

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair

Annual Report

2009 - 2010



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



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ABERDEENSHIRE CARE & REPAIR ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

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 fifth 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 another difficult year for all involved, as due to a high demand for grant assistance, the Grant scheme has been curtailed since July 2008. This has 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.

Whilst works on private water supplies are still eligible for Aberdeenshire Council's Water Grant Scheme, a large number of clients are unable to meet the cost of Repair and Improvement 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 9 months to be approved, with a shorter waiting time for urgent and high priority adaptations. Previously, 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. Due to the increased waiting times for approval, restrictions were also introduced in eligibility for an early start. This will now only be considered for High Priority applications which come within certain criteria e.g. hospital discharge; health & safety issues. All early start requests must now be approved by the Grants Prioritisation Group.

Despite this, the value of grants paid out by Aberdeenshire Council was just under £1 million, only a slight decrease from the previous financial year. The total value of all works completed was just over £1.7 million, a slight increase from 2008/2009.

2 COMPLETIONS

The project received a total number of 2,739 new referrals over the year, in addition to cases referred in previous financial years 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 2009/2010 is as follows:

1445	Minor Adaptation Service	£ 192,408.03
691	Small Repairs	£ 65,220.15
64	Other Works	£ 117,370.02
<u>178</u>	<u>Grant Works</u>	<u>£ 1,338,815.16</u>
TOTAL:	<u>2,378</u>	<u>£ 1,713,813.36</u>

The project assisted in a wide range of works, from repairing dripping taps and cleaning out guttering 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 previously able to access grants of up to 100% to a maximum of £15,000.00. Recent changes introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 means that Local Authorities only have to provide funding for mandatory Disabled Improvement Grants. All applicants are eligible for a minimum 80% grant, with automatic 100% funding for clients in receipt of certain Income assessed benefits. There is also the possibility of funding between 80-100%, dependent on a financial assessment of the applicant. The Act also abolished the upper ceiling, and there is now no limit on the cost of eligible works.

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 Occupational Therapy 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	205,320.68	26,933.97	232,254.65	39
Buchan	202,882.11	49,682.74	252,564.85	34
Formartine	83,339.55	37,850.64	121,190.19	19
Garioch	187,351.69	70,020.66	257,372.35	36
Kincardine & Mearns	204,005.11	36,301.35	240,306.46	33
Marr	<u>96,565.66</u>	<u>138,561.00</u>	<u>235,126.66</u>	<u>17</u>
Total	<u>£979,464.80</u>	<u>£359,350.36</u>	<u>£1,338,815.16</u>	<u>178</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 Kincardine & Mearns where the amount of grant money paid in this area is more than four times as much as in the previous year. There has also been a large increase in Garioch, but a decrease in Marr. Although most grant money was spent in Banff & Buchan and Buchan, both areas have seen a drop from last year, mainly due to the waiting list.

3.3 Types of Work

Grant funding from Aberdeenshire Council, for repairs, improvements and disabled adaptations, assisted a total of 178 completions. This comprised of 144 Disabled Improvement Grants and 34 Repairs/Improvement Grants This represents 81% disabled adaptations and only 19% of repairs and improvement works, which reflects the fact that repair and improvement works are no longer eligible for grant funding. Disabled adaptations usually have to be supported by a Community Occupational Therapist following an assessment of the client's needs.

A total number of 29 houses were classed as below the tolerable standard (BTS) before the grant 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 29 more households now no longer live in below tolerable housing as a result of grant funding. For many clients, they were unable to carry out the work without the Grant funding made available by Aberdeenshire Council.

3.3.1 Breakdown of Works

A Adaptations

Showers	113
Ramps/step work	17
Stairlifts	19
External lift	1
Door widening	4
Kitchen	5
W.C./Closomat	<u>4</u>
TOTAL	<u>163</u>

B Repairs/Improvements

Re-slate	12
Flat-roof replacement	6
Roof/Guttering Repairs	9
Damp/Timber Treatments	6
Water Supply/Septic tank	3
Lead pipe replacement	5
Windows /Doors	5
Re-wiring	3
Re-pointing/Harling	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	<u>51</u>

The total breakdown comes to more than the 178 completions, but this was because some houses had two or three different types of works carried out e.g. level access shower, windows and damp-works; shower and kitchen works; re-slate and lead piping; re-harling and water supply; shower and external lift.

