

## Accreditation as a Home Improvement Agency?

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Clements  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Julie Betteridge  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** Laurie Priebe

### Summary and Recommendation:

Attached as Appendix A is a paper written for the Cumbria Housing Executive Group and presented to their meeting on 20 April 2012. It is for Councillors' background information to the presentation by Robert Cornwall and Roy McNally at this meeting of the Strategic Housing Panel.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The hardy perennial issues around the provision of statutory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are providing sufficient and sustainable capital funding and ensuring that service users have access to the support they need to help them through the process to completion.
- 1.2 This report is similar to, and updates, one that was written for the meeting of this Panel on 19 June 2012

## 2. APPENDIX A

- 2.1 The document written by the DFG Coordinator, Cumbria, is intended to address both those issues by recommending that District Council's apply for accreditation as Home Improvement Agencies.
- 2.2 The paper comprises only two pages of text plus a copy of an application form for accreditation with Foundations, the national body representing Home Improvement Agencies.

## 3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 At its meeting on 19 June Strategic Housing Panel agreed to invite Robert Cornwall (the Cumbria DFG Co-ordinator) and Roy McNally (from Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies) to address a future meeting.
- 3.3 Members also need to become aware of any further implications arising from the new Health & Social Care Act, which received Royal Assent earlier this year, and a

forthcoming government white paper on adult social care. The Act is best known to the public for its reform of the National Health Service but it goes further than that.

- 3.4 The Act's headline issues include the creation of Clinical Commissioning Groups for groups of between 200,000 and 500,000 residents. But it also introduces Health & Wellbeing Boards to lead integrated commissioning and provision of health services. It abolishes Primary Care Trusts and transfers responsibility for public health to the local government sector.
- 3.5 Typical DFGs are mostly (but not exclusively) for stairlifts and/or level access showers. They help prevent or avoid accidents at home often described as "slips, trips and broken hips." They also save lives by preventing tragic accidents. But the cost to health and social care services of broken hips is estimated at many times more than the average of £3,500 - £4000 to install a level access shower.
- 3.6 Commissioners of health and social care services will therefore regard DFGs as providing cost effective prevention services which will be part of their concern in promoting community health and wellbeing. This is not limited to adult services because DFGs include children. There is, therefore, a wider context of which we should be aware while planning the development of the Borough Council's primary statutory duty to provide DFGs.

## **Cumbria Housing Executive Group Progress Update – DFG Integration Project**

**April 2012**

### **Executive Summary**

This report sets out the progress to date of the DFG Integration Project. The report contains a recommendation that all District Council apply for accreditation with Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies. This will provide access to further funding for clients and access to affordable warmth schemes as well as support to improve the service to clients.

### **Background**

- 1.0 In Nov 2011 the NHS Joint Commissioning Board agreed funding for the DFG Integration Project. Additional Funding for Districts of £500k in 2011-12 and £500k in 2012-13 was agreed. The purpose of the project is to create a more sustainable model for delivery of support to help keep older and disabled people as independent as possible in their own homes; improving the way DFGs are delivered.

### **Progress to date**

- 2.0 The Project Working Group met first in January and is currently looking at alternative models and best practice, whilst mapping the DFG process and people's experience. This process has involved contact with Blackpool Care and Repair, who are also building a more integrated approach. We are also looking at other models such as Newcastle New Homes in the social housing sector. The Group has representation from the GP Consortia, Locality Social Care teams and Housing.

### **Discussions with Foundations**

- 3.0 We have also met with Roy McNally of Foundations, the national body for the Home Improvement Agency network. Foundations are funded principally by DCLG and are the main source of support in this area. The purpose of the meeting is to look at what support they could make available to District Councils to help develop a new model of delivery. At this meeting, the benefits of being accredited as an HIA and the services Foundations could provide to the Districts were discussed. The feasibility of District Councils being accredited as HIAs was also covered and the range of services

they would need to offer to meet the criteria for accreditation.

