



Care & Repair Cymru

CARE & REPAIR IN WALES

45 Years of Improving Homes and Changing Lives



Our Vision

A Wales where all older people can live independently in warm, safe and accessible homes.

Care & Repair Cymru is a registered charity (No. 1163542) and a company limited by guarantee (No. 09574555).

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Foreword

Chris Jones

Chris Jones,
Chief Executive,
Care & Repair Cymru

We are in a landmark year for Care & Repair, with 45 years having passed since the Ferndale Home Improvement Service was set up in the Rhondda. In celebrating 45 years, this report maps and details the journey between then and now. It's been a story of success and growth of a Movement, that today covers the whole of Wales, with a workforce of over 300, and services that reach some 40,000 households every year. That success has been built on a determination to meet the acute needs of older people, and over the course of 45 years, the vision and hard work of many dedicated individuals. The ethos of the service over this time has remained person centred, tailored help founded on home visits, and listening to client needs.

In the eighties and nineties, the need was very much about tackling extremely poor housing conditions occupied by older people across Wales, especially in valley communities and rural areas. During this period, one of the biggest concerns was that older people tended to live in the oldest, poorest housing, but they were a group with the lowest take up rates

of plentiful home improvement grants available from local authorities across the country.

As time went by into the 2000s and to the present time, the focus on helping low-income older people living in the poorest housing has continued. However, alongside this, the recognition of the inescapable link between poor housing and poor health has grown. Care & Repair is now a Wales-wide charitable movement that provides services that practically integrates housing with health and social care.

Our work is increasingly recognised as essential in preventing or reducing poor health amongst older people, and supporting quicker safe hospital discharges, reducing admission and re-admission rates to hospital and GPs, as well as supporting independent living at home and delaying admission to residential and nursing care.

We are proud of the work we do and determined to grow, improve, innovate and continue to meet the needs of an older population that continues to grow in number and requires more help and support year on year.

1979

First ever 'Agency' established

The first home improvement agency in Wales is born in Ferndale in 1979. The Ferndale Home Improvement Service (FHIS) is a response to acute problems faced by older homeowners living in housing unfit for human habitation and lacking in basic amenities.



1980s

Local Care & Repair Initiatives

The pioneering project in Ferndale is followed by the development of several Care & Repair schemes in Wales by the mid-80s. These are localised initiatives, often led by local councils, social services and housing associations.



1987

Welsh Office Funding

Care & Repair's early development is helped through an 'Assisted Agency Initiative' actively supported by the Welsh Office, and Care & Repair Ltd which at the time was helping develop schemes in England.

Six Care & Repair pilot schemes launch in 1987 and become twelve by 1989. Care & Repair has extended to both ends of Wales, with Agencies in Clwyd and Cardiff.

THE Welsh Office is to promote new home improvement in the Principality at a £20,000 per year.

The development of the new agencies will be led by Care and Repair Limited, a charitable organisation that is already responsible for the development of a number of successful schemes which offer practical and financial advice on home renovation, particularly to elderly people.

"I am glad that we can support the further develop-

Home help for elderly in Wales

ment of housing agency services in Wales," said Welsh Under-Secretary Mr. Mark Robinson.

"We know that elderly people do not get the share of public and private finance for home improvement that they need if they are to continue to live in their homes in comfort and dignity," he said.

1991

Care & Repair Cymru is born

An important Conference, "Care & Repair in Wales – The Way Forward", takes place in December 1990, attended by the Welsh Consumer Council, the Welsh Office, Care & Repair Ltd, Welsh County and District Councils, Welsh Care & Repair projects and academic institutes.

The Conference agrees on several important actions including future funding and timetable for new Care & Repair Agencies, and a plan to set up Care & Repair Cymru in 1991 as a separate independent body, with a formal launch at Cardiff Castle.





1990s

Growth of a Movement

By 1995 there are 20 Care & Repair Agencies in Wales. Following changes via the Local Government (Wales) Act in 1996, the subsequent years see new Monmouthshire and Anglesey Agencies launch. Dinefwr Care & Repair is renamed Carmarthenshire Care & Repair.

By the early 2000s, Wales-wide coverage is achieved for the first time, with every corner of Wales serviced by a Care & Repair Agency.



2002

Launch of the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP)

Care & Repair's flagship Rapid Response Adaptations Programme is launched in 2002 to address minor adaptations in homes of older people in the owner occupied or private rented sector. The service proves very popular with the NHS and Social Services, being used extensively by Occupational Therapists and Health and Social Care professionals. By 2003, almost half of Care & Repair Agencies have a handyperson service directly delivering the works under RRAP.



