

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE (ICES)

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

14TH DECEMBER, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note changes proposed by central government to the delivery of community equipment services nationally and to highlight pressures on the pooled revenue budget and requirement for capital investment.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendations

- THAT (a) the premises and transport issues facing the Integrated Community Equipment Service be noted and that these form part of the Council's forthcoming scheme selection process for future capital projects;**
- (b) the associated staffing/revenue costs of £37,000 be included in the Council's budget allocation process;**
- (c) the initial Government guidance regarding the role of the Third Sector in equipment service be noted and that a further report be made on these options once the full guidance is available; and**
- (d) the progress made on the action plan from the Cabinet report of 20th April 2006 at Appendix 1 be noted.**

Reasons

Since the Cabinet report on 20th April, new Government guidance has been published which indicates a greatly enhanced role for the Third Sector.

A successful local pilot of a new method of delivery/fitting has demonstrated efficiencies; however, in order to progress, this model requires additional capital and revenue investment.

Potential has been identified to extend the services to include those currently provided by partner organisations. However, the current site restricts these being developed.

Considerations

1. Community Equipment is at the heart of enabling people with disabilities to maintain independence and to stay in their homes for longer. Government research has shown that most people would prefer to be looked after at home, rather than in a care setting.
2. Equipment supports hospital discharge and enables palliative care to be carried out at home. The timely provision of equipment creates savings for both health and social care budgets.
3. The Government announced in June 2006, the “Transforming Community Equipment Services Project”, which proposes a greatly expanded role for the Third Sector. The Project will produce a new service delivery model by autumn, 2007, together with a business case, a contracting package and strategies and frameworks for implementation and change. Although it is not yet clear what form a new model for service delivery will be, it will be important that the premises and other facilities of Herefordshire’s Community Equipment Service are fit for purpose and meet the minimum quality standards likely to be defined by the Project.
4. The Community Equipment Store has recently been the subject of a consultancy exercise, which has been reviewing the procurement process. Recommendations have been made which will bring efficiency savings.
5. An Infection Control audit was carried out on the Store premises in March of this year and a number of recommendations were made to minimise the risks to service users and staff.
6. The current service provides equipment for home nursing, to maintain independence, for intermediate care, for children with disabilities, specialist seating for schools, minor adaptations (through Private Sector Housing and the [You@Home](#) agency)
 - The service recycles equipment items through collection, cleaning and decontamination, servicing and maintenance schedules, repair and refurbishment. Clean, safe, serviceable equipment is returned to stock for further use.
 - The service does not currently provide the following services: Short term loan wheelchairs, mobility/walking aids and access to the Wheelchair Service (NHS provision for permanent wheelchair users). These are provided separately by Herefordshire Primary Care Trust.
7. In 2005/6, the service received 9,591 referrals and issued 13,238 items of equipment on loan. This showed an increase of 10% and 39% respectively over the previous year. 94% of the equipment issued was delivered and fitted, within the 7 days prescribed by BVPI 56. In the same period, 8,867 items were collected because they were no longer needed. This was an 18% increase on 2004/5.
 - In 2005/6, the ratio of collections to issues was 67%. This is the highest rate of any other ICES within the West Midlands and Trent region, defined by the National Association of Equipment Providers (NAEP).

Current and Future Service Demands

8. The revenue budget for the past two years has been bolstered by £100,000 of capital in each year, which has been used to make purchases of single, expensive items of equipment, which have an expected life of up to 10 years. Herefordshire PCT has contributed a one-off payment of £100,000 in 2005-06 for the purchase of equipment.
- There is growing demand to support the key priority of the Helping People to Live at Home agenda. This is borne out by the increase in activity shown above. Budgetary growth year on year has been restricted to standard, inflationary uplift, with no additional funding to facilitate growth in demand.
 - The needs analysis work undertaken by Herefordshire Council identifies a shift in the demographics of our area, impacting on demand for the future, especially in the older age groups.
 - Joint Finance funding for the key post of Partnership manager will cease at the end of this financial year. This will be brought to the attention of the Section 31 partners.
 - The Community Equipment Store currently operates two vehicles and provides a delivery and collection service. It delivers, but does not fit equipment items ready for use. This function is carried out by the requesting professional.
 - The service successfully ran a short pilot project in 2005/6 to deliver and fit (i.e. make ready for use) equipment direct to service users. During the pilot 156 items were delivered and fitted, of which 68.5% were delivered and fitted within 1 day and a further 27.6% within 2 days. In these cases, fitting would previously have been carried out by an Occupational Therapist, whose time was released to carryout assessments. Funding, both capital and revenue, is required to make this an integral part of the core service.
 - These pressures will be highlighted to the Section 31 Agreement partners as part of the annual budget-setting process.
 - The service is currently restricted to the hours of 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, five days per week.