- 3.1 It was agreed that most if not all of the District Councils already offer the range of services expected of an HIA. Foundations have proposed that Districts apply for accreditation and confirmed that this would be at no cost. The benefits of accreditation would initially give Districts access to the Foundations Independent Living Trust and to other schemes such help to provide affordable warmth, which are to be launched in partnership with the utility companies targeted at hard to reach groups. We would also gain access to the range of support that Foundations provide for Home Improvement Agencies and help in developing a more holistic approach to our service.

## **Benefits of Accreditation**

- 4.0 The initial benefits of accreditation are access to 2 further streams of funding. It is likely that Foundations will negotiate further funding for the sector and being accredited will provide access to this funding. The additional services and support will help Districts develop a more sustainable approach to the delivery of adaptations and other services to support individuals to remain independent at home. It will provide recognition for our partners and future clients of the quality and range of services we have available.
- 4.1 Further development and help will enable us to be prepared for the changes that will come from the Social Care white paper. We have been lobbying for DFGs to be included as part of the range of options available to people under any proposed new scheme. The Government is also proposing to introduce equity release schemes to help owner occupiers do work to their homes and this work is likely to increase the opportunities for developing income streams. Developing a recognized trusted brand will help authorities build a range of services that are attractive to commissioners and private sector clients.

## **Recommendation**

- 5.0 It is recommended that Districts apply for accreditation to gain access to additional funding and to gain access to the support to develop a more integrated model of delivery of DFGs and wider support for older and disabled people in their own homes. I have attached a copy of the Foundations application for accreditation.

Robert Cornwall  
DFG Coordinator Cumbria  
April 2012

## Home Improvement Agency Accreditation Profile

We would like to understand how you deliver your housing support services to vulnerable people in your local authority area. The details you provide will help us do this and we will treat this information as confidential and not shared with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. If you have any queries with regards to completing this form please consult your regional operational support manager:

North of England	Roy McNally – rmcnally@cel.co.uk
Central England	Francis Philippa – fphilippa@cel.co.uk
South of England	Doug Stem – dstem@cel.co.uk

<b>1. Agency details</b>	
Agency Name	
Local Authority Area/s Covered	
Agency Address	
Telephone	
Agency Contact Name	
Contact Email Address	
Web Site Address	

2. Please indicate how your service is funded, and detail any funding you receive from statutory bodies:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
3. Do you provide a telephone helpline to callers between the hours of 9am – 5pm?		
<i>If not available between 9am – 5pm please state times available</i>		

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
4. Do you provide a home visit when required?		

	<b>Provided directly</b>	<b>Provided by 3<sup>rd</sup> party</b>	<b>Not provided</b>
5. Do you provide a handyperson service?			
<i>If so please indicate if it is provided directly with employed handypersons or by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party</i>			

6. Please indicate which of the following services are provided by your agency to clients <b>and</b> non-clients:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>
• Telephone Advice			
• Technical Support			
• Handyperson Service			

7. <b>Home Visits</b> – Are you able to provide information when visiting clients on the following:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
• Grant eligibility		
• Means testing for eligibility		
• Charitable Funding Searches		
• Subsidised loan schemes		
• Other loans schemes		
• Benefit entitlement / income maximisation		
• Housing options / Moving-on services		

• Other (please state)		
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<b>8. Customer Service</b> - Do you have a leaflet for clients detailing the following:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
• The range of services available		
• Eligibility for each service		
• The cost of any service		
• How to complain		

<b>9. Customer Feedback:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
• Do you give customers a feedback form to complete on completion of work?		
• Do you monitor these feedback forms?		
• Do you have an advisory group in place?		

