

WA HACC Home Modification and Assistive Technology Project Update – October 2017

The partnership between the Independent Living Centre WA (ILC) and WA Home and Community Care (HACC) Program on the Home Modification and Assistive Technology (HM & AT) Service Development Project continues to progress.

The overall aim of the project is to inform and develop a sustainable service model that will enable WA HACC Program clients to access and receive home modifications and assistive technology (often referred to as aids and equipment) that support independence and wellbeing through the WA Assessment Framework.

This communication aims to inform you of some of the project developments that have occurred over the last twelve months.

Consumer Support

- Making Choices Finding Solutions Guide

This resource was developed as a toolkit for consumers to increase awareness of the availability of basic aids and equipment with information about simple changes to the home environment and tips and strategies to assist people to better manage everyday tasks and overcome common frustrations.

The guide is available in hard copy and electronically on our website, follow [this link](#) to view.

Supporting the Regional Assessment Service

The project team continue to provide support to the Regional Assessment service. In the last year support has been provided through:

- Delivery of additional Home Modification and Equipment Professional Development Workshops for new assessors or as a refresher for previous participants.
- Continued access to an advisory phone line to provide consultation around identifying home modification and equipment needs and determining appropriate referral pathways.
- The draft 'Home Modification and Assistive Referral and Practice Guidelines' was finalised following an online feedback survey completed by RAS assessors who attended the HM and AT Workshop in November and December of 2015. Hard copies were provided to all RAS teams in the Perth Metropolitan and Regional Western Australia.

Best Practice Scoping Review Dissemination

Following on from the completion of the [Home Modification Best Practice Scoping Review](#) a number of articles were submitted and presentations delivered discussing the review findings and recommendations. The team were delighted to see one of the articles titled 'Setting a New Standard' published in the August 2016 edition of the Australian Ageing Agenda - Community Care Review journal.

The article written by Dr Courtenay Harris, School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work at Curtin University and Hilary O'Connell and Kelly McAuliffe from the Independent Living Centre WA, highlighted the considerable benefits of home modifications. These ranged from slowing down the rate of functional decline and reducing symptoms to improving quality of life and social relationships. For care givers benefits included a sense of reduction in concern and improved safety and sense of security.

Of particular note is the evidence identifying that the outcomes of home modifications are significantly improved when embedded in a reablement approach.

Service Provider Support and Engagement

- In 2016 the project team organised the licensing and adaptation of the Fundamentals of Assistive Technology workshop, a learning and development product developed by LifeTec that looks at the levels of assistive technology, their risks and the roles of those involved in the AT selection process. Since the Independent Living Centre WA began delivering the workshop earlier this year the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. All attendees said they would recommend the workshop to others and that they had gained useful knowledge and skills from attending.
- A small pilot was initiated with a small number of HACC funded community care organisations, to work in collaboration towards the following aims:
 - enable service providers to understand how and where they can engage with Allied health to further embed wellness and provide reablement focussed services
 - ensure positive client outcomes and streamlined pathways for allied health input and home modification and equipment referrals

Practical workshops were provided to coordinators and frontline care staff and shadow home visits with the Allied Health team's health professionals were offered to support staff who felt their clients may benefit from an allied health consult within their service.

- The Home Modification Provider toolkit to guide the provision of services for HACC clients is in draft form, nearing completion.

- The project team have presented at a number of conferences and workshops, including:
 - The Aged and Community Services WA (ACSWA) Symposium 2016 – Presented on simple equipment to enable independent living.
 - MODA conference 2016 – Shared the findings of the best practice scoping review.
 - The Council of the Ageing (COTA) Ageing Gracefully Event in Perth and Bunbury – presented on home modifications to an older consumer group
 - ARATA Conference 2016 – Presented the findings of the best practice scoping review.
 - Active Ageing Conference, 2017 – Presenting on how Allied Health supports reablement with a focus on a partnership approach to service delivery.

The scope of the project has been expanded to focus the development of resources and education not only on HM and AT but to also include Allied Health, its role in wellness and reablement and how it supports clients to maximise their independence, safety and quality of life. These concepts have been included in workshops and other resources. A module is under development by the project team, to be included as part of the suite of Reablement training resources available to the Regional Assessment Service.

Next Steps

The year ahead will include how we continue to utilise the results from the Best Practice in Home Modification Scoping Review and previous research on best practice in the provision of AT to shape a consumer centred and contemporary approach to HM and AT service delivery.

Key steps include:

- Completion of the Home Modification Provider Toolkit
- Contribution to the development of an online consumer portal, including translation of the Making Choices Finding Solutions guide to a web based platform and the development of web based resources
- Continued support to the Regional Assessment Service
- Delivery of the Equipment Voucher Pilot Scheme to trial a grant based equipment provision model and provide recommendations for service delivery with consideration of future reforms under the Commonwealth Home Support Program.
- In collaboration with our training department identification of how existing and new opportunities can be progressed to encompass consumers and/or carers, health professionals and the broader home care sector.

For more information about the project contact Service Coordinator Kelly McAuliffe on 9382 0278 or Service Manager Hilary O'Connell on 9382 0277.