2007

Support from the National Assembly

A boost for Care & Repair as the then-Social Justice Minister Edwina Hart AM announces £4.36m funding for Agencies in 2007, followed soon after by the National Assembly for Wales Equality of Opportunity for Wales Committee's report titled 'Still Waiting: Home Maintenance and Adaptations Services for Older People in Wales'. Published in 2009, the report recognises the quality of Care & Repair's Rapid Response Adaptation Service:

“The Rapid Response Adaptations Programme is cited by witnesses as a good example of empowering people to make quick decisions by reducing bureaucracy and focusing on individual needs.”



2010-2015

Strengthening our Organisational Resilience

By 2010 there are 22 Care & Repair Agencies across Wales. Care & Repair Cymru employs 19 staff across two offices, situated in North and South Wales, and joins a Group Structure with Community Housing Cymru (CCH) and CREW.

Imminent grant reductions due to the financial crisis and age of austerity brings a new five-year strategy for Care & Repair, 'Building for the Future, 2010-2015'. This kickstarts a journey towards social enterprises, diverse income streams, cost reductions, and stronger evaluation to demonstrate impact. The first social enterprises are launched by Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Care & Repairs in 2011, providing a home repair service for people who can afford to pay by delivering grant aided work with directly employed operatives.

Mergers of Care & Repair Agencies commence in 2014/15, to reduce management and overhead costs and protect front line staff and services. By the end of 2016, 22 Care & Repair Agencies merge to 13, crucially still coterminous with local authority boundaries to provide all Wales coverage.

In 2015, Care & Repair Cymru leaves its Group Structure and becomes a registered charity, updates its vision and mission and appoints a fundraising officer to grow more diverse income and funding streams.



2015-2020

Move to Project Funding

In addition to continuing to deliver our core home improvement and adaptation services, since 2015 Care & Repair has diversified service delivery through major national and regional projects:

Managing Better: 2016–Present Day

Specifically aimed at helping older people living with sensory loss to stay safe and independent at home. To date, the service has delivered 12,300 practical works to support safe and independent living and helped 3,300 people with enabling technology to support wellbeing.

The Attic Project: 2017–2020

The project’s volunteers helped older people to declutter their homes and reminisce. During its time, the project removed 2,000 bags of possessions from 80 households to make space in the home and to reduce accidents.



Hospital to a Healthier Home: 2019–Present Day

The service employs 14 caseworkers in 17 hospitals across five Local Health Boards in Wales. Specialist caseworkers work with hospital staff to identify patients who are clinically optimised but cannot go home due to a house or environmental reason. Since 2019, the service has supported over 19,500 patients leave hospital more quickly into a home adapted to their needs, saving the Welsh NHS over 120,000 bed days.