<b>10. Signposting:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
If you are not able to assist a customer, do you refer them to any 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisations? If so – please list which agencies you commonly refer to:		
•		
•		
•		
•		

<b>11. Capacity:</b>	
Please indicate the number of your current directly employed staff (full time equivalents)	
• Manager	
• Caseworker	
• Technical Officer	
• Administration	
• Volunteer	

<b>12. Monitoring:</b>	
Do you have a computerised case monitoring system? If so, please indicate:	
• FEMIS	
• Charity Log	
• FLARE	
• Bespoke system	
• Other	

<b>13. Activity:</b>	
• Number of enquiries in the last full year	
• Number of core jobs completed in the last full year	
• Number of handyperson jobs completed in the last full year	
• Average time in weeks between initial enquiry and first visit (core jobs)	
• Average time in weeks from date of first visit to practical completion date (core jobs)	
• Value of core work done (excluding VAT and fees)	
• Current caseload – number of cases as at: (date)	
• Number of complaints received	
• Level of income derived – Grant sourced	
• Level of income derived – Private sourced	

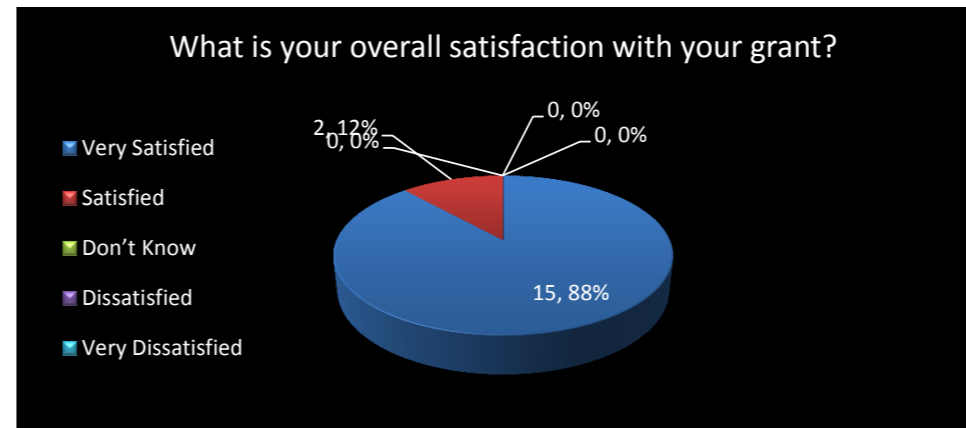
number returned

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1 What is your overall satisfaction with your Grant?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Don't Know
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

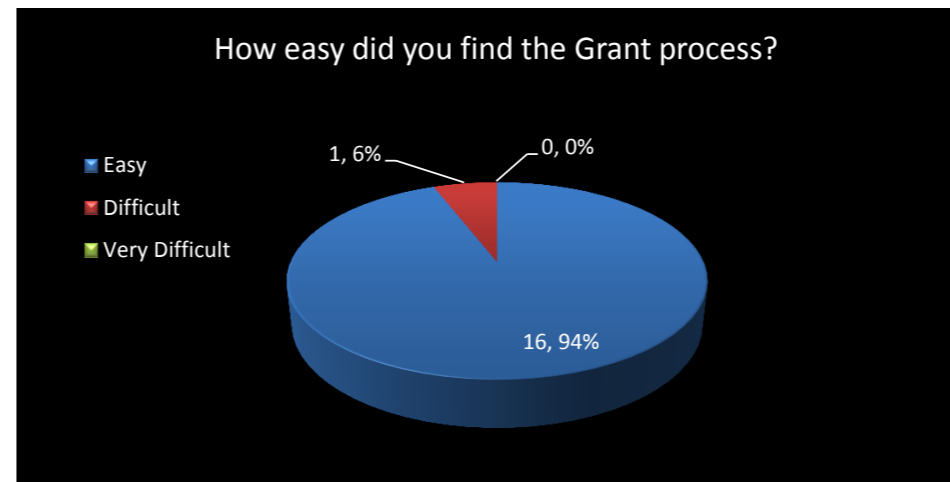
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2 How easy did you find the application process?

- Easy
- Difficult
- Very Difficult
- If you found it difficult please explain why?

