

Aberdeenshire Care & Repair



Charity No. Sco 21487

Annual Report

2010-2011



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



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ABERDEENSHIRE CARE & REPAIR

ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011

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 sixth 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, reflecting the diversity across a wide geographic area.

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 resulted in the introduction of a prioritisation list, with grants being approved on a monthly basis. Although we started the year with a high number of grants on the list, the monthly prioritisation meetings worked well, and by the end of 2010/2011 all grants on the list had been approved. This has meant that waiting times for the new financial year will be significantly reduced.

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, and unfortunately Grant assistance for this type of work has not been available since July 2008. We were able to help with costs through charitable funding for some clients, and a few were able to pay for the works themselves.

Due to the restrictions in funding, applications for Disabled Improvement works were 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 have to be approved by the Grants Prioritisation Group.

The value of grants paid out by Aberdeenshire Council was lower than in previous years, just under £730,000. However, an additional £500,000 of grants had been approved but not yet spent by the end of the financial year. The majority of these works will be completed early in the new financial year. The total value of all works completed in 2010/2011 was just over £1 Million, with a further £600,000 of works not yet completed.

2 COMPLETIONS

The project received a total number of 1038 new referrals over the year, in addition to progressing cases referred in previous financial years but not yet closed. The drop in this figure from previous years is due to no longer managing the Minor Adaptations Service for the Social Work Department. The cases we dealt with were a mixture of simple telephone advice only, more detailed advice and assistance, and others resulting in some forms of work being carried out.

The total number of works completed during 2010/2011 is as follows:

Type	Units	Value of Works £
Grant Funded Works	143	893,317.37
Large/Other Works	86	163,049.49
Small Repairs	172	18,970.70
TOTAL	401	1,075,337.56

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, and clients own money.

The Project also provided information and advice to a number of clients:

General advice: **671**
Detailed advice **130**

3 GRANT FUNDED WORKS

3.1 Background

Aberdeenshire Council provide Grant funding for disabled adaptations through Aberdeenshire Care & Repair. This was previously provided by means of the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) allocation from the Scottish Government, until the removal of ring-fencing in April 2010.

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. 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. Aberdeenshire Council also retained the local discretionary Assessment of Means so clients have the option of undergoing a financial assessment to be eligible for grant funding between 80-100%. The Act also abolished the upper ceiling, and there is now no limit on the cost of eligible works.

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:

Area	Units	Grant £	Client £	Total £
B & B	29	165,081.32	6,369.97	171,451.29
Buchan	27	112,265.64	24,176.82	136,442.46
Formartine	24	95,542.52	27,028.80	122,571.32
Garioch	18	114,927.10	28,338.55	143,265.65
K & M	24	146,741.05	54,030.16	200,771.21
Marr	21	95,440.85	23,374.59	118,815.44
Total	143	729,998.48	163,318.89	893,317.37

3.3 Types of Work

Grant funding from Aberdeenshire Council assisted a total of 143 completions. This comprised of 135 Disabled Improvement Grants, and 8 Repairs/Improvement Grants for works which had been approved prior to the changes in the grant scheme. Disabled adaptations usually have to be supported by a Community Occupational Therapist following an assessment of the client's needs.

Type	Units	Grant £	Client £	Total £
Disabled	135	679,627.17	147,304.89	826,932.06
Improvement/Repair	8	50,371.31	16,014.00	66,385.31
Total	143	729,998.48	163,318.89	893,317.37

A total number of 15 houses were classed as below the tolerable standard (BTS) before works were carried out. The main reasons for BTS classification by the local EHO or Care & Repair Manager were an unwholesome water supply and significant dampness/water penetration. We were also involved in major structural works in a tenement building for 2 of the occupants. The project has worked with the Local Authority in their aim of targeting BTS property and 15 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 Disabled Adaptations:

Type of Works	Units
Level access showers	94
Ramp/step adaptations	21
Door widening/access	9
Stair-lifts	16
Shower room/WC	10
Extension – WC/Shower	3
Porch extension	1
Garage conversion	1
Wheelchair accessible kitchen	1
Total	156

B Repairs/Improvements

Type of Works	Units
Water supply/Lead piping	1
Re-slate	2
Roof Repairs	3
Flat roof replacement	3
Damp/timber treatment	1
Re-pointing/harling	2
Total	12

The total breakdown comes to more than the 143 completions, but this was because some houses had two or three different types of works carried out e.g. level access shower and stair-lift; re-pointing and damp-works; shower and door-widening; re-slate and flat roof replacement; ramping and shower.

