
Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services)

30 July 2013

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services) – Councillor Gingell

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Community Services

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

The development and implementation of an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Opal, Assessment and Demonstration Centre and the Integrated Community Equipment Services supports individuals' health and social care needs, by promoting their independence through the provision of disability related equipment and adaptations. At the Opal, individuals can access professional assessment, information and advice on the most appropriate equipment to meet their presenting need, and be guided on the available options to meet their needs, including the availability of equipment that can be purchased privately.

The current provision of equipment from the Integrated Community Equipment Service ranges from low cost items which are now readily available from local retailers to more specialised equipment. As the retail market has grown, many pieces of equipment have become obsolete or ceased to be specialist disability equipment. Some of the equipment is also able to be sourced at a lower cost by mainstream retailers. The development of disability equipment retail industry has expanded into internet sales, with high street supermarkets promoting the sale of disability equipment. What is not generally available to individuals is the expert advice that would support people to make the right choices about equipment to purchase.

This report seeks permission to develop and implement an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment.

The proposed model will encourage individuals to access a professional assessment from a member of the occupational therapy team prior to making any decisions about the private purchase of equipment. The Council has a duty to meet eligible needs, where equipment is required to meet non eligible needs the member of staff will find the type of equipment that would be most suitable to meet these needs from the range of equipment available through the on-line outlet.

The proposed model would ensure that the sale value through the on-line outlet is competitive to equipment costs nationally. The Council will act as an introductory agent, which will attract a percentage income from every purchase made on the site.

The provider of the on-line outlet would be responsible for ensuring that there is a wide range of equipment available for purchase from a range of suppliers nationally. The contract is between the individual purchaser and the retailer. If the equipment is faulty or not suitable immediately after purchase, the equipment can be returned to the retailer, for a full refund. This is a statutory right of all consumers.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services) is recommended to:

Approve the development and implementation of an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: The development and implementation of an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Having identified a duty to meet an assessed need, Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act 1970 allows for this need to be met by the provision of practical assistance including the provision of items of equipment.
- 1.2 The Opal, Assessment and Demonstration Centre and the Integrated Community Equipment Service, supports individuals' health and social care needs, by promoting their independence through the provision of disability related equipment and adaptations. At the Opal, individuals can access professional assessment, information and advice on the most appropriate equipment to meet their presenting need and be supported on the available options, including equipment that can be purchased privately from a range of outlets.
- 1.4 The current provision of equipment from the Integrated Community Equipment Service ranges from low cost items which are now readily available from local retailers to more specialised equipment. As the retail market has grown, many pieces of equipment have become obsolete or ceased to be specialist disability equipment. Some of the equipment is also able to be sourced at a lower cost by mainstream retailers. The development of disability equipment retail industry has expanded into internet sales, with high street supermarkets promoting the sale of disability equipment.
- 1.5 The Transforming Community Equipment agenda (2009) encouraged the development of the retail market for disability equipment across England. Its intention was to introduce a wide range of disability equipment to the broader retail market, with equipment available in high street shops and supermarkets, creating choice and control for individuals. Early implementer sites in Cheshire and Devon saw traditional equipment stores downsized to provide only specialist equipment, while standard equipment was made available "on prescription" or voucher, which the individual could take to a local retailer and exchange for an item of equipment. The adoption of this model may lead to the local authority having to pay the full retail cost of the item of equipment. In regions where there has only been partial uptake of the model, encouraging new retailers into the market has been difficult, particularly in the current economic climate, thereby limiting choice.
- 1.6 The ability to introduce individuals to an accessible means of purchasing equipment themselves with professional guidance will ensure that individuals purchase equipment appropriate to their needs and assist in managing future demand by developing the information and advice offered by the Opal.
- 1.7 Work undertaken across the sub-region identified that each authority provided a slightly different range of equipment and of the benefits of standardising stock across the sub-region to ensure a level of consistency of provision. As part of the annual review of equipment provision in Coventry the Integrated Community Equipment Service has streamlined the range of equipment and proposes to remove low cost and readily available items from the standard stock list bringing this in line with our sub-regional partners. These items of equipment will be made available through the proposed model of accessing equipment for individual purchase where necessary.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The proposed model will encourage individuals to access a professional assessment from a member of the occupational therapy team prior to making any decisions about the private purchase of equipment. The Council has a duty to meet eligible needs, where equipment is required to meet non-eligible needs the member of staff will support the individual to find the type of equipment that would be most suitable to meet their needs from the range of equipment available through the on-line outlet.
- 2.2 By using a unique PIN code the individual using the on-line outlet will generate the retail cost of the item agreed by the Council and the retailer. The local authority acts as an introductory agent, which attracts a percentage income from every purchase made using the PIN code. Individuals could use the PIN code to purchase equipment without the professional assessment; however staff would encourage individuals to seek an assessment wherever possible.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the Council approaches the market to look at the readily available solutions which can be tailored to provide the solution for Coventry, on a low cost or no cost basis. It is the intention for this solution to be on a trial basis for two years, with the opportunity to withdraw at any point. During the first year officers will be monitoring and data gathering to form the basis to go out to market through a competitive tender process to procure the final solution by the end of the second year. There is potential for a sub-regional arrangement for the future procurement, which should create an economy of scale for any prospective provider, thus maximising income generation and minimising cost.
- 2.2 The Council annually reviews the range of equipment it provides. Currently the Council provides a range of low cost items which are now readily available from local retailers. As the market grows, this level of equipment ceases to be specialist disability equipment. It is proposed that low cost and readily available items are removed from the standard stock list bringing this in line with our sub-regional partners. The range of equipment provided is at the discretion of each local authority. There is no prescribed list by the Department of Health.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The proposed recommendation outlines a new operational way to provide the service and consultations are not being undertaken. However, the Equality and Consultation Analysis attached has considered the impact of this new proposal.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Subject to approval the new model for the provision of disability related equipment, including the development of an on-line outlet to enable individuals to purchase disability living products will be implemented from approximately September 2013.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Legal Services