70+ Cymru and Older Not Colder: 2020–Present Day

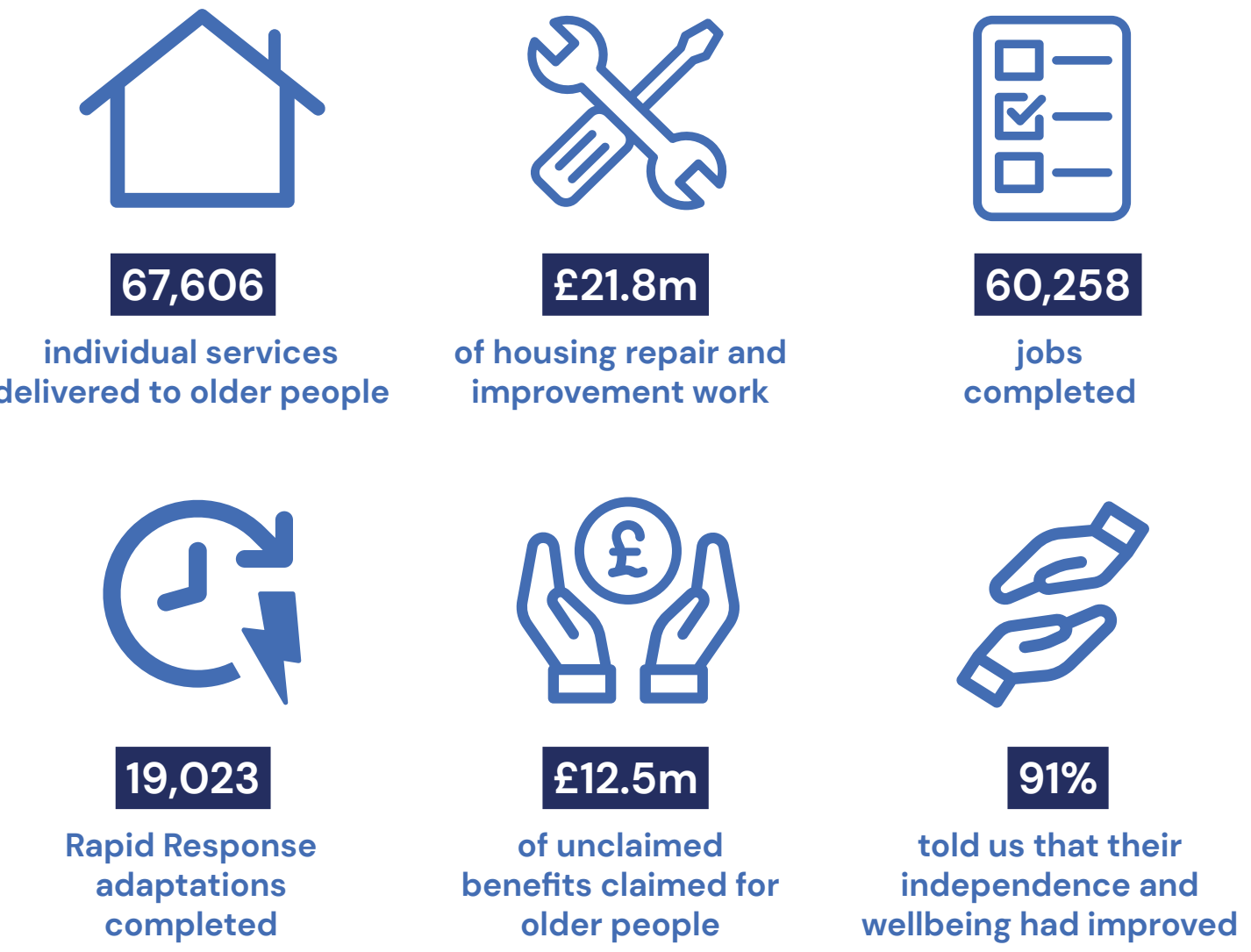
There have been two fuel poverty and energy efficiency projects since 2020 via these specialist services, we have delivered 444 large measures such as oil tank replacement, and 1,075 small measures such as draught proofing, helping over 3,350 households.

2020-Today

Care & Repair Today

Care & Repair Cymru employs 16 people in one office and is now an award-winning national charity. The 13 Care and Repair Agencies across Wales employ over 300 staff, delivering front line services in communities cross Wales.

Our Annual Impact



Supporting Older People to Stay Safe and Independent at Home For Longer

Today, Care & Repair supports the Welsh Government, NHS and Local Authorities to meet a number of their priorities.

Housing

Home Safety, Repairs and Adaptation

Care & Repair has been delivering the Rapid Response Adaptation Programme since 2002. Last year, we delivered £21.8 million of housing repair and improvement work, via 60,258 jobs including 19,023 Rapid Response Adaptations.

Adaptations Framework

The latest published Welsh Government data shows that Care & Repair provided 67% of all adaptations delivered in Wales in 2020–21. 95% of our adaptations were under £500.

Path to Adequate Housing

The Welsh Government has committed to a White Paper exploring the introduction of a Right to Adequate Housing enshrined in Welsh Law, including accessibility and housing condition.

Health and Social Care

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

Adaptations keep people safe, preventing accidents at home such as falls and help avoid unnecessary hospital admission. We support independent living for older and disabled people.

A Healthier Wales

Although a housing charity, our interventions have health and wellbeing benefits from preventing accidents to reducing damp.

Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care

Via our Hospital to a Healthier Home service, we provide home improvements, repairs and adaptations. These are essential to speeding up safe hospital discharge into homes that support continued recovery.

Care Closer to Home

Care & Repair improve properties to support independent living, facilitate packages of care going ahead, and continued recovery at home.

Frailty Quality Statement

Our Healthy Home Check ensures older people are supported with what matters to them and makes frailty easier to live with.

Fuel Poverty

Warm Homes Programme

Our Older Not Colder service provides energy efficiency advice and home improvements to improve affordable warmth and reduce fuel poverty.

Income Maximisation

Welsh Benefit Charter

Last year we successfully raised £12.56m in unclaimed benefits for our clients. All people who receive our casework service are offered a free welfare benefits check, as well as support to access disability badges, free tv licenses and access the priority services register or social tariffs if applicable.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Our Rapid Response Adaptation Programme is not means-tested, supporting an equal Wales. Our home and energy improvements make for a more resilient Wales, and our interventions are proven to improve wellbeing.

Strategy for an Ageing Society

Care & Repair’s work including our adaptations, our Hospital to a Healthier Home service and our policy output such as ‘The State of Older People’s Housing’ report are all name-checked in the delivery plan of this strategy.

National Outcomes Framework

Via client feedback, we measure wellbeing. We also support suitability of living condition via adaptations and home improvements, and secure entitlements through income maximisation.

