

REPORT

TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: "HOMING IN ON CARE – A REVIEW OF HOME CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE"
FROM: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
DATE: 20 DECEMBER 2001	REF: MF/CC	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of a national review of home care completed by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Audit Commission for Scotland. The Report was published on 23 November 2001.
- 1.2 This report also notes levels of home care service activity in North Lanarkshire, and draws comparison with national figures for home care services in Scotland.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Audit Scotland study focused on home care services for older people (aged 65 and over) provided by Scottish local authorities. The review also contributed the Councils' own Best Value reviews of home care services by providing a framework and methodology for assessing the quality and cost of home care services for older people.
- 2.2 In particular, the study aimed to:
 - ◆ Investigate the range of home care services provided by Councils
 - ◆ Survey service users' and carers' views on services provided
 - ◆ Develop quality and cost performance indicators to enable comparison of home care services provided by different Councils
 - ◆ Promote service efficiencies in managing home care services
 - ◆ Disseminate examples of good practice in the delivery and commissioning of home care services.
- 2.3 The Project team worked with six volunteer Councils across Scotland which were undertaking Best Value reviews of their home care services during 2000-2001, namely Dundee, Fife, Orkney Islands, Scottish Borders, West Dunbarton and North Lanarkshire. Information about their home care services was obtained in four ways:
 - ◆ Review of documentation produced by Councils relating to home care services
 - ◆ Semi-structured interviews with a range of employees involved in commissioning, managing and delivering home care services
 - ◆ Questionnaires being sent to a sample of service users, carers, home care employees and care managers.
 - ◆ Collection of basic data from each Council about how their home care services are delivered.
- 2.4 The findings of the national review will inform the North Lanarkshire Council Best Value Review.

3. SUMMARY FINDINGS

- 3.1 The key messages from the national report are detailed within five broad areas.
- 3.2 **Achieving the Right Balance of Care**
- 3.3 The study revealed that twice as many older people receive home care services than residential or nursing home care. Getting the right balance between institutional care and non-institutional care services has been an issue for the past decade. Home care services are central to achieving a shift in the balance of care. The direction taken by North Lanarkshire Council has been to increase the number of hours service to individual service users so that an increasing number can remain within their own homes safely. During the period of study 15% of service users within North Lanarkshire received more than 10 hours of service per week. The current percentage stands at 20% well above the national average of 16%.
- 3.4 In keeping with the direction overall, service users within North Lanarkshire currently receive an average of 8.3 hours of service per week, compared to the national average of 6.0 hours.
- 3.5 The study showed that at a national level, expenditure on home care for older people increased by 10% between 1997/98 and 1999/2000, from around £110 million to £122 million. However, the variation in spending is more marked at a local level with almost one in three Councils showing a decrease in expenditure over the same period.
- 3.6 Information regarding expenditure on home care for older people was obtained from Local Government Finance Statistics which had been adjusted to reflect current prices using GDP deflators. This resulted in North Lanarkshire Council showing a net reduction in expenditure of 2% between 1997-98 and 1999-2000.
- 3.7 However, within North Lanarkshire Council there has been a year on year increase in the amount spent on direct provision of service to older people. The expenditure on these services for the current financial year amounts to 7.5 million. New monies will increase this figure to a projected expenditure of £10.9 million by 2003.
- 3.8 **Delivering a Quality Home Care Service**
- 3.9 The study revealed that older people are over-whelmingly positive about their individual home care workers and value the staff and service highly.
- 3.10 On the other hand the study also highlighted the need for Councils to place a greater emphasis on listening to service users and involving them more fully in planning their own care. Service users place great importance on the availability of a service which can respond flexibly to their needs, including flexibility in the types of tasks undertaken and the times at which home care is provided.
- 3.11 The study highlights that in 2000, 90% of home care was delivered between 7am and 7pm, with 72% delivered between 7am and 2pm. However, between 1999 and 2000, there was an increase at a national level in the proportion of home care hours delivered out of hours (between 7pm and 7am), from almost 1.4 million hours (7%) to over 2 million hours (10%). This reflected a positive move in some Councils to deliver more services out of hours.
- 3.12 The need for greater flexibility had been recognised by North Lanarkshire Council in the Home Care Review and a number of steps have already been taken to respond. The creation of an Out of Hours Management Structure to provide support and guidance to service users, carers and employees, and the change in conditions of service for Home Support Workers from Manual to APT & C (Residential) has enabled more flexible and responsive working.
- 3.13 Currently within North Lanarkshire 200 service users get over 20 hours service every week; in excess of 1,000 service users receive support Out of Hours and over the weekend (representing 29.8% of service users); and 28,850 visits are made by Home Support Workers to older people every week.
- 3.14 **Managing The Home Care Service**

