

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 24

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 15 JANUARY 2004	Ref: ST	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. To advise Committee of the findings of the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services and to seek approval of the recommendations and implementation arrangements.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. On 14 May 2002, the Council's Policy and Resources Committee agreed a report which outlined progress to date in the completion of Best Value Service Reviews. It also approved guidelines for staff undertaking Best Value Reviews and set out priorities for reviews during 2002 / 3.
- 2.2. Social work services to people with physical disabilities were prioritised for review, and this was subsequently broadened to include services to people with brain injury and / or sensory impairment.
- 2.3. The review has taken place within the context of a range of service improvement activities which have already been undertaken within the Social Work Department. eg the creation of the Joint Equipment Service following the Officer / Member Review of Equipment and Adaptation Services.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Steering Group Membership

A steering group was formed to lead the review process with participation by key stakeholders as follows:

- people with disabilities, including service users (Lanarkshire Community Care Forum)
- carers (North Lanarkshire Carers Together)
- North Lanarkshire Council (Social Work, Community Services, Housing)
- NHS Lanarkshire
- Further Education Colleges

3.2 Scope of the Review

The review focused on four specific areas of service including:

- adaptations service
- brain injury service
- sensory impairment teams (visual impairment and hearing impairment)
- day services (Alexander Resource Centre (Physical Disability Service), Coatbridge and Five Day Service, Wishaw)

The Review group recognised that the needs of people with disabilities extend beyond these service areas and for this reason, it was agreed that the review would provide opportunities to gather evidence about needs / difficulties / issues which may require to be addressed and work which would extend beyond the remit of the review.

3.3 Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

The following objectives were established:

- to identify current performance relating to the four areas of service (outlined above)
- to identify the needs / issues of people with disabilities
- to identify improvements / opportunities which will lead to better service delivery
- to identify gaps in service provision
- to identify issues for further review / development

The Steering Group agreed that the following specific outcomes would be achieved:

- to develop continuous improvement plans for the four specific areas of service
- to evidence needs / issues which will inform the future development of a strategic plan for independent living services.

3.4 Values / Principles

The work of the review took place within clearly agreed and understood values and principles, which also helped to shape recommendations. This included a commitment to recognise disabled people as valued citizens, who have the right to live inclusive lives within their local communities in North Lanarkshire. The review recognised the importance of equality of opportunity and the need for each individual to have their needs considered in the context of their unique circumstances and lifestyles.

3.5 Methods

Various methods were adopted in gathering evidence. This ensured involvement / participation by as many people as possible in at least one of the methods adopted. There was an exceptionally high degree of interest in all aspects of the review. For example at the Open Space Event in June 2003, over 160 people attended. The methods used included:

- service profiles
- sub groups (which made use of focus groups, questionnaires, etc)
- mapping exercises
- benchmarking
- option appraisal
- open space event
- independent facilitation
- needs identification projects

3.6 Summary of findings

The review generated a considerable amount of material which evidences peoples experiences of current services. The specific issues raised by users and carers about existing services included:

- Despite the positive efforts of staff, existing day services limit the opportunities made available to people
- Lack of clarity about the support available from the Brain Injury Project
- A lack of flexible, age appropriate respite services
- A need for improved information, support and training for carers
- Younger people want an opportunity to get real jobs
- A lack of communication support, particularly British Sign Language Interpreters
- The need for quicker and easier access to Social Workers, and a stronger focus on individual planning and support
- Delays in getting assessed for and provided with adaptations
- The need for improved housing and roads design
- Difficulties in getting access to appropriate transport
- Access to services and opportunities is problematic for a range of reasons eg lack of information, poor physical access
- Lack of health input for people with brain injury, both treatment and rehabilitation
- Lack of understanding of community based staff about disability, particularly, brain injury and deafblindness.

3.7 Recommendations

The recommendations made following the Best Value Review are wide ranging, and include simple low cost ideas about service improvements, and creative ideas about significant areas of service development. The details of the recommendations are outlined at Appendix 1, and cover the following key themes:

- Independent Living Strategy
- Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements
- Involvement / Participation
- Training
- Advocacy
- Further Education
- Access
- Transport
- Person Centred Approaches
- Information
- Respite / Short Breaks
- Equipment
- Major Adaptations
- Day Services
- Communication Support
- Sensory Impairment Services
- Brain injury

3.8 Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

The Best Value Review highlighted the need for a clear strategic direction for Independent Living Services in North Lanarkshire. For this reason, it is recommended that the work of the review is continued via an implementation group. This group would be responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating progress. The group would include representatives from social work, housing, community service, education, further education and health. The group would also include

the active participation of service users (including young people) and carers and should have appropriate representation from the independent sector. It is anticipated that the implementation group would provide support and information to Local Care Partnerships in the development of independent living services at a local level.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. A range of service improvements / developments have been recommended by the Best Value Review. These recommendations are consistent with national legislation and policy, and with the Council's approach to providing care in the community and social inclusion.
- 4.2. Many of these recommendations can be achieved at no additional costs due to the improvements being dependent upon changes in operational practice and improved partnership working. This will be progressed as part of the implementation plan.
- 4.3. Some service developments can be achieved without additional resources as existing services can be redesigned to improve the way in which services are provided. This will be the subject of a future report to Committee.
- 4.4. On 28 August 2003, Social Work Committee approved a report on service developments which indicated that existing community care monies would be allocated to the provision of independent living services to :
 - Consolidate the Joint Equipment Service
 - Strengthen services for people with sensory impairment
 - Introducing a community support model for people with physical disabilities
 - Enhancing assessment and care management capacity
 - Improving short break opportunities

A total of £250,000 has been allocated for this purpose, and specific proposals will be the subject of a future Committee report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the contents of this report
- (ii) approve the recommendations outlined at section 3
- (iii) approve the implementation arrangements set out at paragraph 3.8
- (iv) request that the Director of Social Work submits regular progress reports on :
 - the implementation of the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services, and
 - approval for the use of the funding made available.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
20 November 2003

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor, Manager, Community Care (Adults) TEL: (01698 332177)