

Salford City Council

Case worker:

Tel: 0161 793 2896

Salford Home Improvement Agency & Housing Choice Service

Helping you to stay in the home of your choice

ABOUT OUR SERVICE

Foundations Award 2009

Winners - Outstanding contribution by an individual

Commended - Excellence in engaging with health and care – Navigator Service

Foundations Award 2013

Excellence in delivering a comprehensive housing options service



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About Salford Home Improvement Agency and Housing Choice

Welcome to Salford Home Improvement Agency and the Housing Choice service, thank you for using our services. The services are funded by Salford City Council's;

- Community, Health and Social Care Directorate
- Environment and Community Safety Directorate

The services are monitored for quality by Salford City Council who receive regular reports of customer satisfaction, complaints and performance.

OUR SERVICES

▪ The Home Improvement Agency

Helps Salford home-owners by advising you about and organising repairs, alterations, adaptations and energy-saving measures to keep you safe dry and warm.

▪ The Housing Choice Service

This service can provide support and advice to help you to move home if you want to. The service can help you to look into different housing options and can offer general advice and support to find and move into a new home. This service is available whether you own your own home or rent a property.

▪ The Navigator Service

Helps Salford home-owners remain living independently in your home if you have recently been discharged from hospital or if you require help with housing issues, such as dealing with clutter. Support will only be given on a short term basis and access to this service is via referrals from a health or social care professional.

If you have any questions about what we do or about the information in this welcome pack our contact details are

Salford Home Improvement Agency

Salford Civic Centre

1st Floor Unity House

Chorley Road

Swinton

M27 5BY

Telephone : 0161 793 2896

Email : home-improvement.agency@salford.gov.uk

OUR SERVICE TO YOU

Salford Home Improvement Agency and Housing Choice are flexible services that will always try to meet your needs.

When you first contact us we will:

- Assess you against the eligibility criteria for our services, work required, age, health, income, to enable us to prioritise your application and to ensure fair access to the services

If you are eligible for service, when we first contact you we will:

- Assess your needs and offer support, information and advice. We can offer this at your home or over the telephone. A Project Officer will discuss your needs and what the service can offer
- Assist you to access and apply for benefits you may be entitled to
- Carry out a risk assessment with you about any risks to health and safety that might be in your property
- Give advice and information about what repairs you need to your home and tell you how long you will have to wait for this service if required
- Give information about the financial choices to pay for any work, including the types of assistance provided by Salford City Council or we may look at charitable funding or other types of loans if required
- Discuss with you all the housing choices open to you if you feel that carrying out the repairs to your home would not be the best option for you.

If you need minor repairs, adaptations or other services we will:

- Refer you to other organisations such as the local Handypersons service for small repairs and small adaptations, Specialist Housing Services for major adaptations
- Refer you to other services that can help you such as the Community Occupational Therapy Team or Affordable Warmth Team

If you need major improvements to your home and need our help with this we will:

- Agree a 'schedule of work'
- Get estimates from contractors
- Work closely with our contracted partner to administer the financial assessment for the Home Improvement Assistance
- Deal with other departments such as Building Control or Planning if required
- Oversee the work to ensure it is carried out to a good standard and carry out a final inspection before contractors are paid

If you need to move home Housing Choice can:

- Help you to gather information about the right housing options for you
- Help with property searches
- Give you advice on benefits
- Deal with other professionals on your behalf
- Offer you practical assistance to move home

- Help you to settle into your new home

When we end your service:

- We will speak to you to make sure that we have done everything that we can for you
- We will send you a customer satisfaction questionnaire

If we have to cancel your service before it is complete, which might happen if funding is withdrawn or if we discover acts of fraud or false information;

- We will refer you to an independent service to get advice, appropriate to your needs

DOES IT COST ANYTHING?

All general advice and information we give is free.

All our customers will be assessed using our Priority Points System. The team will assess you against the eligibility criteria for our service based on the work required, health, age and income to enable us to prioritise your application and ensure fair access to the service

Referral for Minor repairs

- There is a handyperson service that is free for qualifying customers, but there may be a charge for some types of work or for some people who do not qualify.