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 breakdown for Disabled Improvement Grants is detailed below:

%	Units	Grant	Client	Total
Minimum 80%	71	335,415.53	129,102.58	464,518.11
Maximum 100%	49	268,402.83	8,189.88	276,592.71
81-99%	15	75,808.81	10,012.43	85,821.24
Total	135	679,627.17	147,304.89	826,932.06

The overall average grant across Aberdeenshire was 88%, and the average grants awarded in each area are detailed below:

Area	Average Grant £	Average Grant %
Banff & Buchan	5692.46	96%
Buchan	4157.99	89%
Formartine	3980.94	84%
Garioch	6384.84	83%
Kincardine & Mearns	6114.21	86%
Marr	4544.80	87%

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 on-going demand for grant assistance across the area.

3.6 History

Year	Units	Grant £	Client £	Total £
2010/2011	135	729,998.48	163,318.89	826,932.06
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 by Aberdeenshire Council. 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, a significant drop in funding in the last two years meant we had to introduce a number of restrictions to the service.

Service Level 1:

From April 2010, the subsidised service (we pay the labour costs and clients are re-charged for any materials over £2.00) is only available to clients who are in receipt of certain passport benefits:

- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income based Employment Support Allowance.

The type of work is limited to essential repairs to the property, and a maximum of two jobs per year.

For those clients not in receipt of the passport benefits, the following services are available:

Service Level 2: we arrange the work and re-charge the clients for the full cost plus an Administration Fee of £10.00 per job.

Service Level 3: clients are given details of reliable local contractors who are registered on our Preferred Contractors List.

As part of the changes to the Small Repairs Service, we introduced a Preferred Contractors Scheme in May 2010. Reliable contractors we have worked with regularly were invited to register for an Annual Fee of £50.00. Contractors are monitored through the customer Satisfaction Surveys, and also have to provide details of their Public Liability Insurance and their Health & Safety Policies. They also have to comply with Aberdeenshire Care & Repair's Contractors Code of Conduct.

The Preferred Contractors List is available to any client who contacts the office, and also to all members of the public on our web-site:

http://www.castlehillha.co.uk/carerepair_shire.html

4.2 Breakdown of Funding

Service Level 1:

Area	Units	Project £	Client £	Total £
B & B	59	5,863.24	808.83	6,667.07
Buchan	52	5,175.08	1,147.01	6,322.09
Formartine	23	2,360.69	318.15	2,678.84
Garioch	9	737.76	128.47	866.23
K & M	11	775.00	84.00	859.00
Marr	5	363.86	93.00	456.86
Total	159	15,275.63	2,574.46	17,850.09

Service Level 2:

Area	Units	Cost £	Admin Charge £	Total £
B & B	2	146.88	20.00	166.88
Buchan	2	147.00	20.00	167.00
Formartine	4	317.96	40.00	357.96
Garioch	1	150.00	10.00	160.00
K & M	1	15.00	10.00	25.00
Marr	3	213.77	30.00	243.77
Total	13	990.61	130.00	1,120.61

4.3 Breakdown of Trades Used

Trade	Units
Electrician	10
Plumber	40
Joiner	26
Slater	83

The average cost of a job is £112.26, of which the client had to pay an average of £16.19 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. There has been a significant drop in the number of jobs completed, as a large number of clients who contact us for assistance are not in receipt of a passport benefit. The majority of these clients were unwilling to pay an Administration Fee, and opted to take details of local contractors and contact themselves to arrange the work, or said they would leave the work in the meantime.

4.4 History

Year	Units	Project	Client	Total
2010/2011	172	15,275.63	3,695.07	18,970.70
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 ADVICE AND PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

5.1 Background

As part of Aberdeenshire Council's duty under the Section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, from April 2010 the Project is now providing their Scheme of Assistance for all homeowners and tenants of private landlords across Aberdeenshire. This scheme provides information and advice to help them carry out repairs, maintenance or improvements to their homes. We also provide practical assistance to our core client group of over 60's and people with disabilities.

