

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

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| TO: Social Work Committee | Subject: Proposal for a Member-Officer Review Group on the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations for Disabled People |
| FROM: Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work Gavin Whitefield Director of Housing and Property Services | |
| DATE OF COMMITTEE: 23 November 1999 | |
| REPORT AUTHOR: Jim Nisbet, Principal Officer, Community Care | |
| REF: | |

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report makes proposals for a review of the Council's provision of equipment and adaptations to disabled people.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council provides a range of services for people with physical disabilities, including Home Support Services, day care and residential care.
- 2.2 Home Care Services have already been reviewed within the Social Work Department and the Home Care Review, which will address home care needs of a wide range of client groups, is now in the implementation process.
- 2.3 Day Care services for adults with physical disability will be reviewed as part of the review of day care for older people, and will be the subject of a report to the Social Work Committee in the next few months.
- 2.4 Services to people with sensory impairments are, in the main, purchased through a consortium of Joint User groups who manage the Resource Centre for the Blind and the Sign Language Interpreting Service both of which are Glasgow based. This authority, while being a member of the consortium, will seek to develop these purchased services within its own locality.
- 2.5 A small but significant number of adults with physical disability are placed in residential and nursing home care some of which is extremely specialist in nature. Such establishments can often be far from the local area and make family contact very difficult. A comprehensive review of all such placements is underway.

- 2.6 In terms of numbers of clients, the most significant Social Work Service provided to people with physical disability is the provision of equipment and adaptations to aid daily living, provided in the main by the occupational therapy service.
- 2.7 At present, occupational therapy services operate in a climate of rising demand inherited underfunding, consequent waiting lists for assessment and for resources, inconsistent prioritisation systems. Although joint policies and procedures have been developed by Housing and Social Work, and have been in operation since 1997, the relentlessly increasing levels of demand have raised major issues about the future.
- 2.8 The Government has said that new monies for modernising community care will only go to Councils which can demonstrate they provide a much wider range of options to support people in their own homes and who work closely in partnership with health care colleagues. While occupational therapy services make a valuable contribution to community care, their development, particularly in conjunction with health care services, requires urgent consideration.

3 THE PROPOSED REVIEW

- 3.1 A strategic approach is required in order to embrace the basic rights of disabled people to have access to services which enable them to achieve independence, empowerment, access and mobility.
- 3.2 The terms of reference of the proposed review must recognise duties and legal obligations of the council as they affect disabled people. Notably, the N.H.S and Community Care Act 1990, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1972 and the Social Work Scotland Act 1968 all place duties on Local Authorities which must be recognised in the review process and outcomes.
- 3.3 The review will need to consider what is achievable and affordable, and should be set against established principles of good practice. Any proposals for restructuring services will have to demonstrate both qualitatively and quantitatively, improvements in service. Consultation with service users and their carers would be an important feature of any review process, and the views of users and carers should be sought as to the shape and direction of future service provision. Membership of the Review Group should include representatives from Health Care, to be negotiated with the Lanarkshire Health Board.
- 3.4 The review should examine all possible options for funding and resourcing future service provision, emphasising partnership with all sectors as potential avenues for development.
- 3.5 Views are sought on facilitating the active involvement of members in the review process. Possible options include :
- a) the review being led by a small member-officer team reporting to Committee at regular intervals.

- b) wider involvement of some members in exploring some of the options for change.
- c) full Social Work and Housing Committee consideration at key stages in the review process.

4 TIMESCALE

- 4.1 The specific review of the provision of equipment and adaptations should be pursued as a matter of urgency. It is proposed that an interim report be produced within the first three months and a final report by May 2000.

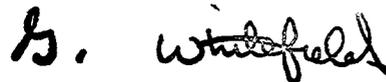
5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- approve the proposal for review of the provision of equipment and adaptations, including occupational therapy services.
- to consider options for the active involvement of members in the review process.
- to approve the proposed time scale and ask the Directors of Social Work and Housing & Property Services to bring forward further reports as the review progresses.



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