

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

Social Work Committee : Operations and Services Sub Committee 9th November, 1999.	Subject : Merrystone House, Coatbridge - Progress Report
From : Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work Prepared by : Jim Nisbet, Principal Officer, Community Care	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of progress made towards the development of Merrystone House, Coatbridge as a specialist Home Care Resource Centre.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 A series of reports have previously been presented to Committee in relation to the Department's review of home care services. As the review moved to an implementation phase, the importance of the role of Merrystone House as a central support unit for some specialist home care services has been recognised and also reported to Committee.

2.2 Merrystone House is a former Council run residential home for older people, situated in Coatbridge. On the closure of Merrystone House, a commitment was given to retain the resource for community care services and, until recently, the building was used as a dementia day care service for older people. That dementia day care service was to new purpose built accommodation in August, 1999 and was the subject of a report to Committee in the last cycle. The transfer of service has enabled Merrystone to be utilised as a specialist home care resource, following a period of adaptation and refurbishment.

2.3 A range of services, designed to support the are task of providing care to a range of vulnerable clients in their own homes, will be provided from Merrystone. The following services will operate from the centre:

- North Lanarkshire Community Alarm Service central control centre and Mobile Response Teams.
- All Home Care Services operating Out Of Hours, i.e. evenings and weekends.
- Intensive Home Care Services
- Supported Living Services.
- Dementia Development Co-ordination.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Given the range, scale, complexity and technology involved in services to be provided from Merrystone, the task of developing the centre is significant. The situation has been further complicated in terms of new technology requirements by concerns about the potential impact of the millenium on telecommunications services. As a result, a timescale of the end of November, 1999 has been set for installation of infrastructure services to the Centre.
- 3.2 Refurbishment and equipping/fitting out the building has been achieved using a project management approach and involving Social Work, Property Services and Information Technology Services departments of the Council, together with private sector contractors such as Tunstall Telecom who have the contract for the provision of the Community Alarm hardware.
- 3.3 The building itself is almost completely refurbished and all of the Community alarm service hardware will have been installed by mid November, 1999. This will enable all 3,500 client details to be installed on computer and all community alarms in clients homes to be reprogrammed within the deadline of end of November, 1999.
- 3.4 Over 80% of the staffing establishment has been filled and staff are undergoing programmes of induction with formal training on their specific roles and responsibilities also taking place in November, 1999.
- 3.5 The Community Alarm Service will be operational by end of November, 1999 with the service incrementally transferring from the former authority's system on a day by day basis. All 3,500 clients, and any new clients, will have transferred to the North Lanarkshire Council call centre by end of January, 2000.
- 3.6 Out of Hours home care services are presently provided by home helps based from area teams. Such services would benefit from on call support, particularly at times of crisis and to date this has only been available from the Regional Stand By Service.
- The Council's new Out of Hours service will be able to support staff, existing clients and carers and new clients and carers at all times when staff are engaged in home care duties.
- 3.7 Out of Hours services will transfer from area teams on an incremental, team by team basis, with the first service transferring before the end of the calendar year and all teams will have transferred by the end of the financial year.
- The majority of Out of Hours managers have yet to be recruited but most will be in post by early December, 1999.
- 3.8 The Intensive Home Care service has been operational since March, 1999 and is expected to reach its capacity of 40 clients during this financial year. Early indications are that the service is appropriately targeted, ensuring that people with intensive support needs who wish to remain at home are able to do so.
- 3.9 Supported Living services and the role of Dementia development Co-ordinator have yet to be fully implemented in Merrystone. Further work is required in relation to these developments.

3.10 Details of the Personnel and Finance aspects of the individual projects have previously been reported to Committee.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Support services provided from Merrystone centre will have a significant role in meeting the community care needs of some of the most vulnerable people in society.

The range of services provided complements core home care and community care services and will make a valuable contribution to community care in North Lanarkshire.

4.2 The potential for Merrystone services to link with a range of community health supports has already been the subject of informal discussion between social work and health colleagues. Any proposals from such discussions will be presented to Committee in due course.

4.4 Innovations in Merrystone have already come to the attention of researchers and publishers in the field of community care, demonstrating their uniqueness and a high regard for the Council's approach.

5. RECOMMENDATION

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



JD
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