Housing (Scotland) Act, all Councils will have to establish a Scheme of Assistance by April 2010. This signals a move away from grant funding, and towards a system where homeowners have to take more responsibility for maintaining and improving their homes. Alternative funding sources such as loans and equity release will be introduced, and grants will only be available for disabled adaptations. The project has an important role to play in assisting Aberdeenshire Council achieve both National and local outcomes, and has already demonstrated the invaluable assistance it can offer to clients. We look forward to continuing to work with Aberdeenshire Council in its aim to improve the quality of housing and enable clients to continue living in their own home in comfort and security.

Shona Milne
Project Manager