

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE HOUSING COMMITTEE		Subject: NEW GUIDELINES ON THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY CARE HOUSING IN SCOTLAND
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 8 January 1998	Ref: CA/SW/22/ 1/LD/IG	

The Scottish Office recently issued a draft circular providing local authorities with revised guidance on preparing estimates of aggregate housing and support needs for certain Community Care Client Groups. A copy of the draft circular is available in the Members' Library.

The revised guidance is intended to help strategic planners in local authorities to produce broad estimates of the aggregate housing and support needs of those Community Care Client Groups within their areas; for use in assessing priorities for community care housing, and producing strategic housing plans capital programmes. It is also relevant to community care plans, in relation to the provision of social work and health support services for people living in both supported housing and mainstream housing.

In order to meet the timescale for consultation, observations were prepared following consultation with the Directors of Social Work and Housing for submission to the Scottish Office and this is attached as Appendix A.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to endorse the response set out in Appendix A to this report as the Council's formal response in respect of the revised guidance on preparing estimates of aggregate housing and support needs for certain Community Care Client Groups.


Director of Administration

North Lanarkshire Council - New Guidelines on the Provision of Community Care Housing in Scotland

Introduction

Both the Housing and Social Work Departments welcome the Scottish Office striving to update and standardise the guidance on the provision of community care housing. The draft guidelines are intended to ensure a consistent approach to needs assessment across different geographical areas and include people with both housing and support needs.

As outlined in the draft guidelines, the prevalence method is a valuable tool in assessing the strategic housing and support needs of large populations, accounting for the methods weakness as stated in paragraph eleven of the draft guidance.

As the draft guidance indicates, there should be a range of assessment tools which strategic planning agencies should use. North Lanarkshire Council in partnership with Scottish Homes and Lanarkshire and Greater Glasgow Health Boards have produced a Joint Community Care Accommodation Strategy which employs elements of the Smart and Titterton methodology. This will be refined to take account of the results of the recently completed North Lanarkshire Council Housing Needs Survey which encompassed sections on community care.

Comments on the draft guidance

The model suggested by the draft guidance assumes that a person's support needs can be assessed by the type of accommodation that they require and vice - versa. Traditionally, a particular type of support has been attached to a particular form of accommodation. As community care develops this will not always be the case.

Increasingly, the 'housing' and 'support' elements of an individual care package are separate. The support is flexible and changes to meet the needs of the individual, not fixed to their type of house. This could lead to the mismatching of assessed of housing and support needs.

Another area of confusion is the 'household adjustment'. Having outlined the adjustment as a key area of the methodology, the draft guidance states that there are no reliable adjustment figures for many of the care groups.

The essential contradiction of the paper is that in trying to merge an assessment of housing and support needs it confuses an assessment of needs for social care services with a measurement of housing provision.

The draft guidance states that Scottish Homes are producing housing design guidance for community care groups. Measurement of existing numbers of housing design type can be a successful way of assessing need across different geographical areas. Where a particular housing design has an integrally built form of provision (e.g. sheltered housing), the need for such forms of provision can be quantified too. Where support arrangements are more flexible, there are greater difficulties in assessing for housing need.

Conclusion

The Housing and Social Work Departments employ a range of assessment tools when assessing housing and support needs. These include :-

- Analysing prevalence based methods.
- Using socio-economic information (e.g. Census).
- Reviewing local and national research studies.
- Aggregating local information on assessment and demand.
- Undertaking local surveys.

The draft guidance is a welcome attempt to update the assessment of housing support needs. When measuring forms of housing provision and giving a broad indication of support needs, the method as outlined in the draft guidance can be a useful assessment tool. It should be employed in connection with other methods as indicated above.