

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING AT HOME

Can YOU Help?

This winter is going to be so hard for so many people. In our support roles, working with people with disabilities, we know how reduced mobility creates an extra need for warmth for health. But the cost of energy bills, food and transport is going to mean choices are needed, ie do I put the heating on; go shopping or drive to see a friend?

We are pulling together a network of additional help: please see the links in the [Ease the Squeeze](#) section on page 4.

However, agencies are going to be stretched in delivering this support so, if you think you can add value to any of these initiatives, then please contact us. For example, could you store and distribute some of our warm packs? Be part of our handyperson network taking on some extra small paid jobs to fit draughtproofing, LED bulbs or hang curtains?

Please send any offers of help to winterwarmtheastsuffolk.gov.uk

I'd like to tell you about a lady I met recently. She is a single lady in her 60's who owns her 1-bedroom ground floor flat in a pleasant seaside town.

She has worked all her life but recently suffered some ill health and had to give up working. She receives £77 per week in Jobseekers Allowance. This is her only income. In her larder was one tin of beans, an out-of-date Swiss roll and a few individually wrapped tea bags. In her fridge was a pint of milk. She can't afford to get her gas boiler serviced and lives in fear of the pump failing. She has it on an hour a day.

We are currently pulling together a package of support to help her with food, warmth, gas boiler servicing, help with bills and some additional insulation for her home. Even then she faces a winter of struggle. But she is not alone. We need your help to identify others in these crisis situations so we can support and signpost them to help to get through this winter. Please refer those who think they are just managing as well as those who are not.

Thank you.

Teresa Howarth
Principal Environmental
Health Officer (Housing)

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Supplier Spotlight: This issue...

James Alger from DD Alger & Son Limited



Q. You have specialised in disabled adaptations - what encouraged you to do so?

"I have been doing grant work in the Waveney area for about 30 years. It started when Home Improvement Grants were more readily available. Building work has been part of the family since 1933! My grandfather started it, then dad took over - I was helping him when I was a nipper!"

Q. What gives you the biggest challenge(s) these days?

"I don't have too many big ones thankfully, other than getting out of bed! With DFGs, it's about ensuring all sub-contractors are lined up with dates, so the job runs smoothly; materials are available, etc."

Huge thanks to James for his time; consistent quality and appreciation of client needs over many years!

Q. What's the best/most satisfying part of the job?

"Appreciation from clients when you handover finished work and see it's going to make huge difference to their lives, ie staying at home and improving their life. Some are over the top; some you don't get any response from mind!"

Q. What would you change about the DFG competition process if you could?

"Nothing to be honest! It seems to work well from the supplier side. It's nice to get a job offer yet equally I can ignore an offer if too busy. All the information is supplied up front to judge the job/work needed. Not winning one, even for a few weeks, doesn't cause a challenge. I undertake private work too, as well as fitting handrails for Social Services and minor works. Indeed, everyone is busy these days and it just works well!"

Q. Any memorable cases?

"No disasters thankfully! One sticks in mind - a wet room and ramping for a really nice Gent in Lowestoft. He had 8 tarantulas caged in his lounge! My team shied away from them, but I got to hold one."



DFG Stat Attack! Putting it all into context

We currently have 59 cases with OT assessments on the waiting list. Clients have been advised by letter that their application will be processed in date received order and according to priority, with the focus on palliative care. Due to demand, they are advised there is a delay, although we are working as efficiently as possible.

150 DFG cases have been approved since 1 April (Plus 26 Supplementary grant cases to support client contributions or cases which previously would not have been eligible), with 87 completed (some approved in previous financial year) and 18 Supplementary cases. The worldwide shortage of tradespeople and building materials continues to impact. However, 46 works are currently on site, or awaiting final sign off, and additionally, a further 18 are awaiting start date agreement, with 20 also agreed, making 84 in total.

Don't just take our word for it!

Mr B from Blundeston was struggling with a 1st floor bath, rotten floorboards and tiles falling off the walls. His new level access shower has made all the difference, as he commented: *"I'm exceptionally happy. It's excellent - simply marvellous!"* And added: *"I've never had a*

shower before and used to stand up in the bath and pour water over my head from a container. I was very frightened of slipping. The builders Andy & Simon (suppliers) were brilliant, with the panelling rather than tiles, marvellous. Can I also say that the kindness of help from everyone

was wonderful. Sarah (Case Officer) put yellow strips on the paperwork to highlight things I had to complete, and Adrian (Technical Officer) gave helpful guidance." And he finished by saying: "I can shower safely and it looks like the Savoy each time I go in the room!"

Before



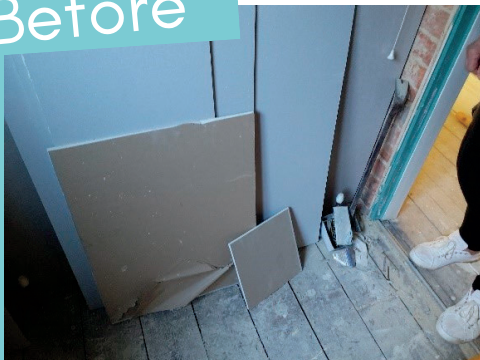
After

Supplier: Nexus Ramps T/A Ramp and Mobility Solutions Ltd

Lynda from Beccles had already paid £5,000 to a contractor upfront who was supposed to have installed plaster board and prepared her bathroom ready for her level access shower, hence the bare walls in this photo:



Before



Supplier: Trevor Benton Construction.

