

1. Caseworker Service

The core Casework Service is the focal point of the Agency and forms the nucleus from which the Agency operates its business. The service helps people complete repairs, improvements and adaptations to their properties, through the provision of expert advice, support and practical assistance in the form of a co-ordinated, holistic, client centred, problem-led casework and technical service. The work undertaken by the Agency can range from very small items such as the repairing of a small water leak, the installation of handrails or new locks through to major jobs such as bathroom conversions or replacing a roof.

The services provided by the Agency's Caseworkers are citizen-centred and as such, are tailored according to the client's needs. The Caseworkers will listen to what an older person wants and needs and will then put together a package with support to make it happen. This is flexible, so that if a client does not agree with anything suggested, or if their needs change, the services to them will change as well.

The Agency's Caseworker services are fully funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and as such, are free for clients.

Casework clients are older people, primarily aged 75 and over, who own their own homes or are private tenants. The full formal service, however, can and does assist people aged between 60 to 74 in certain circumstances (predominantly where they are living alone, receiving income support or pension credit and/or have a limiting long-term illness). Clients accessing the service should be experiencing a housing problem involving some element of repairs, maintenance, adaptations and/or improvements works.

Services available to clients include assistance with:

1.1 Advice and Details of Contractors

- Provide details and contact information about reputable contractors who are able to undertake a variety of different works

1.2 Property repairs, maintenance, adaptations and/or improvements

- Discussing with clients what repairs, maintenance works, adaptations and/or improvements they would like carried out
- Providing technical advice and support including inspecting properties, diagnosing defects and preparing schedules of works to enable clients to make informed decisions and choose appropriate solutions
- Assisting clients prioritise work and advising where work not required

- Advising of likely costs and potential sources of funding available
- Providing details of reputable contractors
- Obtaining and evaluating quotations
- Monitoring and overseeing building work to ensure that it is completed with the minimum of disruption and to a high standard and complies with the clients instructions
- Resolving any snagging or defects regarding the completed works

1.3 Funding Works

- Discussing with clients potential sources of funding available to undertake works including self financing, Private Sector Housing grants, Disabled Facilities grants, Community Care grants / loans, and Benevolent / Charitable grants / loans
- Advising of potential eligibility for the different grants / loans schemes
- Identifying suitable general charities, illness and disability charities, occupational charities, service and ex-service charities, religious charities and local charities
- Assisting clients complete applications for grants / loans funding and advising of outcomes
- Arranging works for clients where funding has been successful

1.4 Income Maximisation

- Providing advice to clients regarding income maximisation
- Identifying any unclaimed benefits clients may be eligible for
- Assisting clients complete applications for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Carers Allowance and Council Tax Benefit
- Liaising with Department of Work and Pensions and Council Tax Benefits Section on client's behalf
- Assisting clients to appeal against decisions where benefit may not be awarded

1.5 Affordable Warmth / Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency

- Providing advice to clients regarding central heating, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing and hot water tank jackets
- Assisting eligible clients with referrals to the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)
- Assisting clients to maximise their incomes through applications for appropriate benefits and / or annuities
- Assisting eligible clients with referrals for Private Sector Housing Grants
- Providing fuel purchase advice to clients
- Distributing free energy efficient light bulbs to clients

1.6 Healthy Homes Assessment

- Identifying issues with clients surrounding disrepair, lack of maintenance, deficiencies and hazards within their home environment (both internal and external) through assessment of:
 - Floors
 - Lighting
 - Stairs / Steps
 - Pathways
 - Security (doors and windows)
 - Excess cold / heat
 - Fire safety
 - Appliances emitting Carbon Monoxide
- Advising clients of potential solutions and preventative measures to minimise any potential risks to their health, safety and well-being

1.7 General Housing Advice

- Discussing with clients the housing options available to them should they wish to move to alternative accommodation (e.g. sheltered housing)
- Assisting clients complete applications for alternative accommodation
- Liaising with Local Authority, Housing Associations and private companies on client's behalf
- Providing information regarding local services clients may be interested in (e.g. community alarm services, disabled parking badges)
- Assisting clients access services by signposting to relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies (e.g. Age Concern, Carers Network, GPs, Social Services, Occupational Therapists)