



Cabinet

16 June 2010

Home Independence Service

Report of Corporate Management Team

[Key Decision AW & H/23/09]

Report of Rachael Shimmin, Corporate Director, Adult Well Being and Health

Councillor Morris Nicholls, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Care

Purpose of the Report

1. The Medium Term Financial Plan, agreed by members on 20th January 2010 included efficiency savings from the Home Independence Service (HIS).
2. This paper makes recommendations for consulting on the proposals for achieving these savings and the future service model.

Background

3. The HIS was set up in 2004 in response to local pressures on DCC Occupational Therapy services and the 'Integrating Community Equipment (ICE)' national agenda. It is a service, aimed primarily at people who don't / may not meet Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria, but who still have equipment needs and want some professional advice and guidance to buy their own equipment. Originally planned as a joint funded DCC/PCT service, it initially received an ICEs grant which met a proportion of the costs; however it never received Health funding. The current service operates from 7 locations across the County and has an operating budget of £402,110 for the current financial year. Changes to the service would have some implications for some third sector organisations. (see Appendix 2 for more detail).

4. The service is largely preventative, offering free professional advice and guidance and subsidised equipment sales to those below FACS criteria. A search of web-sites reveals that most local authorities only provide access to aids and equipment to those meeting FACS criteria; generally larger items of equipment on loan.
5. There is no readily identifiable equivalent, amongst other authorities, to the service being provided by Durham County Council. All of the equipment provided by HIS can be obtained via local or national commercial or voluntary suppliers, either in store, by phone/mail order or internet.

Value for Money

6. Value for Money needs to be considered in the context of the individual, the wider community and the Council.
7. There were 8107 customers/enquiries/home visits in 2008/9, this equates to a unit cost of just over £49 per unit. In 09/10, each £1 worth of equipment sold will cost DCC about £6.04. The service to individual customers is clearly very heavily subsidised.
8. Although valued by users, the service is very costly for DCC to operate, and no contributions are being received from the PCT or from Darlington Borough Council, who both make referrals to the service.
9. Most of the service costs are staffing, the only other major cost being rental paid at two of the sites.

Proposal

10. Following a review of the service, and in the light of potential future arrangements described more fully below, it is proposed that a phased retraction over 2 financial years take place.
11. From 1st October 2010, it is recommended that the service operate from one base at Abbey Day Centre. This is central to the Council area, has good levels of footfall and has the benefit of also having a demonstration area and a separate area for staff training. Potential redundancies would be managed through re-deployment.
12. From 1st October 2010 there would be a reduced service.
13. The total overall efficiency saving achieved in Year One (2010-11) would be: **£144,770**
14. A further reduction in staffing in year 2 (2011 -12) would bring about a further saving of £42,196

15. At this point the Abbey Day Centre service would close. Remaining staff would be used to strengthen the operational services, which will need to absorb some additional demand as a consequence of the closure.
16. During the final year a web based self assessment tool will be set up. This will enable people to identify the most useful aids and equipment for themselves and would direct them to both local and national suppliers. It will also promote the availability of equipment through normal retail outlets. Specialist software is already available to purchase. We will also explore the potential for developing some of the functions within the County Council's existing customer relationship management system. We will continue to promote the use of internet technology and improved access through our customer and library strategies. This will provide DCC with a comparable service to other local authorities.
17. A self assessment toolkit, which guides people to self purchase appropriately, is consistent with, and supportive of, the personalisation and choice agenda.
18. The further staff reductions in year two combined with the full year effect of year one savings produce a saving of £182,556 in 2011/12. Over the two years, 2010/11 and 2011/12 savings totalling **£327,326** have been identified.

Disability impact assessment

19. A disability impact assessment will be carried out during the consultation period.
20. Through the development of alternative arrangements it is anticipated that the potentially negative impact of closing the service can be reduced to acceptable levels.
21. The assessment will also take into account the impact on the 2 staff members employed in the service who live with a disability.

Consultation

22. If cabinet agree to the recommendations below a 90 day stakeholder consultation will commence in June 2010. A detailed consultation plan is being developed in anticipation of a decision by Cabinet. There are implications for some third sector organisations in these proposals which will be the subject of separate negotiations.
23. A report containing final recommendations will be prepared for Cabinet following the end of the consultation. These timescales will allow a decision to be made and the recommended service changes to be implemented in line with the current medium term financial plan.

24. Formal consultation with the staff side on the implications for jobs will commence if and when Cabinet make a final decision. The staff side have already been informally briefed so as to engage them early in the process.

Recommendations

25. Cabinet are recommended to:

- Agree to consult on a retraction of the service and reduction in staff in a period commencing October 2010.
- Agree to consider a final report following consultation.
- Agree that officers should undertake an equality impact assessment on the proposal to retract services and replace them with a web-based service and arrangements with suppliers.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The Home Independence Service has been reviewed and potential efficiency saving identified.

Staffing – The recommendations in the report will have an affect upon staff. If the final decision is to retract services the job implications will be subject to formal consultation.

Equality and Diversity - Alternative opportunities for two members of staff, both of whom have a sensory impairment, will be specifically considered. A disability impact assessment will be completed as part of the consultation process.

Accommodation – It is recommended that the service continue to operate out of Abbey Day Centre for a further year.

Crime and disorder- No direct implications

Sustainability – N/A

Human Rights –N/A

Localities – N/A

Young people – N/A

Consultation – This report recommends that Cabinet agree that consultation commences on the decision to retract this service

Health – Due to the nature of this service health partners will be consulted on the recommendations of this report

Personalisation – A combination of some direct personal advice and guidance and a self assessment toolkit which guides people to self purchase appropriately would lend itself to the personalisation and choice agenda.

Appendix 2: The Service

The HIS works from 5 shop premises across the County, it also uses space in voluntary sector premises, to deliver sensory support equipment and advice as below.

Location	Base	Functions
Bishop Auckland	Shared premises with Red Cross, based on the main shopping street.	Shop only.
Newton Aycliffe	Based in the Pioneering Care Centre	Shop and demonstration area.
Peterlee	Based in DCC Day Centre	Shop only.
Stanley	Based in DCC Day Centre	Shop only.
Durham	Based in DCC Abbey Day Centre	Shop and demonstration site. Training facilities.
Spennymoor	Co Deaf Premises in Spennymoor Day Centre	Equipment demonstration advice and guidance.
Durham	Co Durham Society for the Blind & Partially Sighted premises. (St Oswald Resource Centre)	Core equipment sales, advice and guidance.

Risk Description	Potential Impact	Treatment (if not already in place, state implementation date)	Risk Owner
1. Implementing Key Decision			
Stakeholder Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative feedback • Negative publicity • DCC reputation temporarily affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust Consultation Plan • Stakeholder involvement • Communication Plan 	Project Team
Staff Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary and early redundancies • Equality and Diversity issues re two disabled staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Plan • Impact Assessment • Vacancies being held across department to reduce impact by redeployment 	Head of Service
2. Not Implementing Key Decision			
Not achieving Medium Term Financial Plan savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced financial stability • Impact on other service areas where shortfall will be sought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial impact assessment 	Head of Finance – AW & H