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1  
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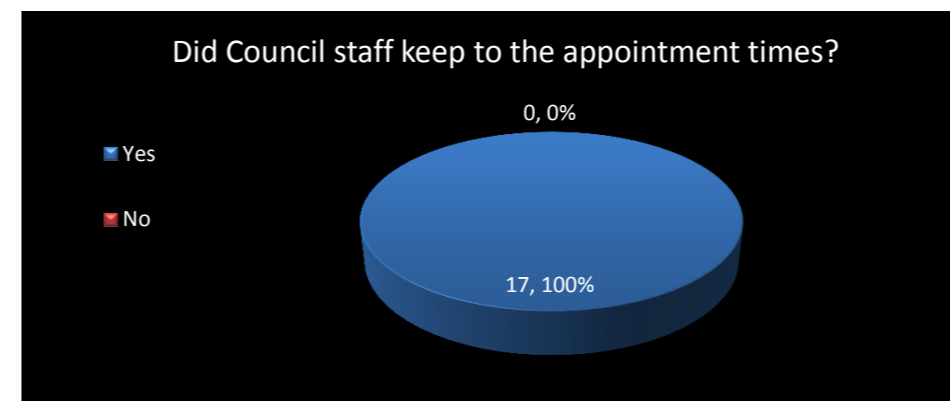


*I found it difficult because the form to fill in I found it quite complicated. If it was simplified it would make the process much easier*

3 Did Council staff keep to the appointment times?

- Yes
- No

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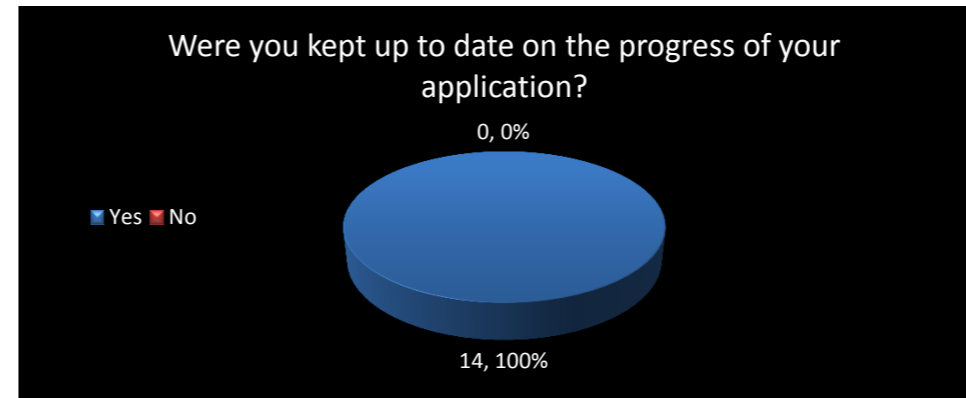
4 Were you kept up to date on the progress of your application?

Yes

No

14

0



5 Were the Council Staff courteous and polite at all times?

Yes

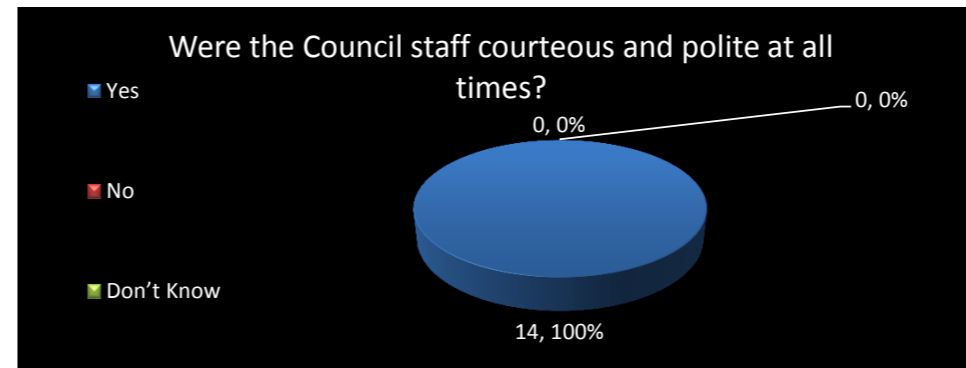
No

Don't Know

14

0

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6 How well were your telephone enquires dealt with?

