

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## REPORT

To: Social Work Committee	Subject: Management of Residential and Nursing Home Care Turnover
From: Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work	
Date: 4th April, 1997	
Ref: BMcG/HS	
Author of Report: Brian McGuire, Principal Officer (Community Care)	

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the outcome of arrangements put in place in December, 1996 to manage the residential and nursing home turnover budget, and to propose new arrangements for 1997/1998.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 Local authorities throughout Scotland have expressed concern about the level of funding provided for care in the community. In July of last year the Scottish Affairs Committee launched an enquiry into the implementation of community care inviting comments from local authorities by October, 1996. A report to Committee on 8th October, 1996 outlined the proposed response by North Lanarkshire Council, including comment on the need for adequate resources.
- 2.2 Some neighbouring authorities have experienced a serious crisis of funding to the point where new nursing home placements could only be made on the death or discharge of a person already receiving public funds. North Lanarkshire Council has been able to avoid this situation retaining throughout the year the capacity to fund new places.
- 2.3 The majority of nursing home placements are filled by someone occupying hospital beds. If funding is not available when the person is ready for discharge the bed will continue to be occupied for reasons other than clinical need and thereby unavailable for new admissions. This has not been a significant problem in North Lanarkshire, and by the end of 1996/97 there were no people remaining in hospital through lack of funding.
- 2.4 In a report of 26th November, 1996 Committee were advised that the care element budget received by North Lanarkshire was sufficient to fund an additional 188 net places in residential and nursing homes during 1996/97, equivalent to 15.7 places per month.
- 2.5 Actual placements to the end of September, 1996 were running at an average of 19.2 per month. If that level of placement had been sustained, the full year effect of the **extra** placements in 1997/1998 would be £372,000.

2.6 In order to reverse this trend and achieve the level of net placements originally set for 1996/97, the target for the remaining six months of the financial year had to be set at 73.

2.7 Committee agreed to the following management action:

(a) that the department should respond to assessed needs for nursing home and residential care by targeting resources at only the most vulnerable people;

(b) that social work headquarters should take an overview of such placements in order to ensure a consistent approach both to placing across the authority and to priority based on need;

(c) that senior officers should seek urgent discussions with Lanarkshire Health Board to assess the impact of changes within the NHS on the demand for residential and nursing care, with a view to negotiating an appropriate transfer of resources from the Health Board.

### **3. Effects of Management Action**

3.1 Negotiations with Lanarkshire Health Board have secured a transfer of resources which has enabled the department to fund an additional fifteen nursing home places in the last quarter of the 1996/97 financial year at full year costs of £150,000 (as reported to Committee on Jan 1997).

3.2 This transfer gave the department sufficient resources to fund a net total of 646 nursing home placements by 31st March, 1997. In practice, the total number of residents in receipt of social work department funds by the end of 1996/97 financial year was 647.

3.3 The department's funding capacity for net residential places in 1996/97 was 120, with the actual year end total coming in at 118. At the end of March, 1997 there were no individuals in the North Lanarkshire area awaiting residential or nursing home placement for reasons of funding.

3.4 These figures will now ensure that the opening funding commitment for 1997/98 is on target, thus allowing the department to fund the anticipated growth in placements in 1997/98 and enhancing capacity to provide community based services in response to assessed need.

### **4. Arrangements for 1997/98**

4.1 The system for approval of placements will revert to local level in 1997/98. Headquarters community care and finance staff will, however, maintain a strong central monitoring role to ensure consistent and equitable practice across the whole Council area

5. **Recommendations**

Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report;
- (ii) Endorse the proposed arrangements for 1997/1998.

Jim Dickie,  
Director of Social Work.

For further information on this report please contact Brian McGuire, Principal Officer (Community Care) - Telephone 01698 332031.