

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT & MINOR ADAPTATIONS : PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 28 October 2004	Ref: ST/SKMCD	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To advise Committee of progress in establishing the Joint Equipment Service (JES), and in developing the equipment and adaptations service.

2. Background

2.1. The Joint Equipment Service opened in May 2002, as a result of recommendations made by the joint Member/Officer working group, which reported to Social Work and Housing Committees in November 2000.

2.2 The need to jointly resource and manage equipment and adaptation services is a requirement set out by the Scottish Executive in the context of a Joint Future.

3. Proposals/Considerations

3.1 Service Developments

3.1.1 The Joint Equipment Service (JES) has now been operational for just over 2 years and the volume of work has significantly increased in that time. This is a result of the increasing levels of assessed need as the balance of care shifts from hospital to community and the availability of additional budget on a non-recurring basis year on year to meet that need.

3.1.2 Further, as single shared assessment has been rolled out, there are more assessors accessing the service. In addition, new technologies such as Assistive Living Technology, which have been developed since the JES was recommended, place more demands on the service.

3.1.3 The Best Value Review of Independent Living Services has provided an opportunity to review service provision and identify areas which are working well, and those which require to be revised.

3.1.4 As previously reported to Committee, work has been undertaken at a local level to support this which includes:

- The Joint Partnership Action Plan which prioritised the scoping of existing business, administrative processes and training requirements.
- A Business Process Engineering scoping exercise.
- Development of draft policies and standards including a recycling policy.

3.1.5 A joint bid was made to the Changing Children's Services Fund (CSSF) by the Social Work and Education Departments in relation to equipment and adaptations. Funding of £190,000 was approved, and an audit of existing Education Department equipment is being finalised as part of the consideration to provide this service via the JES in the future.

3.1.6 Audit Scotland published their report of community equipment and adaptation services in August 2004. The report, "Adapting to the Future. Management of Community Equipment and Adaptations, a baseline report" highlights the increasing demand made on this service nationally:

- Approximately a third of Scottish households contain at least one person with a long term illness, health problem or disability.
- 1 in 3 adults with such difficulties have equipment or adaptations in their home.
- The need for services rise with age and the number of people aged over 65 years will rise by 46% from 2002-2027 (currently 70% of service provision from the JES is to people over 65 years.)

3.1.7 The main findings of the report include:

- Community equipment and adaptations make a positive difference to peoples lives
- The services are fragmented and the split in responsibilities is unhelpful for users and providers alike
- Access to information about the service is poor
- There is poor management and performance information about the service, e.g. it is estimated that the spend on service was in excess of £30M annually across Scotland in 2001/2, but this is an incomplete figure due to the gaps in Housing and NHS information.
- There is a lack of common definitions making benchmarking difficult.
- Councils and NHS bodies could consult more effectively with service users.
- There is a lack of written policy/procedure to deal with repairs and faulty equipment and recycling.
- Most social work staff carry out follow up visits to ensure what has been issued meets a persons' needs. This is less common for NHS staff.

3.1.8 The recommendations of the report are wide ranging and for Council's and the NHS include:

- Councils and NHS bodies should jointly publish comprehensive information on community equipment and adaptation services.
- Councils should ensure that users have information on direct payments and their use for equipment / adaptations and assess whether self assessment / selection could improve efficiency of providing low risk, low cost items.
- Clarify partnership arrangements for the assessment and provision of community equipment / adaptations and formalise these arrangements in agreed policies and procedures.
- Councils and NHS bodies should jointly review budgets for community equipment and adaptations and Housing Improvement Grants to ensure that they are set at a realistic level to meet need.
- Develop joint performance indicators so the service can be evaluated across a partnership area.
- Councils and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) should work together to assess the need for major adaptations in the future.
- Councils and NHS bodies should ensure that written instructions on using equipment / adaptations are always provided for users and carers, and trained staff always demonstrate their use.
- Review user needs once equipment / adaptations have been supplied.