Sail Research

Care & Repair has participated in a research partnership with Swansea University’s Medical Data Science Unit since 2017.

We linked anonymised data from Care & Repair’s national database with the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage Databank (SAIL) to show the impact of having and not having a Care & Repair intervention. The data set contained over 650,000 people aged between 60 and 95, of which over 123,000 were Care & Repair clients. The research found that:

- Care & Repair clients on average had a higher risk of falling compared to the non-Care & Repair population
- Care & Repair adaptations reduce injurious hospital admissions by 17%
- There was a 13% reduced risk of someone having a fall for one year following a Care & Repair intervention
- Care & Repair interventions reduced risk of care home admission for people with moderate or severe levels of frailty over a 1-, 3-, and 5-year time period.

You can read these academic, peer reviewed journal articles here:



Care & Repair Research

The State of Older People’s Housing Report

This report explained the increase in complex housing issues faced by our clients, and how it is becoming more difficult to support clients living in unfit housing. Read the full report here:



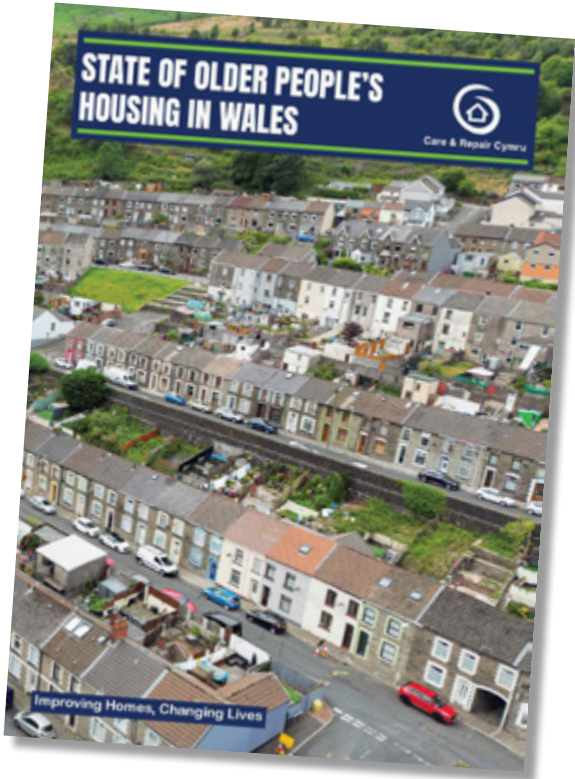
Older People in Wales: Poverty in Winter 2023–24

Despite government support, last winter the average Care & Repair client was spending 19% of their income on fuel and water. Read the full report here:



From Wear and Tear to Disrepair

This report highlighted the long-term consequences of small issues going unresolved, and the lack of solutions and support for homeowners to make repairs. Read the full report here:



Next Steps for Care & Repair

A Safety Net Grant for Older People

Care & Repair are increasingly seeing older people living in homes unsafe and unfit for human habitation. We are asking Welsh Government for a safety-net grant to resolve issues of hazardous disrepair where the occupier has no means to fund the works themselves, and all benevolent funding options have been exhausted.

Higher Demand for Rapid Response Adaptations

Over recent years, demand has continued to outstrip resource for small adaptations. Our Agencies have reported fully allocating their yearly RRAP monies as early as October. Our adaptations are proven to prevent falls, accidents, and hospital admissions. With an ageing and increasingly frail population, increasing RRAP investment continues to be a vital low-cost solution to a problem.

Immediate Support for Older People Living in Fuel Poverty

Through our energy efficiency and fuel poverty advice services, we see older people who need immediate support to heat their homes. One client we helped was spending 62% of their total income on fuel and water. While the new Warm Homes Programme focuses on larger, whole house solutions and low carbon heating, older people we support need solutions now to repair their boilers and get heat into their homes.

Over the next five years our strategic objectives are to:

- Continue to be a resilient and diverse charity by maintaining and growing current funding streams and new opportunities
- Solidify our reputation as an expert voice, go-to service provider and point of excellence for housing adaptations
- Provide excellence in the collection, analysis and reporting of data to show impact and inform policy
- Grow and improve our work on client voice and insights

- Develop our services and reputation as a leading organisation for decarbonisation of private housing
- Further embed good governance, quality assurance and a culture of learning and good governance

Demand for Care & Repair’s services have grown over consecutive years. At the same time, the number of people who can afford to pay for home improvements has reduced. With an ageing population, it is vital that Care & Repair continues to play its part in delivering health, housing and social care outcomes across Wales to reduce pressures on the NHS, keep older people safe at home, and support improved housing accessibility and condition.