- 3.15 The study recognised that home care services are complex to manage even without the need to increase and diversify provision. Large numbers of staff are employed, most of whom work part-time, and home care serve a large number of people with many and varied needs that will change over time. The study underlines the importance of good management information systems which should be integrated into other IT Systems within the Council, including payroll and service user charging systems. This is recognised by North Lanarkshire Council and since its inception steps have been taken to continuously improve in this area of activity.
- 3.16 The study highlighted the good practice within North Lanarkshire Council and acknowledged the commitment of Elected Members in recognising the value of information and the financial commitment involved in establishing good quality systems.
- 3.17 The study made special mention of the North Lanarkshire Council SWIS 2000 system, integrated information on activity, charging, service user information payroll. This is detailed as a specific Case Study within the Audit Scotland Report .
- 3.18 Areas highlighted by the study where there is a need for Councils to improve performance are:
- ◆ Need for formal supervision of home support workers
 - ◆ More regular reviews of service user needs
 - ◆ Improved communication between Home Support Managers and Home Support Workers
 - ◆ Recruitment, training and retention of staff.
- 3.19 The above areas are being addressed within the Council's Best Value review of Home Care services, the findings of which will be the subject of a Report to Committee in February 2002.
- 3.20 Joint Working**
- 3.21 Home care staff need to work on a day to day basis with professional staff from a number of different agencies who also deliver services to older people in their own homes. During 2000, in addition to the 20 million hours of home care delivered by Councils, health visitors and district nurses made over 3.4 million home visits to older people. This highlights the need for good communication and joint working between social work and health, and indeed other agencies involved in caring for people.
- 3.22 The recommendations of the Joint Futures Group require Councils and Health authorities to put in place effective response teams to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital, to facilitate early supported discharge from hospital and provide intensive home care to enable older people to remain living safely within their own as an alternative to institutional care. Within North Lanarkshire all of the above recommendations are in place.
- 3.23 The study underlines the recommendation of the Joint Future Group that the sharing of information via a joint case record, including a shared care plan, would provide a vehicle for improving communication amongst agencies.
- 3.24 The study made special mention of the shared electronic record currently being designed by North Lanarkshire Council Social Work and Health in Lanarkshire. This is detailed as a specific Case Study exemplifying good practice within the Audit Scotland Report.
- 3.25 Cost and Charging for Home Care**
- 3.26 The study acknowledged that while the quality and effectiveness of home care services are paramount, it is also important to manage the cost of the service. To do so Councils require to have in place robust management information systems which provide good financial information. The progress made within North Lanarkshire is highlighted within the study Report.
- 3.27 With regard to charging for services the study reviewed the charging policies in 23 Councils which showed the wide variation among these Councils in how charges are made for home care.

The study recommends that COSLA should develop guidance on charging policies to reduce inconsistencies in how Councils charge for home care.

3.28 The impact on North Lanarkshire Council of any guidance on charging policies developed by COSLA will be the subject of a future Committee Report.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1.1 This Report by Audit Scotland provides important and helpful information on Home Care services in North Lanarkshire and in a variety of other authorities. It helps shape the future direction of services and informs thinking in relation to Best Value consideration.

4.1.2 Joint working between the Social Work Department and Audit Scotland on this important area of work has also helped to lend an objective external influence to the Best Value Review of Home Care Services and is in keeping with best practice in reviews of this kind.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that:

a) Committee note the contents of this report.



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November, 2001

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