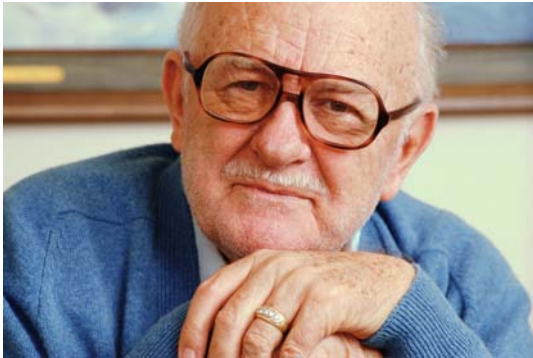




Welcome to SAFE AT HOME

Your Rights and Responsibilities explained



This leaflet sets out your rights if you become a customer of Safe at Home. It also sets out what the Agency will expect of you if you take up its services.

Your right to information:

- ❖ We will inform you about the relevant services offered by Safe at Home
- ❖ We will keep you informed about progress on your case
- ❖ You will have reasonable access to the member of staff handling your case for you to discuss any issues relating to your case, during normal office hours.
- ❖ We will provide you with a Service Agreement letter, details of our complaints procedure and other relevant information leaflets.
- ❖ Wherever possible you will be given information on alternative ways of meeting your needs.
- ❖ Later you will be given copies of:
 - A schedule of the works to be carried out
 - A letter setting out:
 - The cost of the proposed works
 - The cost of the agency's service
 - Your financial contribution, if any
 - A copy of any plans produced
- ❖ You will be able to ask to see your case file and its contents at any convenient time

- ❖ Before any work is given the go-ahead you will be advised about the costs involved and any costs that you will have to pay.

Your right to be involved and to make choices:

- ❖ You have the right to be fully involved in your case and to be accompanied or represented by a relative, friend, carer or advocate.
- ❖ Where possible you will have an opportunity to make your own choices between acceptable ways of meeting your needs
- ❖ The agency will not spend any money on your behalf without obtaining your agreement in advance
- ❖ You will be able to choose a contractor who has quoted for the work but who is not the cheapest, but in this case you will have to pay the difference between this tender and the lowest one submitted.
- ❖ You will be consulted about the start date for the work to ensure that this is as convenient as possible.
- ❖ You can ask for a review of your case or end the service provided at any time by informing the Agency.

Your right to confidentiality:

- ❖ Staff will handle your case in a confidential manner and will not discuss or pass on your details except:
 - With other agencies involved in your case
 - Where the Agency suspects fraud may be involved
 - Where required to do so by Government for performance monitoring
- ❖ You will only be asked for personal information which is required to ascertain your eligibility for assistance



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- ❖ Your case file and any information relating to your case will be kept in a way that respects your right to confidentiality



Your right to be dealt with in the right manner

- ❖ Agency staff and contractors will provide identification, treat you courteously and treat your property with respect.

Your right to a good quality service

- ❖ We will always try to keep our appointments with you and arrive on time.
- ❖ We will visit you in your home by prior appointment. You will not have to come to the Agency's office unless you wish to.
- ❖ We will respond to your initial enquiry within three working days
- ❖ We will make the first visit to your home within three weeks.
- ❖ We will reply to letters and emails within one week.
- ❖ We will ensure work carried out to your property is completed to a satisfactory standard.

Your right to comment on the service provided

- ❖ We will invite you to complete a customer satisfaction questionnaire after the works are completed to comment on the quality of services provided by the Agency and the Contractors.



Your responsibilities

As a customer you are expected to:

- ❖ Treat Agency staff, contractors and other people involved with respect in a courteous manner.
- ❖ Ensure you keep appointments unless really unavoidable.
- ❖ Provide any documentation or information requested about you, your household and your home.
- ❖ Ensure all information is correct and inform the Agency as soon as possible if there are any changes in your circumstances which might affect your eligibility for assistance.
- ❖ Provide reasonable access for the contractors to carry out the work, keeping any pets under control.
- ❖ Enter into a contractual relationship with the Agency and with the contractor.
- ❖ Take your own legal advice and action if a serious dispute arises between you and the builder.
- ❖ Inform the Agency as soon as possible if you wish to end the service being provided.

Your Questions and Answers

What happens first?

A Safe at Home team caseworker will visit you to explain how we can help you and to complete some application forms.



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What do I have to do?

You will also be asked to provide personal and financial information and to produce a proof of ownership for the property. You may wish to have a family member or friend there with you when we discuss these matters. It is your decision whether you would like to proceed with the whole process and we will support you in this.

What will Safe at Home do?