3.1.9 The Scottish Executive should:

- Update national guidance on roles and responsibilities, which reflect the new ways of working, promoted by the Joint Future Agenda, local government reorganisation and developments in technology.
- Produce and disseminate national guidelines on decontamination and infection control of community equipment and adaptations.
- Ensure that Medical Device Alerts are issued to Scottish Councils as well as to the NHS in Scotland

3.1.10 These recommendations together with the evidence gathered locally will be incorporated into the work of the Best Value Implementation Group on how best to manage implementing them, and any organisational and resource implications in doing so.

3.2. Equipment and Minor Adaptations Provision (Social Work)

3.2.1 The current budget for Equipment and Minor Adaptations is just over £1.7M (this includes £200,000 for Service and Maintenance via the Minnivor Contract and £22,300 for Hearing Impairment Equipment). This is being uplifted by additional non-recurring monies via the Corporate Management Team of £161,000 (2003/4 balance approved growth brought forward), and £850,000 (approved by Personnel and Resource (Finance) subgroup on 1.6.04.). This takes the total budget for 2004/5 to £2,711,000.

3.2.2 At 8th September 2004, the spend on Equipment and Minor Adaptations for 2004/5 was £766,162 and there is a committed spend of £781,252 (total spend of £1,547,414). The costs of the additional temporary staff (part year) and vehicles approved at Committee on 28th August 2004 are £49,263, which leaves a balance of £1,114,324.

3.2.3 Based on the above total spend (actual and committed) to date, less the approved balance brought forward from 2003/4 (£166,000) there is a projected shortfall of £604,393 to the year end. This is based on an average monthly total spend of £276,282 over the remaining 7 months of 2004/5.

3.3 Major Adaptations (Housing)

3.3.1 The budget provision for Local Authority properties for 2004/5 is £2,758,000. The waiting list value is £1,387,722. There are 47 people waiting with a points value of 20 and above, and 855 people waiting with a points value of 19 and below.

3.3.2 The budget provision for private sector adaptations via the Grants Section is £860,000. At the end of August 2004, the spend was £315,000 and the committed spend was £360,000 (total £675,000). These figures do not include the value of grants that have been offered but not yet accepted (£178,000) or the value of estimated grants in the pipeline (£885,000). It should be noted that the difficulties in meeting assessed needs for private adaptations was the subject of a separate report to the Housing and Technical Services Committee on 9th August 2004, and has been remitted to Social Work Committee of 28th October 2004.

- 3.3.3 These figures continue to highlight the increasing level of demand for adaptations with the corresponding shortfall in resources to meet this demand.
- 3.3.4 In addition, it has previously been reported to Committee that the new means testing regime for Home Improvement Grants may impact significantly on disabled children and their families, as the additional costs of raising a child with disabilities is not usually taken into account. This is beginning to be borne out with at least one family currently unable to meet their contribution of £11,000. This is being addressed locally within the team to see how the Council can assist.
- 3.3.5 In Northern Ireland disabled children are now exempt from the means testing regime due to similar difficulties.

4. **Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

- 4.1. The approach to the provision of equipment and adaptations in North Lanarkshire is consistent with legislation and national policy.
- 4.2. The recommendations within the Audit Scotland will be addressed within the Best Value Review Implementation Group, but consideration is required to investigate options to ensure that the recommendations are taken forward across Departments and agencies
- 4.3. There continues to be an increasing demand and need for this service, which has significant implications for the resources of the Council. This has been reported to Committee on a regular basis. There is a projected shortfall of £604,393 at the year end which is based on the current level of total spend (actual and committed) to date.

5. **Recommendation**

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
- (i) note the level of demand for equipment and adaptations, and on the Joint Equipment Service in particular;
 - (ii) note that the Equipment and Adaptation budget has been uplifted for 2004/5 on a non recurring basis;
 - (iii) ask that the Director of Social Work provides a future report on the implementation of the Audit Scotland recommendations; and
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
10 September 2004

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor on telephone 01698- 332177 or Susan Kelso-McDonald on telephone 01698 332633.