

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATION SERVICES IN SCOTLAND: A SURVEY OF WAITING TIMES FOR SOCIAL WORK PROVISION
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 28 FEBRUARY 2002	Ref: SK/DM	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the findings of a Scottish Executive survey of waiting times for the provision of equipment and adaptations in Scotland.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. This report is a response to the previous Minister for Health and Community Care, who asked the Social Work Services Inspectorate for Scotland to investigate how long people are waiting to receive occupational therapy services across the country. Local authorities are not individually identified in the report.
- 2.2. The reference to Social Work provision in the title of the report is misleading. Community care assessments are carried out by Social Work that may result in recommendations for the provision of equipment and/or adaptations. The responsibility for providing equipment rests with Social Work or Health, depending on the nature of the equipment. Responsibility for funding adaptations rests with Housing if the property is Council owned or owner-occupied. If a person with a disability lives in Housing Association stock it is the responsibility of the landlord to arrange adaptations, usually through Communities Scotland (formerly Scottish Homes) funding.
- 2.3. The importance of equipment and adaptation provision in community care has long been recognised in helping people to maintain their independence, improve their quality of life, and either prevent admission to hospital care and/or facilitate speedy discharge home.
- 2.4. The findings are particularly relevant to the agenda for change recommended in "Community Care: A Joint Future" report, which proposed joint services for equipment and adaptations.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. The main findings of the research include:

- ◆ Waiting times for a range of equipment and adaptations are highly variable and often long, making provision unpredictable
- ◆ The provision of adaptations experiences far greater waiting problems than the provision of equipment; sometimes this is associated with the complexity of the alterations required but mainly because of authorisation of funding.

- ◆ Joint equipment stores and other methods of sharing resources have worked in some places, particularly for the provision of equipment, but they do not guarantee quicker or more streamlined provision.
 - ◆ The main point of delay in service provision tends to be at the point of funding authorisation and this is worse in areas where funding decisions have not been delegated down from senior management.
 - ◆ There is evidence of joint working, to a greater and lesser extents, in almost all local authorities. The arrangements vary from simple co-ordination and communication to sophisticated joint working arrangements and systems.
 - ◆ Many local authorities found it difficult to provide the information requested.
- 3.2. North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department has already reviewed its equipment and adaptation service in partnership with Health, Housing and user and carer representatives. The new Joint Equipment Service will operate from the Store in Fern Street, Motherwell, providing a service across North Lanarkshire.
- 3.3. Single shared assessment is essential to ensuring that improvements to equipment and adaptation provision are about a better joined up service and not merely a joint store facility. North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department has introduced single shared assessment in the Multi-Sector Project based in Airdrie. It is anticipated that this model will eventually be rolled out across the authority.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no resource implications arising from the specific contents of this report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



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Director of Social Work
21 January 2002

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