

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS UPDATE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 24 November 1998	Ref: JD/MM	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this joint report is to update Committee on progress since the introduction of the new joint Social Work and Housing Adaptations Policy approved by the respective Committees in May 1997.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared jointly with the Director of Housing and has already been considered by the Housing Committee.

2 Background

- 2.1 Requests for adaptations to be carried out to homes of disabled people and their carers have been increasing at 15% per year since 1990 as public awareness of community care has grown. Early hospital discharges and the introduction of EU regulations regarding moving and handling have also increased demand.
- 2.2 With the creation of North Lanarkshire Council, 4 District Council Housing Departments and one Social Work Department attempted to rationalise adaptations procedures on an interim basis. However, the responsibility for the provision of community care services lies between Social Work, Health and Housing. In relation to adaptations, the Council's responsibilities are as follows:

- *Social Work*

- The assessment of disabled people's needs.
- The provision of equipment and temporary adaptations to public and private sector.
- Provision of some permanent adaptations in the private sector.
- The financial contribution to 'top up' disabled grants in certain circumstances.

- *Housing*

- Provision of adaptations in Council houses.
- Administration of Home Improvement Grant scheme for private sector.

2.3 A Joint Social Work/Housing Working Group was set up in 1996 with the following remit:

- Review range of existing policies and procedures.
- Recommend new policy and procedures which would prioritise need.
- Make best use of scarce resources.
- Improve communication between Social Work and Housing Departments.
- Improve public information and access to services.

The new Adaptations Policy was approved by Social Work and Housing Committees in May 1997 and following joint staff training, was introduced in November 1997.

3 Performance Information

3.1 Budget 1997/98

<i>Budget</i>	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Supplementary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Social Work	£599,330	£729,148	£1,328,478
Housing	£1,408,000	£378,000	£1,786,000
Housing Non HRA	£250,000		£250,000
Total			£3,364,478

Social Work was able to increase the budget by using non recurring resource transfer monies to purchase equipment for clients who would otherwise be at risk of admission to hospital or residential care. In addition, it augmented the equipment budget from other community care budgets, mainly the ILS budget which is specifically provided for people with high physical needs. There has been a pattern over the past 3 or 4 years of similar sums being found year on year to augment the budget on a one off basis from new care element transfer monies or resource transfer. This is not a pattern which is likely to continue in the future now that growth in these areas has greatly reduced.

3.2 Performance 1997/98

<i>Social Work</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Value</i>
• All requests for Occupational Therapist assessment 1997/98	5,966	
• Number of adaptations referred to Housing for adaptations to Council property	1,520	
• Number of clients who received equipment	6,068	£283,534
• Number of clients who received adaptations	1,688	£914,562
• Number of cases where contribution made to 'top up' to Home Improvement Grant (assessed cases)	86	£130,382

<i>Housing - Council Properties</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Value</i>
• Number of referrals for adaptations received from Social Work	1,520	
• Number of adaptations completed	1,854	£1,786,000

<i>Housing - Private Sector</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Value</i>
• Number of people who received Home Improvement Grants	116	£204,000

3.3 *Waiting Lists at 31 March 1998*

<i>Social Work</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
• Clients waiting for assessment by Occupational Therapist	1,292	£742,000
• Waiting list for equipment (assessed cases)	451	£102,860
• Waiting list for adaptations (assessed cases)	256	£298,781
Total	1,999	£1,143,641

<i>Housing - Council Properties</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
• Waiting list for adaptations	387	£209,218
(Waiting list for adaptations at 31/07/97)	857	£1,151,401

<i>Housing - Private Sector</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
• Waiting list for Home Improvement Grants	65	£130,000

3.4 *Budget 1998/99*

<i>Budget</i>	<i>Initial</i>
Social Work	£600,000
Housing	£1,528,000
Housing Non HRA	£217,000
Total	£2,345,000

4 *Progress Until March 1998*

4.1 In conjunction with the introduction of the new procedures, the following developments have assisted in the provision of a more responsive service.

- Production of new public information.
- Authority-wide priority scoring system introduced to ensure that the highest level of need is addressed first.
- Targeted consistency across authority for access to service.
- New contract for public sector adaptations to ensure best value, including Occupational Therapist's input to specifications.
- Focus on best use of housing stock, including assessment by Occupational Therapist of suitability of property prior to allocation to disabled person.
- Development of database of adapted properties.
- Development of temporary modular extension for complex needs which cannot be met in any other way at considerably less cost than traditional extensions.
- Introduction of high quality sectional metal ramps which can be re-used and are less expensive than permanent concrete ramps.
- Regular liaison meetings between relevant Housing/Social Work area staff promoting joint work and understanding
- Enabling the public to apply directly for a handrail from Housing (now also in the process of being adopted by housing associations operating within North Lanarkshire) and inclusion of handrails as routine work.
- Inclusion of North Lanarkshire Council procedures in Community Care Works good practice database.

5 Current Developments

5.1 In addition to the achievements now in place, several other procedures are currently being reviewed and will be the subject of future reports to Committee. These include:

- Review of policy, procedure and practice to develop comprehensive guidelines for private sector which mirror those applied in public sector, including:
 - Home Improvement Grant scheme;
 - introduction of Care and Repair scheme;
 - application of priority scoring system to grant scheme;
 - investigating options for design work and co-ordinating consents;
 - investigating opportunity to use temporary modular extension within private sector;
 - production of improved public information;
 - possibility of accessing provision of metal ramps via housing maintenance contract to achieve better value.
- Trial period ongoing for lower thresholds in PVCu doors to aid access for disabled people. If successful, wider use to be considered.
- Trial of PVCu doors which can accommodate electric keepers to allow disabled people to safely admit callers.
- Ongoing review of new procedures.
- Ongoing monitoring of waiting times for assessment and waiting time for provision of equipment and adaptations.
- Social Work reviewing home care service, including assessment process for equipment and adaptations.
- Social Work upgrading database (SWIS).
- Comparing North Lanarkshire Council practice against new COSLA good practice guide.

6 Future Considerations

6.1 Although significant progress has been achieved, it is envisaged that in the longer term a wide ranging review of current arrangements will be required, including:

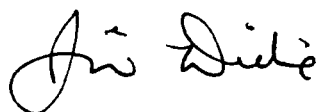
- meeting the challenges of service provision in light of demographic changes, hospital closures, changing legislation and budget availability;
- the scope for a co-ordinated approach to the provision of all adaptations irrespective of tenure;
- exploring alternative mechanisms for purchase and procurement of equipment for disabled people;
- review staff resources, particularly Occupational Therapists, so that agreed targets and timescales can be achieved;
- developing a customer feedback system;
- establishing monitoring and evaluation processes in line with Best Value so that performance can be measured against targets;
- exploring alternative funding arrangements;
- consideration of an alternative scoring system for prioritisation of needs;
- reviewing the threshold which allows people to access service from local authority.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

8 Background Papers

8.1 Background information is available from Housing and Social Work Departments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Dickie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
17 November 1998