

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Social Work & Health Committee - 22 October 2007

REPORT ON: Specialist Multiple Sclerosis Provision in Dundee

REPORT BY: Director of Social Work

REPORT NO: 527 - 2007

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the new multi-disciplinary initiative in the area of multiple sclerosis services in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

- 2.1 Agree to take forward this multi-disciplinary initiative.
- 2.2 Instruct the Director of Social Work to progress the establishment changes outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of establishing a post of Specialist Care Manager/Social Worker, graded SCP27-35 will be £31,183 in a full financial year. This will be met by the re-designation of a vacant 0.5 FTE Care Manager post (50%) and by funding from the MS Society (50%).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti Poverty, Equality, Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues

5.0 MAIN TEXT

- 5.1 Multiple Sclerosis is the most common neurological condition affecting young adults. It is geographically variable, but is particularly common in Scotland where the accepted prevalence is 1:500 (as opposed to 1:800 in England). Across NHS Tayside there are approximately 1,200 patients attending specialist clinics with an approximate 350 of these from Dundee.

MS is one of the most complex and variable conditions and thus presents huge challenges to the health and social care systems and to the staff working in these areas.

It has been recognised in Tayside for a considerable period that the health services available to people with MS have been insufficient to meet the need, particularly community based rehabilitation. Existing NHS services focus on the in-patient specialist and long term medical requirements of the patients.

Partnership arrangements offered by the MS Society have given an exceptional opportunity to approach MS care from a multi-agency perspective, as yet not experienced elsewhere in Scotland. The MS Society is committed to achieving a high standard of care for all people affected by MS and an important aim in the charity strategy involves the Jointly Funded Specialist Scheme.

To this end we have agreed to establish a Specialist Care Manager/Social Worker post. NHS Tayside are also funding 0.5 FTE Specialist Physiotherapist who, along with the existing specialist MS nurse, will form the core of the multi-disciplinary approach. This will provide the basis for a multi disciplinary approach to work in this area with a full evaluation of the public benefits of the service improvements that arise. Funding for the Specialist Care Manager/Social Worker will be 50/50 between the Social Work Department and the MS Society. The department's share will be met by redesignating 0.5 of a Care Manager post. This fits with the current level of work being carried out with clients who have MS and are receiving support in various ways from the department.

It is anticipated that the Specialist Care Manager/Social Worker will:

- Develop practice in Social Work in this specialist area.
- Promote awareness of the needs of people with Multiple Sclerosis and their families across agencies.
- Participate in training and development activities to promote awareness and understanding of Multiple Sclerosis.
- Identify gaps in Social Care Services for people with Multiple Sclerosis and contribute towards the planning of services to meet these needs.
- Carry out the evaluation of the impact of this initiative on service delivery.
- Case holding and development worker function in this specialist area.

The funding has been proposed on a three year basis. The Social Work Department would enter into this initiative on an agreed basis of ongoing review. It would be the intention to have a formal mid point evaluation on the basis of cost and service benefit. Should there be no evidence of service improvement or effectiveness then it would be the intention to agree an exit strategy at this stage.

The relative merits of having specialist workers in Social Work on this basis are currently poorly evidenced. It is therefore an essential part of this initiative that a rigorous examination of its benefits and ongoing focus is included. However, it is anticipated that the initiative will provide a substantial improvement in the quality of the client/patient experience.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Assistant Chief Executive (Management) and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

Date: Wednesday 3rd October 2007