

THE EXECUTIVE

15 APRIL 2003

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

| CHANGES TO HOME CARE SERVICE | FOR DECISION |
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| <p><i>This report concerns efficiencies in the home care service.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This Report details proposals to reduce the level of unused hours within homecare by a reduction in contracted hours for 14 (fourteen) staff with a compensation package previously used in other departments. This measure will improve efficiency and reduce contracted hours by a total of 80 (eighty) per week in order to better direct services towards Older People requiring a higher level of support in the community.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree approval for the purchase of home care contracted hours at a one off cost of £13,998.40. The cost of which will be met from within the home care budget, the effect of which will be cost neutral for the financial year.</p> <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>There is a need to target Social Services revenue within the home care service at older people with complex needs living in the community.</p> | |
| <p>Contact: Cathy Mitchell</p> | <p>Director of Older People Services</p> <p>Tel: 020 8227 2331 Fax: 020 8227 2241 E-mail: catherine.mitchell@lbbd.gov.uk Minicom 020 8227 2462</p> |

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Joint Review in 1997 said that Social Services were spreading financial resources too thinly across all older people and needed to target them towards people with complex needs. Therefore Social Services has identified those older people with the greatest need who can be legitimately funded using the Social Services budget which means that older people with a lower level need can no longer receive funding from Social Services.
- 1.2 Over recent years the physical and mental ability of Older People now accessing the Home Care Service has changed dramatically, as have the requests for the type of assistance required by the older person in assisting them to remain at home, with a significant shift from domestic care to personal care and support.

- 1.3 This change of needs of Frail Older People has had significant impact on the home care service, in that the times assistance is most requested now falls within core hours of 7am to 11am and 4pm to 10pm. And whilst home care was predominantly a weekday service, there has been a considerable increase in the level of weekend support required.
- 1.4 The contracts of employment for homecare workers is explicit as to the number of hours and times of day each worker is scheduled for duty. These contracts are predominately based on attendances between Monday and Friday and are out step with the needs of a modern service. In view of these contractual rights it was necessary to identify a means for varying terms for those staff with unused hours.
- 1.5 The flexibility of staff within the home care service with regard to their contracted hours was changed as a result of Executive approval of report "Changes in the Home Care Service" 14th August 2001. Further changes have been effected through staff recruited to the service since that date. However, there has for some time been a significant number of unused hours in the service, a large number of which were outside of core hours.

(Unused hours are defined as contracted hours available, for which there is no user requiring a service)

- 1.6 Discussions regarding unused hours began with the GMB Trade Union, as the main union representing home carers, in June 2002. Since that time they have been both supportive and co-operative in trying to assist in reducing the unused hours in the service, however, no significant impact had been achieved in reducing the unused hours. A compensation package previously used in another department was agreed as the appropriate mechanism to equitably achieve the reduction in unused hours.
- 1.7 In December 2002 jointly agreed letters were sent to 50 home care staff who were identified as having regular periods of unused hours within their weekly contracted hours. In January 2003 each staff member then had a follow up meeting with their trade union representative, human resources and management.

Process:

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| June 2002 | Unused hours 1643 (average over 4 weeks = 410.81hrs) |
| Nov 2002 | Unused hours 1486 (average over 4 weeks = 371.5 hrs). |
| Dec/Jan | Letters & Personal Interviews |
| Feb 2003 | Unused hours 706.5 (average over 4 weeks = 176.62). |

- 1.8 Of the original 50 staff identified, 36 agreed to work flexibly within their existing contracted hours, 14 requested a compensation package for reducing their contracting hours using a formula as previously agreed with the trade union.
- Formula:
 Number of contract hours reduced x home care hourly rate of pay x 26 weeks

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Purchase of home care contracted hours at a cost of £13,998.40 the cost of which will be met from within the home care budget, the effect of which will be cost neutral for the financial year.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The adoption of this proposal will bring much greater efficiency to the service, and will enable the service to both meet needs, and to demonstrate a joint commitment between the Council, the Trade Union and staff to meeting the expectations of service users and of Government.

Background Papers:

- Joint Review Report
- Executive Report Dec 2001