Excellent

Good

Average

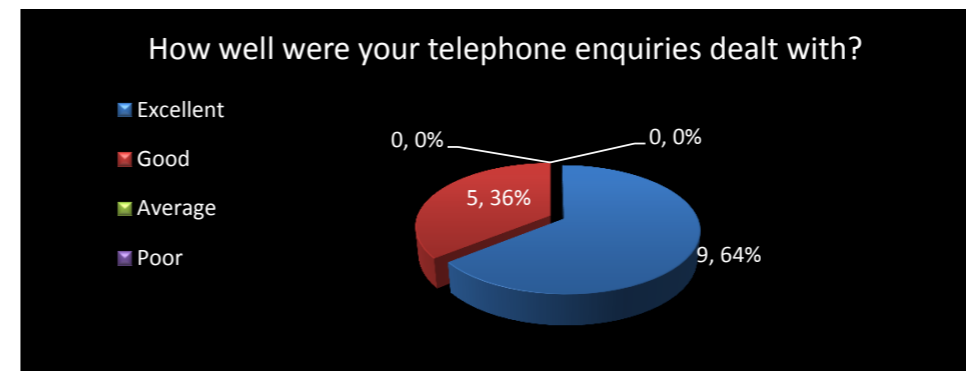
Poor

9

5

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7 How well did you rate your Contractor?

Excellent

Good

Average

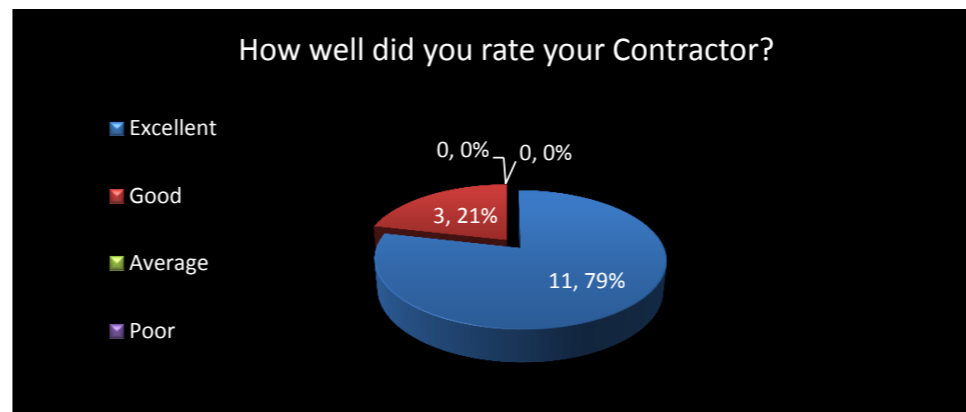
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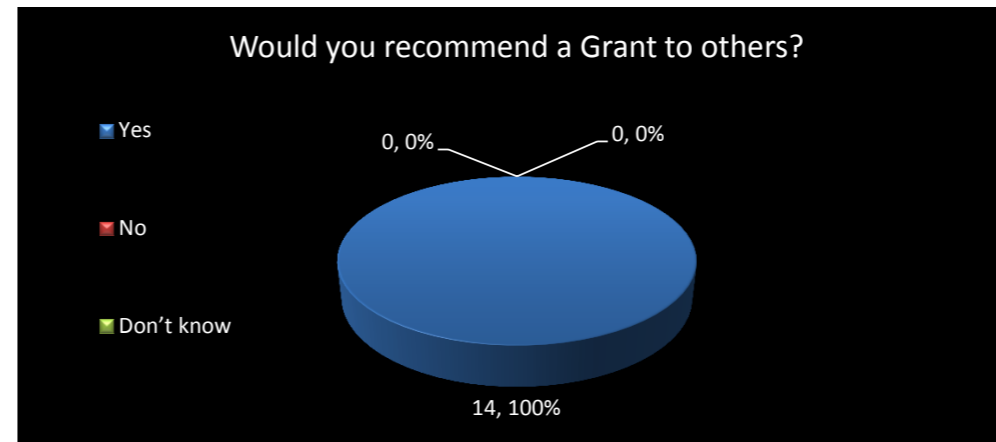