If you have major repairs to your home:

- You will be expected to pay for the work yourself but we can help you to find the funds
- If you do not have the funds to pay for the work we will help you to apply for financial assistance, including loans, charitable grants and the financial assistance that is provided by Salford City Council
- Salford City Council will only provide financial assistance for specific types of service, those that will keep you safe, dry or warm
- If the Home Improvement Agency Technical Officer gives you practical support we may ask you to pay a fee, if you are able to afford it. This will be discussed in full with you and confirmed to you in writing before any works start. If you receive financial assistance from Salford City Council for repairs it may be possible to include the fees in this funding
- Fees are invested back into our service so that that we can continue to help older and vulnerable people to improve their homes. However if you are worried about paying for our service please discuss this with a member of staff

CLIENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While you are dealing with the Home Improvement Agency or Housing Choice service;

You have the right to expect:

- To be treated with courtesy and respect
- To have control over the decisions made with you and about your property, and always to be asked about your views and expectations of the support you receive
- To be interviewed in your own home, by trained staff, and receive advice and assistance in completing any relevant forms
- To be given enough information to make an informed choice about the services offered, including Independent Financial Advice if required
- To be kept fully informed on the progress of your works through the Home Improvement Agency or to be kept fully informed of any referrals we might make on your behalf
- For the Agency to involve your family or carers in your support, but **ONLY** with your consent
- For any information you supply to be carefully stored and to be treated in complete confidence. This will be possible except where you, or someone else, may be in danger
- To receive copies of your assessment and all relevant documents, including written explanations of the service we are offering, and to expect any information we supply to be in a form that meets your needs
- Staff to be sensitive to your needs and to offer full professional and technical support while work is being carried out
- That all works arranged through the Home Improvement Agency will be carried out in line with health and safety regulations and that your home will be left in a clean, tidy and hazard free condition at the end of each working day
- To request a review of your case, including any support plans or risk management plans that have been put in place with you
- To end the service, for example if we have not provided the service that you would expect of us, or if your circumstances change significantly, and if you wish to do this you must speak to your Project Officer
- To have any complaints you may wish to make fully investigated in accordance with Salford City Council Complaints Policy.
- To be consulted on changes to the service and to have your views and opinions of the service listened to and considered

You are expected to be responsible for:

- Providing up to date information with supporting documents if required. This will help staff to assess and advise on options open to you
- Treating any staff with courtesy and respect. Due to Government legislation that protects workers, we also respectfully request that you refrain from smoking during staff visits
- **Signing an agreement between yourself and the chosen contractor** as explained to you by your Home Improvement Agency Project Officer, should you have works carried out to your home
- Informing Salford Home Improvement Agency or Housing Choice should you wish to make any changes to the service you receive or any works you are having carried out, or any extra works you would like. Even if you have spoken to your contractor, you will still need to tell the Agency. This includes if you no longer want to use the service. If you are considering withdrawing from the process please discuss this with your Project Officer
- Letting Salford Home Improvement Agency or Housing Choice know about any risks that may be present in your home. These risks might be to yourself, to a member of staff or to other people, such as dangerous dogs
- Co-operating with any Health & Safety requests made by our staff or by contractors
- Informing Salford Home Improvement Agency or Housing Choice if you have a change of circumstances that might affect the service we provide to you or that might affect work going ahead to your property
- Completing and returning a Client Satisfaction Form once all the work is completed or if you have received advice from our service
- **Signing a completion certificate upon completion of works** you may have had carried out to the satisfaction of yourself, and the Home Improvement Agency's Project Officer (Technical)

We will ask you to sign a form to state that you are aware of your rights and responsibilities as detailed above.

PROTECTING YOU

All staff and contractors that Salford Home Improvement Agency use are thoroughly vetted, however **if you ever feel that you have been treated inappropriately you should report this straight away.**

For this reason our staff have 'professional boundaries'

Our staff should:

- Listen to your needs as a service user – and provide you with support and advice
- Respect your right to privacy

Our staff should not:

- Become your friend
- Contact you outside of normal working hours
- Give you details of how you can contact them outside of work
- Try to influence you with their own personal beliefs or values
- Personally lend you money or borrow money from you
- Accept gifts or donations without discussing this with their line manager

A leaflet explaining more about different **types of abuse** is included with this welcome pack – it includes;

- people taking money from you
- people hurting you or even just threatening to hurt you
- people ignoring your needs

If you or someone you know is experiencing abuse you can talk to your Project Officer about this. The Project Officer cannot promise to keep this information private as they may need to tell their line manager or another agency about it.

We will give you support and you will not be left to deal with the situation yourself.

