

What if I have no money?

You may have enough money to pay for building works yourself but feel that you need professional help and guidance to deal with such matters without being worried about 'cowboy builders'. If your finances are limited, a major part of our job is to help find the money to pay for essential works.

If you are on a low income or receive a means tested benefit such as Council Tax Benefit or Income Support, you will probably qualify for an adaption grant or Kickstart loan. We can assist you to apply for these. Where they are not available, we can help you find other ways of funding the works for example charitable funding.

What does it cost?

Our advice service is free, we do not charge a fee for repair works covered by a Kickstart loan. We do, however, charge a fee if we support you through building work for disabled adaptations. For most works, this is calculated as a percentage of the cost of the works and can be included within the grant. This will be fully explained to you before any work proceeds. We will ask you to sign an agreement with us outlining our services and fees if you decide to use the Home Improvement Agency.

Who does the work?

We have compiled a list of local builders. They are all properly insured and are signed up to the Council's registration scheme and commitment to equality. We monitor the list constantly.

Builders who let us or our clients down are removed from the list. If there is a particular builder/tradesman whom you would prefer to use, please tell us about them and we can invite them to join the Council's registered list.

For your own protection, we always recommend that there is a formal contract between you and the builder. We will arrange this for you.

The Home Improvement Agency will not be able to:

- ✗ carry out major work ourselves (although we do keep a list of local contractors whose work is continuously reviewed)
- ✗ discuss anything about you with anyone else without your permission
- ✗ make any decisions which affect you without first consulting you.

Contact Details

Please contact the Home Improvement Agency on 01432 260710 if you have any other questions or queries.

Email: yah@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call the Private Sector Housing You at Home Service on 01432 260710 or e-mail yah@herefordshire.gov.uk

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A guide to Herefordshire's Home Improvement Agency service

You at Home

Private Sector Housing Promoting warm and safe homes in Herefordshire



The You at Home - Home Improvement Agency was established by Herefordshire Council in 2005.

Our aim is to help homeowners and private tenants remain safe, secure, comfortable and independent in their own home. We specialise in helping people who are vulnerable, disabled, or over 60.

We have an experienced team of surveyors, technicians, administrative staff and caseworkers based in Hereford.

How do you help?

Our help is usually called for when someone has a problem with their house. This might be because of a need for repairs, adaptations, or improvements. It could also be because normal activities such as using the bath or getting upstairs have become difficult.

Perhaps you have been told that something needs attention but you need independent advice or the reassurance of a second opinion.

How do I become a client?

Many of our clients contact us directly. Others have been referred to us by concerned friends, family, social services, GPs, district nurses, hospital staff etc.

What exactly do you do?

We do as much as you feel is necessary to help you to get things done. Some people want, or need, more help than others. We work with you. You make the choices. Our services include:

- visiting you in your own home to discuss your needs and how we can help you
- helping you complete forms for grants, Kickstart loans and referral to others who can help with benefits, insurance etc
- checking that you are receiving all the welfare benefits to which you are entitled
- helping you find the finance to pay for building works
- liaising with other relevant people and organisations on your behalf

The Agency also runs a small repairs and adaptations service. Small adaptations like installing grab rails are normally carried out following an occupational therapist visit to your home. Where there is an urgent need for adaptations to enable you to return home from hospital, the team work with Occupational Therapists to minimise delay. Other works such as security or home safety jobs can be carried out by our small repairs and adaptations service.



What happens after I contact you?

Our case workers can visit you to discuss how you would like the Agency to assist.

Our main aim is to help with repairs and adaptations to your home. To do this we can carry out a brief inspection of your property and tell you what we find. We can then offer you services such as:

- ✓ referral to our small repairs and adaptations service or other relevant organisation
- ✓ preparing drawings and specifications
- ✓ obtaining planning permission, building regulations approval and helping with other legal matters
- ✓ obtaining quotations for the work and helping you to choose a builder
- ✓ talking to the builder on your behalf
- ✓ ensuring the works on site are satisfactorily completed
- ✓ arranging payments
- ✓ advising and assisting to move to another property if this is appropriate

All information you give to us is treated as confidential. If, ultimately, you decide that you do not want building works carried out, we will fully respect your wishes.