We will discuss with you the work you would like carried out. The decision is always yours, but we can advise you on what is necessary or possible and whether the work is eligible for financial help. Where necessary we will arrange for plans and specifications to be prepared. If you would like to consider a move to accommodation that is better suited to your needs we can offer advice on this too.



What will the service cost?

Our advisory service is free and this includes completing forms and applying for funding from the council or from other organisations on your behalf. Where we are employed to provide schedules and inspect the works that have been done on your home, our fee is 10% (plus VAT) of the total cost of the works or 12.5% (plus VAT) if we draw plans, submit planning /building applications and inspect works regularly until they are completed.

Who pays for this?

If we have submitted an application for you, our fees can be included in this. Should you receive the full funding from the Borough Council, you will not have to pay for anything. In the event that you pay for the works yourself, you will also be responsible for the payment of our fee.

What happens if I decide to have the work carried out on my home?

Where necessary we will arrange for plans and specifications to be prepared and in order for this to be carried out you will receive a visit from one of our Technical Officers.

They will carry out a survey in order to assess the work required. In the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant this initial visit may be done with a member of the Occupational Therapy team to ensure that your needs are clearly identified and agreed. You will receive a copy of the drawing and specification when they are completed. The drawings will also be sent for approval to the appropriate planning and building control departments before it goes out to tender.

Who else is involved?

As well as the caseworker and technical officer from the Safe at Home team several other people may be involved. These could include a building inspector and, of course, the builders.



It is not unusual for building work to be carried out by several contractors as the



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builder may not provide all of the trades necessary for the task.

Do I have to employ a builder?

Yes, but we will contact two or three local contractors from the Safe at Home approved list and ask them to price the work. They need to have access to your property to enable them to produce their tender. Once the tenders have been returned you can confirm your preferred contractor and authorise them to proceed. We will then draw up a contract between you and the builder. A start date can then be requested. You will be asked to sign either an Agreement or an Instruction for Building Works; when completed these will then be sent to the contractor to sign too. A site meeting will be arranged prior to work commencing where you can raise any questions that you might have.

Can I choose my own builder?

If you decide to appoint your own builder to carry out the work instead of one from the Safe at Home approved list we may have to decline from acting as your agent in all matters. Also should any problems arise in the future when the property is inspected by a technical officer and the work does not reach the required standard for which the funding was awarded, you may be liable for additional costs for the work to be brought up to that standard.

Can I ask the builder to carry out additional work for me?

You may ask the builder to carry out work that is not included for in the schedule of works but we advise you to ask for a written quote. The builder is not obliged to do the work for you but if they agree you should settle the bill with them directly.

What happens when work commences?

There may be some inconvenience to you whilst the builders are with you but this is only to be expected when major building works are being carried out. Should you have any concerns regarding safety or about the way in which they carry out their work you can raise the issue with the builder yourself, or if you would prefer Safe at Home will do it on your behalf.

Who checks his work?

Whilst the work on your property is being carried out the Technical Officer will visit on a regular basis to monitor the work and liaise with the builders if any difficulty occurs.



What happens if the builder finds another problem?

As there may be additional costs incurred we will ensure that all of the parties involved discuss it and reach an agreement on how to resolve the problem.

Will I have to move out of my house?

In some cases clients choose to move out of their property rather than live in it whilst building work is taking place, this is something, which you may consider, and we can help in this.

What happens when work is completed?

When the work is completed a Technical Officer will visit your property to ensure



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that the building work has met the required specification for which the funding was awarded and that the builders have done a satisfactory job. You will be asked to fill in some forms to confirm that the work is completed and that you are satisfied with the outcome.

How is the builder paid?

When the work has been completed and inspected the final invoice will be settled. If your works are fully covered by the grant or loan the builder will be paid through Safe at Home. If you have to make a contribution towards the works we will send you a bill and you can pay the builder through us.

Is there a maintenance period?

There will be a period of six months after completion where any defects can be rectified.

How long does it take for the whole process to be completed?

It is difficult to give exact time scales as it is dependent upon the scale of works being carried out, the time that it may take for your grant or loan to be approved or for the builder to become available to start work.



Can I stop the process?

If you decide at any time that you do not wish to continue with the service we ask that you inform us in writing. You may however be liable for costs that we and

the builder have already incurred on your behalf.

How do I complain if I am not happy?

Please contact a member of the Safe at Home team to raise the issue at the earliest opportunity. Also in your welcome pack you will find a form called Complaints, Compliments and Comments for your feedback.

How do I contact Safe at Home?

Telephone: (01493) 846190
Fax: (01493) 846193
Email: safehome@great-yarmouth.gov.uk



Address:

**Safe at Home
Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
Norfolk, NR30 2QF**