8 *Would you recommend a Grant to others?*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

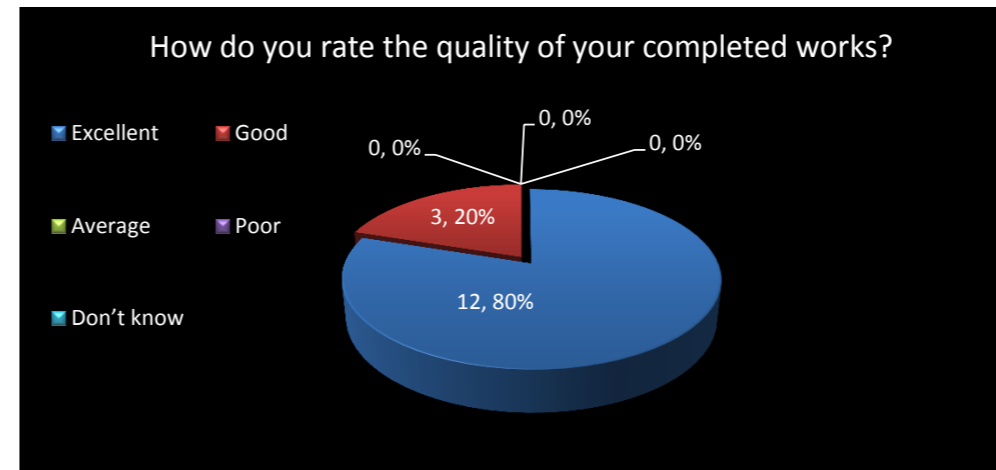
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9 *How do you rate the quality of your completed works?*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Don't know

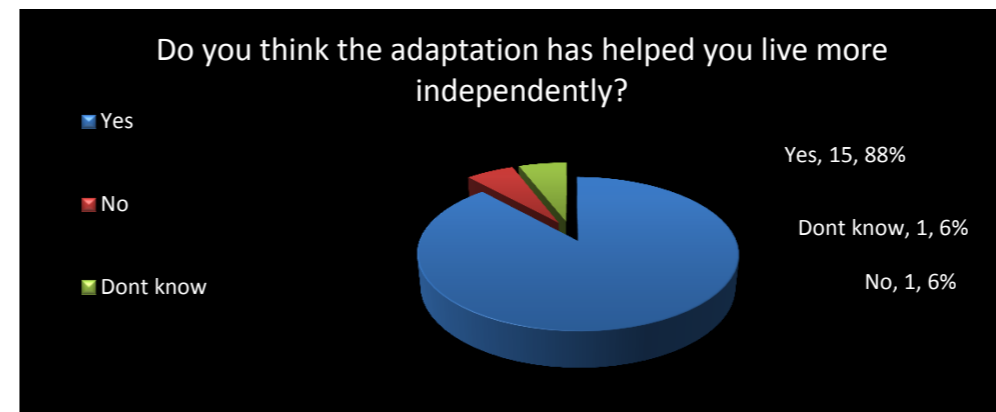
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10 *Do you think the adaptation has helped you live more independently?*

- Yes
- No
- Dont know

15  
1  
1



11 Do you think the adaption has improved your health and wellbeing?

Yes	15
No	0
Don't know	1

12 Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

- \* *Just to say I'm very grateful to you all*
- \* *We found the Council staff helpful and polite at all times*
  
- \* *I am very pleased with all the help from your staff, much appreciated. Thank you.*
  
- \* *Since having the stairlift for my mother it has also improved my life, no more worries about getting her downstairs when she goes to respite- thank you*
- \* *Very pleased with the stairlift, makes it easier to go up in the stairlift.*
- \* *I would like to say a big thank you to David for all his advice, I can now look forward to more independent living.*