Lynda said: *"Marvin has done a lovely job!"*



After

Mrs H of Lowestoft and her daughter are so pleased with their DFG work! Following her first shower she was very relieved and said for a long she had been so anxious around her personal care due to the risk of falls - it was life changing! She was full of praise for Stuart Dewell Builders, saying: *"They couldn't do enough for me!"*

Ease the Squeeze Solutions

Across the country people are rallying to support those suffering the worst consequences of the cost-of-living crisis and in Suffolk it is no different.

A number of initiatives are being finalised including Financial Roadshows, winter warmth packs of essential goods to help people stay warm, a network of warm rooms and our ongoing Warm Suffolk support for insulation and renewable measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes - **find out more about Ease the Squeeze on our website.**

You can also access our referral form online.

Winter Warmth referrals are operating across Suffolk via professionals or voluntary sector support using Suffolk Information Partnership referrals or email: **winterwarmth@eastsoffolk.gov.uk.**

We also have a standard Winter Warmth referral form on our website.

ESC is also about to pilot a 'handyperson network' to install items where the householder is unable to do so themselves such as draughtproofing, curtains and LED bulbs. Details to follow!

See the advice and assistance on Citizens Advice Bureau website.

HELPING
EAST SUFFOLK
EASE THE
SQUEEZE ON
THE COST OF
LIVING



Stepping Home Service wins national recognition

Stepping Home - a hospital pressure-easing patient scheme - received high commendation from judges in the Health and Social Care category of the annual Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards. Delivered by East Suffolk Council to support hospital patients returning home from hospital, Stepping Home was launched in 2018 as a way of recognising the impact of housing on the health, wellbeing and independence of communities, and to provide support for patients awaiting hospital discharge or at risk of admission.

A partnership covering the five Suffolk local authority areas, as well as the West Suffolk and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning



Group, Stepping Home launched, judges praised the service's "fantastic, well-led team, with incredible skills being deployed to the benefit of local people". Total estimated service savings, after service running costs, are in the region of £404,220 - equivalent to almost 1,700 hospital bed days, 16 band five nurses, or 700 ambulance call-outs.

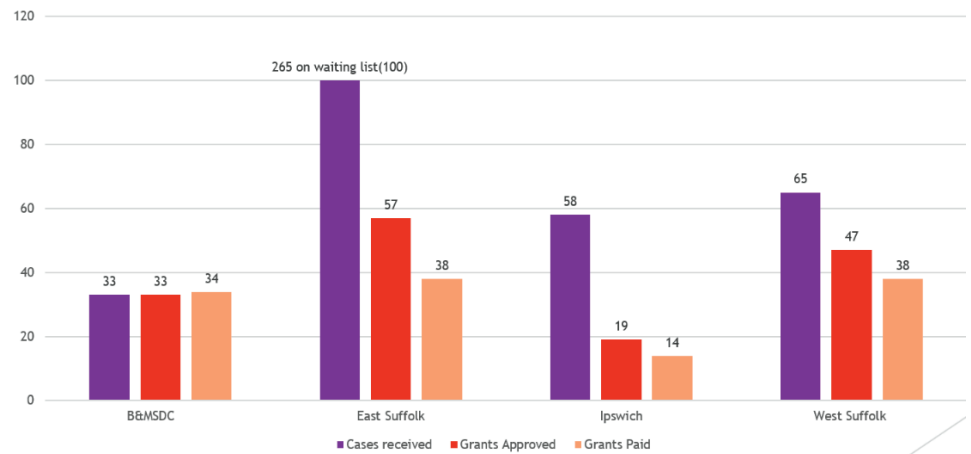
More details about Stepping Home and the award are on our website.

Didn't we do well!

Audit completed their review of our Independent Living Service (ILS) and found that the overall assurance is effective (the top rating) and no findings have been raised! Commenting on the certification, Head of Housing Heather Tucker commented: "Well Done! A great outcome. All areas are designated as 'full compliance' with an overall rating of 'Effective'. Brilliant work. Thank you for all your hard work on turning DFG's around. An amazing achievement!"

No champagne corks were popped however as there is much still to do, but we are all delighted! Indeed, two years on from conception, all DFG providers across Suffolk are undertaking a root and branch review of services to see how collectively we can do even better in delivering DFGs. Great progress is being made as our graphic shows, but we also want to look at

Suffolk DFG - Year to date



a number of improvements, ie standardising grant policies across Suffolk; signposting help with Cost of Living; exploring what else could be included with a DFG, including SMART/Digital solutions and much more.

In East Suffolk, we are encouraging people to pursue benefits they may be entitled

to, for if they are on mean-tested benefit this can speed up their application.

If you would like to make any comments about the service, please feel free to send them to kevin.wegg@eastsoffolk.gov.uk.

How to apply for a DFG

An Occupational Therapy (OT) Assessment is needed first and the client should contact the Independent Living Suffolk (ILS) at Suffolk County Council to arrange this, via ILSesuffolk.gov.uk or Tel: 0800 121 7711.

For anything else, please see our contact details below.

We'd love to hear from you!

Find out more about DFGs and meet 'The Team' in the back issues on our website.

And do let us have your comments and suggestions. Our contact details are below...thank you!

CONTACT US

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/adaptations-and-independent-living

☎ 0300 003 0231 | ✉ independent.living@eastsoffolk.gov.uk