

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT & ADAPTATIONS : PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 28 AUGUST 2003	Ref: SKMCD/ST

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. To advise Committee of progress in implementing the Joint Equipment Service and to provide an up date of information relating to the provision of adaptations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A report to the Social Work and Housing Committees in October 1999 identified a number of issues relating to the assessment and provision of community equipment and adaptations. Committee approved a recommendation to establish a joint Member/Officer working group. The decisions of the group were agreed by Committee in November 2000 and have been the subject of regular progress reports to Committee since that time.
- 2.2. As reported by the Joint Future Group, the Scottish Executive requires agencies to jointly resource and manage equipment and adaptation services.
- 2.3. Audit Scotland is currently undertaking a baseline review of community equipment and adaptation services across Scotland which will examine how joint working is progressing at the local level, and how well such services are being managed. The report is expected at the end of 2003.

3. PROPOSALS/CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Service Developments

- 3.1.1 The Joint Equipment Service (JES) has been operational since May 2002. The Joint Partnership Board meets every six weeks to monitor performance in relation to budgets and service provision, which is provided by the Joint Equipment Stores' stock control system (MESALS 2000). Discussions with the company responsible for this system are taking place about the installation of an upgraded version. During these discussions a number of issues were highlighted and are in the process of being addressed prior to the upgrade going ahead.

- 3.1.2 The measured term contract for major items of equipment has been in place since August 2002, and includes some equipment funded via Health. Meetings are held approximately every 6 weeks with the contractor to monitor contract performance. This is the end of the first year of this three year fixed term contract and in conjunction with the Contracts and Monitoring Section, the company's performance is being evaluated.
- 3.1.3 The S.A.I.L (Support and Advice for Independent Living) Service is being accessed by a range of people including;
- Occupational Therapists who are trying out large equipment such as stairlifts and throughfloor lifts with service users
 - Area team staff who are using the meeting space for retraining and refresher courses on equipment
 - Rehabilitation and Mobility Officers from the Sensory Impairment Teams who are carrying out individual programmes with young people
 - Sensory Impairment staff who have weekly sessions for people with hearing impairment to try out a range of specialist equipment
 - A variety of local groups who have booked the meeting space.

The Mobile Unit goes out on a planned programme every month with staff from S.A.I.L and supported by staff from the area teams. A specific database has been designed by IT staff which will provide management information on the use and performance of the service. One of the Disability Information Worker posts will shortly become vacant and recruitment to this post will take place as soon as possible to minimise disruption to service.

3.2. Assessment

- 3.2.1 The next round of intensive training for Single Shared Assessment for older people will commence in September 2003. Staff from the JES are involved in this training. Support for staff undertaking these assessments is being offered locally via the Local Care Partnerships.
- 3.2.2 Referrals for simple equipment from hospital based occupational therapists continue to be processed via Reception Services without the need for further assessment by social work staff. In addition, early discussions have begun with NHS Lanarkshire in relation to the remit of occupational therapy services in both agencies.
- 3.2.3 The Department has appointed 4 Occupational Therapists from the recent recruitment process who will be located in Airdrie, Cumbernauld, Coatbridge and Motherwell.

3.3. Equipment and Minor Adaptation Provision

- 3.3.1 Performance information from the JES Stock System continues to indicate the following level of activity in relation to the provision of equipment:
- a) an average 1900 referrals per month since opening in May 2002.
 - b) approximately 2400 items of equipment are delivered per month.
- 3.3.2 Equipment is regularly returned to the Joint Equipment Store for recycling and reissue, however it is not yet possible to demonstrate what impact this has on service provision. Work requires to be undertaken to establish a recycling policy which would include for example, which items are recycled, what the criteria for recycling are, what the costs are per item and the impact this has on the overall service provision.
- 3.3.3 The current budget for Equipment and Minor Adaptations is just over £1.7 M (this includes £200,000 for Service and Maintenance via the Minnivor Contract and £22,300 for Hearing Impairment Equipment.) This budget is unable to meet the level of assessed need and in recent years non-recurring resources have been used to meet the difference.
- 3.3.4 In 2002/3 an additional £1.7 M was made available to the Joint Equipment Service as a result of virement by Committee on 22nd August 2002, 19th December 2002 and 27th February 2003.
- 3.3.5 The current spend on equipment and minor adaptations to date is £1,321,203. Based on this level of spend additional investment will be required to meet anticipated assessed need to 31st March 2004.

3.4 Major Adaptations

- 3.4.1 Whilst a number of improvements to the major adaptation service were implemented as a result of the Equipment and Adaptations Working Group, the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services has enabled a range of work to be undertaken in relation to further improvements that could be made. These will be the subject of a separate report to Committee.
- 3.4.2 In 2002/3 an additional £305,000 was made on a non-recurring basis, from slippage in the funding of new developments to Housing and Property Services. It should be noted that this does not address current assessed need.
- 3.4.3 The Home Improvement Grant scheme, which operates for people living in the private sector, is managed by the Grants Section in Housing and Property Services. Grant applicants can apply for additional funding for work which is not covered by the amount made available via the grant. These are commonly referred to as Top Up amounts. In June 2001, responsibility for management of the Top Up budget transferred from Social Work to Housing and Property Services together with £50,000.

- 3.4.4 This budget is also insufficient to meet assessed need, and in 2002/3 an additional £70,000 was made available to Housing and Property Services on a non-recurring basis (from slippage in the funding of new developments) which allowed the waiting list to be addressed.
- 3.4.5 In the current year, the base budget of £50,00 has already been spent and there are 58 grant applications requesting Top Up funds with a value of £96, 798.
- 3.4.6 A new grant regime comes into force on 1st October 2003 which will impact on the current Top Up arrangements. Work is currently underway to look at the implications this will have for North Lanarkshire Council and the options available to take this forward.
- 3.4.7. A sampling exercise was recently undertaken to investigate the circumstances of the people on the adaptation waiting list (both local authority and private properties) with a priority score of less than 20. Whilst the sample was relatively small, the results demonstrated that in all cases people are waiting for shower provision. In all sample cases people had been assessed by an occupational therapist and had either been using equipment or had tried a range of equipment during the assessment process and this did not meet their needs.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.4. Committee is asked to note:

- (i) that significant additional investment will be required to meet the potential assessed need for equipment and adaptations as well as the increased demand for services. (15 – 20% per annum)
- (ii) And otherwise note the contents of this report.



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1 August 2003

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