Site Restrictions

9. ICES occupies a part of the Unit 3 site, which Herefordshire Council leases from Pontrilas Developments and is linked to Herefordshire Council ICT systems.
- 16 years remain on the current lease and acceptance of early surrender by the landlord is unlikely. Release costs are likely to be in the region of £250,000 for the area occupied by the ICES, unless Herefordshire Council can provide replacement occupants. The terms of the lease do not allow for sub-tenancies.
 - The Equipment Store facilities have office space, workshop and decontamination and cleaning areas and occupies 628sq.m (6836sq.ft), at an annual rent of £38,000 (inclusive of services).
 - In addition, the service rents a small (500sq.ft), Council-owned unit elsewhere on the Rotherwas industrial estate. The rent for this is £3,850 per annum, plus a small, additional cost for electricity. This unit is used for storage of beds and

other large items, in order to maximise space at Unit 3.

- The recent Infection Control Audit highlighted a number of premises related issues. In particular, these relate to insufficient space for storage of returned goods and decontamination of large items.

10. Potential Future Developments include:

- **Mobility and walking aids** – These are currently provided by Herefordshire Primary Care Trust via the Community Physiotherapy Service. To provide further integration of services and efficiencies, ICES could take on this service.

However, additional storage space, cleaning and recycling capacity and transport capability would be required.

Discussions with Herefordshire Primary Care Trust have commenced.

- **Wheelchair Service** – this service is currently provided by Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and is currently in unsuitable accommodation. The Trust is keen to be co-located with ICES, providing economies of scale. This would generate additional funds for the pooled budget/sharing of costs.

Additional storage space and transport will be required to develop this service.

- **Delivery, including fitting, ready for use** - the short pilot scheme referred to in Point 7 and carried out in conjunction with the [You@Home](#) agency, indicated a likely cost of £38,000 per annum and demonstrated shorter waiting times and better use of Occupational Therapists' time. The service has not been continued because of lack of funding. However, service users and clinicians were strongly in favour of such a scheme and, longer term, this would enable clinicians to reduce waiting times for assessments and also improve performance, as measured by the indicator BVP 156.
- Dividing the county into three areas: more deliveries could be carried out on a daily basis and would allow additional time per "drop" for equipment to be set up or installed, ready for immediate use.
- Capital of approximately £40,000 would allow for the purchase of two additional vans, with additional revenue funding of £30,000 per annum to provide two additional drivers (plus on-costs). Additional cost to the revenue budget of running two extra vans is estimated in the region of £7,000 per annum.
- **Assessment and demonstration facilities for Service Users** – Clinicians wishing to assess the suitability of particular pieces of equipment with users before ordering use facilities provided by local commercial suppliers to assess and demonstrate.
 - An area with a cross-section of equipment items for trial would be an appropriate addition to ICES. Such a facility would improve the quality of the service provided and facilitate access to a greater range of suppliers. It is not envisaged that there would be any additional revenue cost to the service, since local suppliers would be happy to provide demonstration equipment.

All the above developments, whether pursued separately or together, require additional space. The estimated total additional space required is 901 sq.

Conclusion

11. Premises

- Additional accommodation will enable ICES to widen the range of its service and improve the quality of provision.
- Additional premises will relieve the pressure on existing accommodation and enable service development in line with the Government's prevention and wellbeing agendas.
- Upgrading of the premises will allow for infection control issues to be managed and will ensure that no liability can be attached to the ICES operations in the event of an outbreak of a notifiable disease.
- Release costs from the existing premises are likely to be prohibitive, unless alternative tenants from within the Council can be found, or existing occupants wish to expand their accommodation. Investigation indicates that neither option is likely. As a consequence, removal to a single, larger, site is not currently an option.

12. Transport

Two additional vans and drivers will enable the Community Equipment Store to provide and make ready equipment in one visit, thus benefiting the service user, who can begin to use and benefit from the equipment immediately; freeing up clinician time for more complex work; providing a streamlined, efficient service. More deliveries will be possible overall, ensuring that more items are delivered and satisfactorily installed within the 7-day target (PAF BVPI 56/D54) and performance keeps pace with demographic demand.

Alternative Options

Alternative options explored in Appendix 2

Risk Management

ICES is central to supporting individuals to maintain their independence, and to stay in their own homes, within the local community. There are growing pressures on the service, to continue to meet the increasing needs of the ageing population. Investment in the premises and vehicles will allow the service to respond to the increasing demand for equipment services, and reduce the risk of delays in the assessment, delivery and fitting of equipment.

Consultees

The ICES has a Management Advisory Group, which meets monthly to oversee operational matters. This group includes representatives of all stakeholder groups, including service users.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on progress on Action Plan of 20th April, 2006

Appendix 2 – Options for Transport

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet dated 20th April, 2006.