5.2 Breakdown of Assistance

Other Works:

The Project assisted clients to arrange other works which were not eligible for grant funding. They were funded either by charitable donations or with clients own money.

Area	Units	Value of Work £
Banff & Buchan	9	21,023.74
Buchan	27	31,319.26
Formartine	10	20,530.94
Garioch	8	7,034.52
Kincardine & Mearns	19	53,531.29
Marr	13	29,609.74
Total	86	163,049.49

Detailed Advice & Assistance:

The Project provided detailed advice to a number of clients, but this did not necessarily result in any works being carried out or money spent. These are cases that may have taken up considerable time and resources, but have not been reported elsewhere.

Area	Units
Banff & Buchan	56
Buchan	18
Formartine	12
Garioch	11
Kincardine & Mearns	23
Marr	10
Total	130

General Advice:

As part of the Scheme of Assistance, the Project provided general advice for all homeowners and private tenants across Aberdeenshire.

Area	Units
Banff & Buchan	118
Buchan	191
Formartine	159
Garioch	67
Kincardine & Mearns	60
Marr	64
Other	12
Total	671

Type of Advice:

Type	Units
Contractor details	232
Benefits/Charitable/other works	139
Grants/small repairs/C&R	105
Technical	34
Smoke alarms	21
Referral to other agencies	124
Other	16
Total	671

6 QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

6.1 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 **36** smoke alarms have been fitted in **26** properties, including 2 smoke alarms for the hearing impaired. 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.

6.2 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. Most clients also received a lump sum in backdated money and we also assisted clients with applying for one-off grants from the Social Fund e.g. Community Care Grants and Funeral Payments.

Area	No of Benefits	No of Clients	Weekly £	£ Per Annum
Banff & Buchan	25	20	1,009.99	52,519.48
Buchan	17	13	848.71	44,132.92
Formartine	8	7	282.76	14,703.52
Garioch	2	2	90.35	4,698.20
Kincardine & Mearns	13	12	1,097.45	57,067.40
Marr	6	6	520.90	27,086.80
Total	71	60	3,850.16	200,208.32

6.3 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. Other charitable funding has been secured for works not yet completed.

AREA	CLIENTS	£ RAISED
Banff & Buchan	10	15,951.73
Buchan	11	16,664.75
Formartine	5	17,124.47
Garioch	3	1,683.18
Kincardine & Mearns	2	6,150.00
Marr	2	4,300.00
TOTAL	33	61,874.13

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.

6.4 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. 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. We are also about to begin a pilot questionnaire which is more Outcome focussed, and this will provide invaluable feedback from clients for the following areas:

- I feel more confident that I can continue to live independently in my home.
- It is easier for me to use the facilities (kitchen, toilet, bathroom) in my home.
- My home is warmer at the same or reduced cost to me.
- I feel less anxious about my safety and security in my home.
- I feel I am less likely to have a fall at home because of the work that has been carried out.
- I am more likely to get out and about, or receive visitors at home, as a result of the work that has been carried out.

Some of the comments we have received on questionnaires and thank-you cards/letters are detailed below:

- I think it is a wonderful service and I can't see it could be improved. Thank you for being there.
- Absolutely delighted with the service and the workmanship is second to none. Thank you so much.
- We have greatly appreciated all you have done for us.
- In my case, service was excellent in every way!
- As far as we are concerned the service is second to none. Thank you all so much.
- It is a perfect service for people my age.
- Keep up the excellent service. Thank you.
- Could not have had better service anywhere, everything first class.
- Everyone at Care & Repair are very caring and understanding in every detail.
- We are highly satisfied with the agency, and in fact other agencies, in both their courtesy and professionalism.
- We were highly delighted with service provided, all the workmen were cheery and great to have in the house. Thank you.
- The service is 1st class and the company that did the work was absolutely first class too. Fantastic. Many thanks.
- Our contact was exceedingly helpful.
- The help and advice was exactly what we would have required. Thank you.
- Just keep up the good work. Thank you.
- We think that the service provided has been excellent.
- As I am a pensioner living on my own, I very much appreciate the work I've had done. I can't see how it can be improved.
- I think it is marvellous. I cannot get tradesman to attend for a small job. Ring Care & Repair and a tradesman appears. Wonderful!

