**Promoting Independent Living Market Engagement – June 2024**

**Questions and Answers**

1. **Is there a move towards a more local presence for the service?**

There is a requirement within the specification to have a local presence in Worcestershire but it is not necessary to have an office base in each district. The provider should consider the social value element when decisions about how the service will be delivered locally.

1. **What are Disabled Facilities Grant volumes delivered through the service.**

The number of Disabled Facilities Grants delivered through the service for 23/24 are broken down by district in the slides and in the specification.

1. **Are there TUPE obligations?**

There are TUPE requirements in the tender. The TUPE list will be available by request when the service goes out to tender on 7 August. As at 1 February 2024, the service employed 24 people (full and part time)

1. **Housing Options Service**

The Housing options element is a support and advice service for customers. This element gives customers an additional option to help meet their housing needs when moving home is a more suitable, desirable or viable option to adapting. For example, pressured budgets may not allow us to fund an adaptation which exceeds grant limits or the landlord refuses due to property suitability. The service can be used alongside the home move grant which is also on offer through the HIA.

1. **Is the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) well embedded and integrated or developing**

There is a strong history of collaboration in Worcestershire and the move toward integration continues, which is a great opportunity to grow that relationship. The ICB covers two counties which is a challenge, but there are mechanisms in place such as the district collaboratives to ensure that there is effective partnership working. An example of partnership working in Worcestershire is the Executive Director: Strategy, Health Inequalities and Integration is the Chair of the new Delivery Group for the Housing Strategy.

The Integrated Care System (ICS) has been in place for two years and is working well in some areas and developing in others. There is a commitment to housing in these areas.

1. **Are the Level Access Shower schedule of rates for Minor Adaptations or Disabled Facilities Grants**

The schedule of rates is for the Disabled Facilities Grant element of the service.

Having Minor Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants within the same contract works extremely well. The single route allows a more seamless service and is particularly effective when a customer needs to access adaptations through both services.

1. **Foundations Quality Mark – how does the relationship work between Foundations and the service provider work?**

Foundations ([Foundations](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.foundations.uk.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cbf1743bbf1a045a7dd6508dc8baa751e%7C3fa26e850ac24d4b8ce7781013dde536%7C0%7C0%7C638538811456078572%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=QlUrTwxlPiKw0uDmIeyV566rayBaNInjlQyIR%2B9%2FeuA%3D&reserved=0)) are funded nationally through an ongoing contract with the Department for Housing, Levelling up and Communities (DHLUC) which covers at least the next three years to provide advice and support to enhance HIA services.  The Government are keen to see the quality marks introduced across the sector and are working closely with foundations on the introduction of the new DFG Quality Mark.  The quality marks are initially self- assessed but moves then to a supportive and collaborative approach with the Regional Advisor being heavily involved in working with the provider and the commissioner to reach the standard.  If the Quality mark is awarded, there is then the potential for future reviews which would involve physical audits by Foundations, where they would speak to staff and customers and look at policies and procedures. Foundations would welcome providers to apply or reach out to them to find out more.

1. **What grants/services are in place locally to tackle the high rate of fuel poverty?**

There is national funding, but this is often only for short term initiatives. Currently much of the work in this area is locally based within an individual district council (for example, solar panels in Wyre Forest). However, the comprehensive spending review may open more opportunities in the future.

Thank you for your questions. Any further questions or feedback on the specification would be very welcome, please direct through the procurement portal.

All questions and responses will be published on our portal.