3.5 Funding

The grant system is financially assessed, although there are minimum 80% grants available for Disabled Improvement Grants if the client does not wish to reveal their finances. The overall average grant across Aberdeenshire was 85%, which is higher than in the previous year and mainly due to the minimum % grant being increased from 50% to 80%. The average grants awarded in each area detailed below:

	<u>Average Grant</u>	<u>Average %</u>
Banff & Buchan	£5,264.63	94%
Buchan	£5,967.12	89%
Formartine	£4,386.29	84%
Garioch	£5,204.21	79%
Kincardine & Mearns	£6,181.97	89%
Marr	£5,680.33	77%

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>
2009/2010	178	979,464.80	359,350.36	1,338,815.16
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. Unfortunately, the SW Department was unable to continue funding the service resulting in the budget being cut in half. We had to introduce a number of restrictions to the service, including a maximum of 3 jobs per client a year, and only undertaking essential repairs.

4.2 Breakdown of Funding

	<u>Project</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	6,705.42	748.54	7,453.96	86
Buchan	22,590.66	2,798.43	25,389.09	237
Formartine	14,404.58	983.86	15,388.44	182
Garioch	5,507.93	659.33	5,734.57	60
Kincardine & Mearns	5,540.36	659.33	6,199.69	78
Marr	4,761.50	292.90	5,054.40	48
Total (All Areas)	<u>£59,510.45</u>	<u>£5,709.70</u>	<u>£65,220.15</u>	<u>691</u>

4.3 Breakdown of Trades Used

Electrician	42
Plumber	189
Joiner	65
Slater	385
Builder	1
Glazier	9
<u>Total</u>	<u>691</u>

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 £93.98, of which the client had to pay an average of £8.26 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>
2009/2010	691	59,510.45	5,709.70	65,220.15
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	32,595.38	224
Buchan	38,569.51	301
Formartine	28,926.90	223
Garioch	39,866.58	316
Kincardine & Mearns	23,563.38	144
Marr	28,886.28	237
TOTALS	<u>£192,408.03</u>	<u>1445</u>

Due to a high demand for minor adaptations, along with a decrease in funding through PSHG, the minor adaptation service had to be restricted near the end of the financial year. The OT Team Managers had to approve any works instructed, and only very urgent cases were completed.

This is our final year of running this service, as from 1st April 2010 the Social Work Department will be carrying out the service in-house.

5.3 History

	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Units</u>
2009/2010	192,408.03	1445
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 to the Energy Assistance Package/Scottish Executive Central Heating Programme for Insulation works and central heating installations
- Work which is not grant eligible
- Charitable fundraising
- Arranging contractors for clients able to pay the cost of works in full themselves

6.2 Breakdown of Funding

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Units</u>
Banff & Buchan	39,930.54	17
Buchan	39,470.85	23
Formartine	16,716.38	7
Garioch	1,176.45	1
Kincardine & Mearns	11,229.87	10
Marr	<u>8,845.93</u>	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	<u>£117,370.02</u>	<u>64</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 **21** smoke alarms have been fitted in **20** properties. These alarms were fitted to houses which either had no smoke alarms previously, or the existing ones were broken. The Joint Partnership Agreement was also 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 Welfare 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 2009/2010, the Project helped clients across Aberdeenshire to claim an additional **79** Welfare benefits for **66** clients. This resulted in the following:

- Total weekly increase in income of **£4781.62**
- Total annual increase of **£248,644.24**.
- Average increase in weekly income of **£72.45**
- 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 Grants and Funeral Payments.

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 which are not grant eligible but the clients cannot afford to fund themselves. During this financial year, a total of **£34,553.75** was raised for **32** clients. A further **£26,444.60** was paid direct to **25** clients or contractors. This brings the total charitable funding accessed on behalf of our clients this year to **£60,998.35** for **57** clients. 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 has also been 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:

- If this is the normal level of help that your organisation provides then there is no way it could be improved. Many thanks.
- I feel all the people involved were very helpful and the response was fast.
- Thank you very much for all the assistance you gave to us in getting our windows replaced...the house feels warmer and drier.
- Thank you very much; it was very good and much appreciated.
- Top service, very helpful start to finish. More than happy; will make our lives a lot easier.
- Everyone was so helpful, I could not have asked for more.
- I would like to express my gratitude for all the help I received; the stair-lift has been a great help to me.
- I can honestly say from the bottom of my heart I am completely satisfied with all Care & Repair has done for me. I can't speak highly enough about it...and I was glad my friend put me in touch with you.
- I have the highest praise for C&R...my house has been transformed – I have a terrific “low-level” kitchen I can use with ease...the bathroom is a dream come true.
- The service received from your department was excellent and I appreciate very much all you did for me.
- Service was excellent from your staff through to tradesmen.
- I was extremely pleased with your staff and service – I sleep better (literally) knowing that I can get these jobs done when companies will not normally take on a small job.
- The attention and support has been above and beyond all our expectations.
- As I live alone I could not manage without your help. Thank you.

8 CLIENT AND PROPERTY PROFILES

8.1 Age of Client

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Under 60	4%	19%
60-69	21%	31%
70-79	49%	25%
80-89	23%	21%
90+	3%	4%

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

Mental Health Problems	1%
Dementia	5%
Learning Difficulties	3%
Mobility Problems	82%
Chronic Illness	52%
Physical Disabilities	20%
General Poor Health	29%
Healthy	5%

8.3 Length of Residence

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Less than 5 years	18%	6%	9%
5-10 years	11%	19%	21%
10-20 years	25%	25%	26%
20-30 years	17%	16%	14%
30+ years	29%	34%	30%

8.4 Types of Dwelling

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Terraced	11%	9%	10%
Semi-Detached	28%	34%	30%
Detached	47%	47%	45%
4 in a Block	7%	-	4%
Tenement/Flat	4%	7%	5%
Others	3%	3%	6%

8.5 Age of Property

	<u>A. Minor Adaptations</u>	<u>B. Small Repairs</u>	<u>C. Large Works</u>
Pre 1919	20%	12%	35%
1919-1944	3%	5%	13%
1945-1964	15%	16%	19%
1965-1982	34%	38%	22%
Post 1982	28%	29%	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 local 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	4%	16%
Health/GP	-	7%
Neighbour	27%	2%
Publicity	6%	2%
Friend/Family/Self	42%	19%
Home Care	2%	3%
Social Work/OT	11%	41%
Voluntary Organisation	-	2%
Other	8%	8%

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 77% for large works, 77% for minor adaptations and 85% for small repairs.

A MINOR ADAPTATIONS

1 Standard of Tradesmen

Customer Care	Very Satisfied	84%	Satisfied	16%
Quality	Very Satisfied	79%	Satisfied	21%
Reliability	Very Satisfied	80%	Satisfied	20%

2 Overall Satisfaction

Very Satisfied	84%
Satisfied	16%

B SMALL REPAIRS

1 Standard of Work

Very Satisfied	73%
Satisfied	27%

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

Yes	1%
No	88%
Don't Know	11%

3 Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?

Significant	90%
Minor Difference	17%
No Difference	3%

4 Overall Satisfaction

Very Satisfied	88%
Satisfied	12%

C **LARGE WORKS**

1 **Standard of Work**

Very Satisfied	81%
Satisfied	19%

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

Yes	5%
No	84%
Don't Know	11%

3 **Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?**

Significant	98%
Minor Difference	1%
No Difference	1%

4 **Overall Satisfaction**

Very Satisfied	84%
Satisfied	15%
Dissatisfied	1%

11 CONCLUSION

2009-2010 has been another 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 over £1.7 million
- 29 properties improved are no longer Below the Tolerable Standard
- A high level of adaptations were completed, both major and minor, which have enabled clients to carry on living in their own home in safety
- Demand for grant funding continues to increase across Aberdeenshire
- Just under £250,000 per annum in additional benefits successfully claimed
- 98% of clients reported a significant difference to the enjoyment of their home after grant work was completed
- 30% of households have lived in the property for over 30 years
- Half of clients are aged over 70
- 84% 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
- Over £60,000 raised in charitable funding for individual clients
- Only 5% of clients had no health problems, and 82% of clients have mobility problems

There are many challenges facing the project in the years ahead, including the future of grant funding and funding of the Project itself. 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. From 1st April 2010, the Project shall be delivering advice & assistance to all home owners and private tenants, irrespective of their age. 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