7 CLIENT AND PROPERTY PROFILES

7.1 Age of Client

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Under 60	6%	22%
60-69	24%	25%
70-79	45%	30%
80-89	21%	22%
90+	4%	1%

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

Mental Health Problems	1%
Dementia	3%
Learning Difficulties	3%
Mobility Problems	78%
Chronic Illness	52%
Physical Disabilities	30%
General Poor Health	17%
Healthy	0%

7.3 Length of Residence

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Less than 5 years	6%	10%
5-10 years	9%	14%
10-20 years	30%	19%
20-30 years	15%	21%
30+ years	40%	36%

7.4 Types of Dwelling

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Terraced	27%	12%
Semi-Detached	24%	32%
Detached	36%	43%
4 in a Block	3%	5%
Tenement/Flat	6%	4%
Others	4%	4%

7.5 Age of Property

	<u>A. Small Repairs</u>	<u>B. Large Works</u>
Pre 1919	13%	30%
1919-1944	6%	14%
1945-1964	34%	12%
1965-1982	19%	31%
Post 1982	28%	13%

8 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	3%	8%
Health/GP	3%	8%
Neighbour	9%	-
Publicity	6%	3%
Friend/Family/Self	45%	17%
Home Care	3%	3%
Social Work/OT	18%	58%
Voluntary Organisation	6%	2%
Other	7%	1%

We have attended information day events in Ellon, Peterhead, Inverurie and Turriff and further events will take place across other parts of Aberdeenshire in the forthcoming year.

9 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 and 75% for small repairs.

A SMALL REPAIRS

1 Standard of Work

Very Satisfied	70%
Satisfied	27%
Dissatisfied	3%

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

Yes	12%
No	79%
Don't Know	9%

3 Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?

Significant	88%
Minor Difference	12%

4 Would you use Aberdeenshire Care & Repair again?

Yes	97%
Don't know	3%

5 Overall Satisfaction with Aberdeenshire Care & Repair:

Very Satisfied	88%
Satisfied	12%

B **LARGE WORKS**

1 Standard of Work:

Very Satisfied	86%
Satisfied	13%
Neither	1%

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

Yes	4%
No	84%
Don't Know	12%

3 Any Difference to Enjoyment of your House?

Significant	97%
Minor Difference	3%

4 Would you use Aberdeenshire Care & Repair again?

Yes	98%
Don't know	2%

5 Would you have been able to continue living at home without work being done?

Yes	53%
No	47%

6 Overall Satisfaction with Aberdeenshire Care & Repair:

Very Satisfied	83%
Satisfied	17%

10 CONCLUSION

2010-2011 has been another 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 400 completions at a cost of just over £1.075 million
- 15 properties improved are no longer Below the Tolerable Standard
- A high level of adaptations were completed, which have enabled clients to carry on living in their own home in safety and comfort
- Demand for grant funding continues to remain high across Aberdeenshire
- Just over £200,000 per annum in additional benefits successfully claimed
- 97% of clients reported a significant difference to the enjoyment of their home after grant work was completed
- Over 36% of households have lived in the property for over 30 years
- Half of clients who received grant funding are aged over 70 and 22% aged under 60
- 84% of clients could not have carried out the work without the assistance of Care & Repair
- 30% of the properties given grant aid funding were built prior to 1919
- Just under £62,000 raised in charitable funding for individual clients
- 78% of clients have mobility problems and 52% suffer from a chronic illness

There are still many challenges facing the project in the years ahead, including the future of grant funding and funding of the Project itself. This has been a difficult year due to the restrictions in funding, for both large works and the Small Repairs Service. 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. The work we are involved in makes a significant contribution to the Scottish Government's agenda set out in "Reshaping Care for Older People", a document published jointly by them, COSLA and NHS Scotland.

Shona Milne
Project Manager