If you do not wish to talk to your Project Officer about what is happening or if your concerns are about your Project Officer, anyone is able to report abuse to;

Adult Health and Social Care - Salford City Council Reporting Line on **0161 909 6517**

If you need to talk to someone outside of normal office hours you can contact;

Adult Health and Social Care - Emergency Duty Team on **0161 794 8888**

If at any time you or someone you know is in immediate danger or a serious criminal act is being committed you should call the police or the ambulance service on 999.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All staff visiting your home will carry out a risk assessment and a Home Property Check to check the health and safety of your home; **we will ask you to sign the risk assessment to say you understand**. Staff will advise you on how to reduce your risk.

If you decide to have repairs carried out to your home:

With assistance from the Home Improvement Agency, the Project Officer will work with you to reduce the risks to yourself, your family, visitors and friends while the work takes place, but it is important to understand that risks can never be completely removed and **you must take special care if major work is being carried out at your property**.

Salford Home Improvement Agency makes sure that the contractors it uses, to carry out repair works, meet up to date standards for health & safety. If you want to use your own contractor we will need to make sure that they also meet these standards.

If you have any concerns about health & safety while a contractor is on site then please speak to the contractor or contact the Agency on the number provided.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

We will only ask you for the information that we need to do our jobs. The information remains private and will only be used for the purposes that we agree with you. **We will ask you to sign an agreement to allow us to use your personal information for these purposes**. Salford Home Improvement Agency and Housing Choice will not discuss any details about your circumstances with any other person or organisation without your consent.

The only time this may change is in the event of an emergency or if you or someone else is in danger or have committed a crime. We also have a duty to share information in order to help detect or prevent fraud.

We will offer you copies of your needs assessment and support plan and send you copies of any documentation related to major works.

You are also entitled to see other personal data that the council holds about you under the 'Data Protection Act'. This is called the right of "subject access". If you want to see your information;

- Your request must be in writing
- You need to supply identification, to ensure that we provide the data to the correct person
- We will require a fee of £10
- You will be required to supply enough information to enable the council to locate the data to which you require access
- The council has 40 calendar days to respond once all of the above is received

Send your request to the Home Improvement Agency or Housing Choice Service and we will forward your request to the Corporate Information Officer.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We aim to ensure that nobody is treated less fairly than others because of their gender, age, class, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, creed, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, physical ability or mental health.

If you think that we have not treated you fairly, in the service we have provided to you, or that we have discriminated against you in any way you can report it using the contact details in the next section – ‘How to give feedback’.

If you have any particular requirements around how we deliver our service to you please inform us and we will try to build this into the service offered to you, for example you may not wish to be contacted on certain religious holidays.

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

We always aim to provide a high quality service and welcome any compliments, feedback and views about the service you have received. You might like to tell us about something we have done well or you might feel that there is room for improvement.

Your views and comments about our service are very important to us. We are always learning, and need to know what works and what doesn't. Any comments will be used to review and improve our service.

Please tell us:

- **if you feel you have been discriminated against or treated unfairly**
- **if you feel staff have been rude or impolite**
- **if you feel there has been unreasonable delay in providing a service**
- **if you feel the quality of the service provided has been unsatisfactory**

If you would like to make a complaint, comment or give us a compliment you should speak to your Project Officer first, or write in to us, so that we can try to put things right for you, or learn what we did well.

But if you would prefer not to talk to the Agency and want someone independent to hear your complaint or compliment, you can do this via;

Adult Health and Social Care - Salford City Council Reporting Line on **0161 909 6517**
www.salford.gov.uk/complaintsform.htm

Your complaint will always be dealt with via Salford City Council's complaints process. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your original complaint you can ask for an appeal through the complaints procedure.

If you are still not happy with the outcome following the complaints procedure then you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone:

- Call on **0300 061 0614** for help making a complaint
Calls to 03 numbers **will cost no more than calls to national geographic numbers** (starting 01 or 02) from both mobiles and landlines, and will be included as part of any inclusive call minutes or discount schemes in the same way as geographic calls
- Text 'call back' to 0762 481 1595
You may be charged by your provider for sending the text message
- Use a textphone via the Next Generation Text Service (formerly known as Text Relay and Typetalk)
- Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm (except public holidays)
- Calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes

Online:

If you have a complaint, please use the [complaint form](#).

If your complaint is about building works, either while the work is being carried out or afterwards please contact the Project Officer (Technical) in the first case and we will work on your behalf to solve this issue directly with the contractor.

If you require any of the above information in another language or format please contact the Home Improvement Agency and we will be happy to assist you.