

To: HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS
From: HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK DEVELOPMENT	
Date: 21 OCTOBER 2009	Ref: SK/BM

## 1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

This report seeks approval to introduce measures to improve the provision of equipment and adaptation services, including developing an integrated approach and a single point of entry for information, advice and direct service provision; and unifying the allocation of resources with the Council's existing Prioritisation Framework.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The value of equipment and adaptations in supporting people to remain at home is well recognised. Historically, North Lanarkshire Council has demonstrated strong commitment in providing high quality services such as the jointly funded Joint Equipment Service and, more recently, the development of an online self assessment service for direct access and self purchase of items.
- 2.2 This area of activity is subject to a range of national and local drivers, including:
- The Housing Scotland (2006) Act, implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, which introduces new measures for home owners, as previously reported to Committee.
  - Changing demographics, with more people living longer with one or more long term conditions. In North Lanarkshire numbers of older people are growing at a rate of 4% per year, presenting challenges to manage demand within available resources.
  - Significant increases in the incidence of lifelong disability associated with improved healthcare.
  - Consultation on the requirement to adopt national eligibility criteria, as reported to the August Housing & Social Work Services Committee.
- 2.3 Social Work assess for, and provide, equipment through the Joint Equipment Services in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire; and assess the need for adaptations. Housing provide adaptations to public sector properties, funded through Housing Revenue Account (HRA); and fund adaptations to private sector properties through the allocation of Private Sector Housing Grant.
- 2.4 In recognition of the increasing gap between assessed need and available resources, the Council adopted a Prioritisation Framework for access to services in January 2005. This categorised the need into four categories and made judgements about the risk if a need was not met. The four bands adopted were:
- Priority 1- critical risk where serious harm or loss of life may occur
  - Priority 2- significant risk where harm may occur now or in the near future
  - Priority 3- moderate risk where harm may occur if action is not taken in the longer term
  - Priority 4 – low risk where a person may be disadvantaged, or their quality of life reduced, if needs are not met.

- 2.5 The Council's policy is to meet critical and substantial need; meet moderate needs where resources permit; and not meet low needs but instead signpost to other resources as appropriate. The report to Housing & Social Work Services Committee in August 2009 indicated the increasing resource constraints upon the service in meeting moderate needs.
- 2.6 The Prioritisation Framework applied to social work services has not been applied to people who require housing solutions to meet need - including adaptations. Instead, arrangements established in 1997 apply a points threshold following social work assessment, and those with the highest priority needs are funded. As there are many more people with assessed need at lower priorities than there are available resources to meet that need, a significant number of people are effectively placed on a waiting list with little or no expectation that the work will ever be carried out

### 3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1 The existing priority points system applied to people with housing needs is no longer consistent with current legislation or policy. The system is based on a medical model of disability which does not always prioritise those with the greatest need e.g. people with a certain diagnosis score more highly than people with other diagnosis, even though their needs may not as great. It is proposed, therefore, to replace the points system with application of the existing Prioritisation Framework.
- 3.2 The revised system delivers a robust, fair, transparent and consistent framework against which to apply available resources where the need is greatest or the risk highest or where service can have the greatest impact in supporting people maintain their health and prevent the need for additional care/service.
- 3.3 Furthermore Scottish Government on implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 is clear that local authorities must define, and meet, eligible need; and provide advice to people whose needs are not deemed eligible. As a consequence there will be no waiting lists. The proposals contained in this report address that issue by interpreting eligible need as Priority 1 and 2 (whilst still seeking to meet Priority 3 needs as resources dictate). This position is consistent with the draft Scheme of Assistance for private sector residents, approved for consultation by Committee in August.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the revised prioritisation framework will be complemented by the development of an integrated equipment and adaptation service. This service will build on the successful Joint Equipment Service by adding a Housing Options Service to process all requests to meet housing need following assessment. The service will be managed by a single manager, will have pooled resources in terms of staffing and budget and be overseen by the existing Equipment and Adaptation Service Board which has representation from Social Work, Housing, Learning and Leisure, and NHS Lanarkshire.
- 3.5 The service will operate across tenure and will offer a range of services including:
- Providing a cross tenure authority wide mechanism to agree responses to complex work - operating in conjunction with the existing locality planning groups
  - Issuing work for public sector adaptations
  - Processing adaptation grants for private sector adaptations
  - Offering advice, information and signposting for people identified with low risk needs not prioritised for direct provision
  - Operating a single liaison point for adaptations in registered social landlord properties

- Offering a housing options advice service where it is not possible to adapt a property
- Monitoring the online self assessment service which provides information, advice, self purchase options and direct access for an agreed range of products via the Joint Equipment Store.

#### 4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy / Equalities Implications

4.1 The proposed improvements to the equipment and adaptation service are consistent with current trends in modern health and social care provision and will be achieved within existing budgets. The capacity of Housing and Social Work Services to meet need is, of course, contingent on the amount of resources available. In recent years the service has been able to meet additional need through the provision of non-recurring monies allocated by the Council for this purpose. In the current financial climate it is recognised that future capacity to do this may be constrained. The table below sets out the funding position, assuming that the non-recurring monies may not be available in the next financial year.

Resources (£k)	Recurring	Non Recurring	Total
2009/10 Equipment	2,960	300	3,260
2009/10 Adaptations (public sector)	2,759	0	2,759
2009/10 Adaptations (private sector)	794	517	1,311
2010/11 Equipment (projected)	2,860	0	2,860
2010/11 Adaptations (public sector) (projected)	2,759	0	2,759
2010/11 Adaptations (private sector) (projected)	355	0	355

- 4.2 The projected figure for equipment for 2010/11 incorporates a £100k saving from the recent tender of the stairlift contract, as previously reported to Committee. If the projected resources are realised for 2010/11 it is anticipated that public sector adaptations can be provided to those with critical, substantial and moderate needs. The extent to which private sector grants can be made available to those beyond eligible need (i.e. critical and substantial) will be adversely affected by the anticipated reduction in grant funding.
- 4.3 The integrated service will consist of existing staffing from Housing & Social Work Services and will not entail the use of any additional resources.

#### 5. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee approve the service improvements outlined in this report.



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**30 September 2009**