

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REPORT**

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject:  <b>FREE HOME CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE LEAVING HOSPITAL</b>
FROM: Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 24 May 2001	
REPORT AUTHOR: George McNally	
REF: JD/GMCI/JMCF	

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Social Work Committee of a guidance circular (CCD2/2001) issued by the Scottish Executive which has the effect of introducing free home care services for older people leaving hospital.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Local authorities have discretion under section 87 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, on whether to charge for their home care services and, if so, how much. Circular SWSG 1/97 provides general guidance on the use of these powers.
- 2.2 In response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care and also in line with the recommendation of the Joint Future Group whose report "Community Care A Joint Future", a number of local authorities do not charge for care in the initial period following discharge from hospital. The intention of circular CCD2/2001 is to ensure this becomes the normal practice and all authorities act in a similar manner.

**3 PURPOSE OF A FREE SERVICE**

- 3.1 This is part of the measures to shift the emphasis from care in institutional settings to care at home. Other parts of the package are designed to improve services, at what is deemed to be a critical time, for the older person, more so when leaving hospital.

**4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- 4.1 Those assessed as requiring home care should get it free for a limited time (up to four weeks) if they are aged 65 or over on the date of discharge and have been in NHS in-patient care for more than one day (24 hours) for treatment, assessment or rehabilitation. People who have had surgery as an NHS day case are also eligible for exemption from charging. However, the relief from charging will not apply to discharges following admission on a regular or frequent basis as part of the person's ongoing care arrangements. This would include for example admissions for respite care or for ongoing but episodic treatment.

4.2 The services which will be provided free will include all social care services provided in the person's home, i.e. home care, domiciliary services, meals on wheels, laundry and other services provided under Sections 12 and 14 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Services provided outwith the home such as day care and lunch clubs would not be covered.

4.3 The circular also makes provision for exemption from charging where people being discharged from hospital require equipment or minor adaptations. These are not matters which are currently subject to charging in North Lanarkshire in line with the Council's policy of non charging for equipment and adaptations.

## **5 MAXIMUM PERIOD OF EXEMPTION**

5.1 The maximum period of free home care under the guidance is four weeks, commencing on the date of discharge. The circular advises however that those people needing care for a lesser period of time should only get relief for that shorter period of time. After the 28 day period local authorities will revert to their normal charging practices for home care services.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The circular indicates that the settlement for the period 2001 - 2004 includes amongst other things, allowance for the income local authorities will forego as a consequence of this guidance.

6.2 Since the number of people who will be eligible for free home care services cannot be predicted, detailed records of the income concerned will be maintained to measure the overall loss to the home care revenue account.

## **7 SERVICE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 It is a matter of good practice to ensure that clients who receive a home care service, undergo a review of their service following any period of hospitalisation. In consequence of the new charging arrangements such practice will be essential to ensure that the level of relief only applies for the duration of time for which the service is deemed appropriate.

7.2 The practice of carrying out reviews on all clients discharged from hospital will undoubtedly place extra demands on Home Support Managers. The full extent of this cannot be gauged at present, however, if this proves to be problematic it may be necessary to report fuller to the Social Work Committee to advise whether or not additional staff resources are required as a result of this initiative.

## **8 IMPLEMENTATION**

8.1 The free home care measurements for people leaving hospital, came into operation on 1 June 2001.

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Committee is requested to:

- a) approve the exemption arrangements outlined in this report, to take effect from 1 June 2001; and
- b) otherwise note the report

*V Somers*

*JD*

**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**17 May 2001**

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