

# Housing, Older People and The Single Assessment Process: a briefing to assist a holistic approach

**The Single Assessment Process (SAP)** is a set of principles and procedures to coordinate the assessment of the care and support needs of an individual and to share that information appropriately between relevant agencies.

## Why SAP?

- It helps to achieve compliance with **NSH Standard two: person-centred care** that aims to ensure that the NHS and social care services treat older people as individuals, enabling them to make choices about their own care.
- It aims to ensure that older people's needs are assessed thoroughly and accurately, but without procedures being needlessly duplicated by different agencies. SAP was introduced in the **National Service Framework for Older People (NSF)**.

## Why ask about housing?

The ability to sustain independent living at home is an important objective for most people as they get older. There is a close inter-relationship between a person's home environment and their health and social care needs. A warm, comfortable, well-adapted home can both contribute to good health and wellbeing and reduce support needs.

Whilst ability to live independently will be affected by deteriorating health, reduced mobility, isolation and/or a low income, this will be complicated and exacerbated if they are also living in poor housing condition. Indeed those conditions may even be at the root of their health problems, exacerbating

- Susceptibility to falls and accidents
- Respiratory conditions
- Arthritis
- Cardiovascular conditions
- Cold related illness, hypothermia and death
- Carbon Monoxide poisoning
- Mental health problems and social isolation

Therefore being aware of a person's housing problems is fundamental to a full and thorough assessment of the potential risks to their health and safety and potential for independent living.

By asking a few simple questions it may be possible to make referrals to the local agencies that can support older and vulnerable people to correct their potentially hazardous housing conditions.

## Key observations/questions to ask

The inclusion of housing into SAP does not mean an onerous or lengthy series of questions. The aim should be to include just enough to trigger an effective referral (see Housing Referrals below).

- *Does the home feel cold and/ or damp?*
- *Can the person easily get around their home and undertake basic functions (bathing, stairs, cooking etc)*

- *Is the home in a reasonable state of repair and does the person need some help to look after their home?*

The response to these questions could then trigger a referral to an agency that could help with improving heating and undertaking repairs and adaptations.

## Effective referrals from SAP

**Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)** are not-for-profit services often called Staying Put or Care & Repair. They help older, disabled and low income home owners and private tenants to repair, adapt or improve their homes. Some also run a small repairs or minor adaptations service to carry out jobs quickly and cheaply. Many are involved with local Falls Prevention schemes and similar strategies.

Most operate their own assessment procedures, which will expand upon a simple SAP “trigger” question.

**Handy Person Services** may be provided by the local HIA, Age Concern or Help The Aged to provide free or low cost measures and interventions:

- Small repairs
- Property maintenance checks
- Minor adaptations
- Provision of aids and equipment
- Home safety checks
- Falls prevention measures
- Security
- Fire safety
- Energy efficiency/affordable warmth
- Carbon monoxide alarms
- Hospital discharge schemes
- Gardening

## Find out more

This briefing has been produced as part of **Healthy Homes Healthier Lives**, a Care & Repair England initiative supported by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network, part of the Care Services Improvement Partnership at the Department of Health, and the Rayne Foundation.

The programme provides a range of materials and resources to raise awareness of the importance of improved housing in securing safe and healthy independent living amongst vulnerable group. It includes training and briefing sessions for health and social care front line staff as well as a **Self Training Kit**.

All materials, including the Self Training kit and information about how to book a training session are freely available on the Care & Repair England website [www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk).

A full appraisal of handyperson schemes is provided in the new Care & Repair England publication “**Small Things Matter**”, which can also be freely downloaded from [www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk)

Details about your local Home Improvement Agency are available from Foundations, the national co-ordinating body for HIAs on [wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com)

More information about the Standard Assessment Process is available from the Centre for Policy on Ageing on [www.cpa.org.uk](http://www.cpa.org.uk)