

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Adult Social Care**

Date: **25 November 2005**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES)**

Purpose of report: **To update the Committee on the Integrated Community Equipment Service**

RECOMMENDATION - to note the current position of the Integrated Community Equipment Service.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 On 29 June 2004 Cabinet approved the proposal that the Council, as lead commissioner, enter into a pooled budget agreement to support ICES (using powers under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999) with the four Primary Care Trusts (PCTs); Bexhill and Rother PCT, Eastbourne Downs PCT, Hastings & St. Leonards PCT and Sussex Downs & Weald PCT.

1.2 The Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Director of Law and Performance Management was authorised by Cabinet to agree the terms of an inter-agency agreement which outlines the governance, commissioning and financial arrangements for the pooled budget. This has been agreed by the PCTs and the arrangements put in place. Subsequently the PCT partners have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the pooled budget arrangements and this has resulted in a disputed level of activity. The amount of financial contribution required by each partner is calculated in accordance with the agreement. However, a proportion of activity that is tracked to the PCTs (mainly in relation to intermediate care services) historically and pre-ICES received funding from Social Services. Work is being undertaken to re-establish the balance of contributions between Adult Social Care and the PCTs in respect of these services.

2. Background and Supporting Information

2.1 A tendering exercise for the provision of the service was undertaken in line with Council's Contract Standing Orders and the contract was awarded to Nottingham Rehab Limited. The service commenced on 30 September 2004.

2.2 The Council, as lead commissioner, provides the contract management and financial support for the service. The service has been implemented in accordance with Government guidance issued in the March 2001 circular '*Community Equipment Services HSC2001/008: LAC (2001)13*' and meets the four defining characteristics of an integrated service which are: A pooled budget; no distinction between health and social care equipment; one operational manager for the service; and a 'Management Advisory Board' (county wide multi-agency and multi-professional group)

2.3 A review carried out by the Audit Commission called '*Fully Equipped*' 2000 made specific recommendations for improving community equipment services. From these recommendations emerged the Department of Health's vision for local authorities and the NHS for integrating and modernising equipment services as defined in paragraph 2.2. The NHS Plan and the National Service Framework for Older People set out the Government's commitment to modernising equipment services.

2.4 A quote from '*Fully Equipped*' succinctly captures the reason why the Department of Health required local authorities and the NHS to work together to achieve this vision:

“Effective joint working between the NHS and local authorities is essential to ensure the provision of high quality community equipment services. Good quality services can enable independent living in the community at low cost. The proper tracking of equipment is essential to make the best use of available funds and to minimise risk” (Fully Equipped, Audit Commission National Report 2000 page 59)

2.5 Pre-ICES separate equipment services were provided by Bexhill and Rother PCT, Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and the County Council. Not only were the services fragmented but they were frequently duplicated with service users receiving equipment services from both the NHS and the local authority. There were significant differences in quality between the services provided by the County Council and those of the NHS.

2.6 A Project Board, formed in March 2001 with representatives from Social Services and the four PCTS, was responsible for determining the local vision and requirements for both the ICES service provider contract and the inter-agency agreement.

2.7 Failure to achieve an integrated service was/is likely to have an adverse effect on Star Ratings and Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores. ICES has been a key objective within the Council Plan and the service supports older people by enabling them to live at home, a priority for Adult Social Care.

2.8 As well as responding to political pressures the County Council’s existing contract for service provision was due for renewal in March 2004 following several six month extensions. The contract no longer achieved the efficiencies required and there was an urgency to move forward with the new service specification and contractual requirements.

Current Performance – service provider

2.9 From a delivery perspective there is no distinction between health and social care with all service users receiving the same quality of service irrespective of the funding partner.

2.10 Improvement to the quality of service provision, in terms of access and response times, has been reflected in the delivery response times and the stock levels required and achieved by the service provider. Attached in **Appendix 1** is a report from Nottingham Rehab Limited indicating the daily stock levels which average monthly at 98%. **Appendix 2** is a delivery and collection report from Nottingham Rehab Limited which indicates the number and percentage of items collected compared to the numbers of items issued both by item and value. Set out in **Appendix 3** is a report produced by the Performance Team, Adult Social Care, indicating the achievement of Nottingham Rehab Supplies to date for 2005/2006 against PAF D54; percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days. The current average is 84.14% compared to 64.80% for 2004/2005.

Key developments to date, issues, and impact

2.11 Since ICES commenced there have been a range of new developments put in place; however, there are also associated issues and the table at **Appendix 4** highlights, in detail, what has been done together with the current issues and the work in progress to address these points.

2.12 The quality improvements (see paragraph 2.10) together with a high volume of activity have had significant financial implications for the PCTs. The PCTs, as a service priority, are in the process of establishing financial stability by re-defining the access and the availability of some equipment, to an affordable level. This means that the range of equipment available for health practitioners to prescribe will be reduced.

2.13 The PCTs would like to move towards a greater sharing of overspends/under spends between themselves and Adult Social Care. However, there are associated risks in terms of the practitioners who access the service on behalf of service users and how management control can be maintained when the practitioners are outside the line management arrangements of the Council.

Future Plans and development

2.14 At a strategic level a range of work is being undertaken between Adult Social Care and the PCTs to consolidate the commissioning arrangements and to establish a shared vision for how the service can be developed in the longer term to achieve a greater degree of integration between the partners.

2.15 At an operational level work is in hand to implement on-line ordering within Adult Social Care and to support the accounting arrangements with SAP. The Equipment Review Group is developing a consultation plan for the next year involving voluntary organisations and for obtaining feedback from service users and carers.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The procurement perspective of ICES is now well established. However the commissioning aspects are more complex to bed down. This is due to: the number of organisations involved; the issues arising in changing historical practices and funding arrangements to establishing the new commissioning partnership; and simultaneously the requirement to respond to the rapidly changing community services which ICES needs to support.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Section 31 – Health Act 1999
- Government guidance issued in the March 2001 circular '*Community Equipment Services HSC2001/008:LAC (2001) 13*'
- Audit Commission Review '*Fully Equipped*' 2000
- NHS Plan
- National Service Framework for Older People
- Cabinet report – 29 June 2004 and relevant minutes