- 5.1 Financial implications

The first three years of the Opal Centre's running costs were funded by NHS Coventry. To ensure the continued operation of the centre, £67k of on-going resources is required.

£17k from existing budgets has already been identified, with a further £20k expected from the delivery of training and £3k from room hire income, leaving a shortfall of £27k. Whilst the introduction of an on-line outlet will offer value for money for service users and ensure

they purchase equipment appropriate to their needs, it also provides a potential stream of income for the Council.

Due to the commercial sensitivities, limited numbers of such schemes in existence, and variations in the market for such equipment, it is not possible to accurately forecast the potential level of income that could be achieved from such a scheme. Based on the numbers of enquiries by people seeking to purchase equipment, it is expected that the income that could be generated would be sufficient to meet the above shortfall, with any additional income contributing towards the Commercialisation/Income Maximisation abc project.

In addition to this, it is expected that the Opal will contribute to corporate procurement savings targets. This target will be met from the cessation of supply of readily available non specialist equipment as described in paragraph 2.6 which is expected to deliver savings of £10k, and changes to the procurement of equipment provided by the Opal from 1 January 2014.

5.2 Legal implications

Once a social services authority has carried out an assessment of needs of a disabled person and decided that a provision of services under s.2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act 1970 is necessary in order to meet the person's needs, the authority is under a specific duty to provide the service. Services under this Act include the provision of practical assistance for that person in their home or any additional facilities designed to secure the person's greater safety, comfort or convenience.

The proposed model will require the Council to undertake a procurement process for a framework partner under its rules for contracts.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Currently individuals are able to purchase equipment from a wide range of retailers. Purchasing through many high street stores or on the internet does not generally have the component of a professional assessment/advice by a suitable qualified practitioner. The model proposed will encourage adults and children with a range of needs relating to their disability to seek appropriate advice prior to purchasing equipment.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

What is not generally available to individuals who purchase equipment themselves is the expert advice that would support people to make the right choices about equipment to purchase.

At present individuals can attend the Opal for advice about appropriate products but are then signposted to other providers to purchase equipment.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities/EIA

The Equality and Consultation Analysis (section 19) identified that there may be exceptional circumstances where the provision of ordinary non specialist equipment may be necessary. The new model proposed means some items historically held as stock by the Council which are readily available in local retail outlets will no longer be held, but the ability of individuals to easily purchase this equipment at more competitive prices through an on-line outlet will mitigate any potential equality issues. The Council continues to have a duty to meet assessed need of individuals.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The provision of community equipment is jointly commissioned by NHS Coventry and the Council. The revised equipment provision will have no impact on health partners.

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Directorate:

Community Services

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Pete Fahy	Assistant Director	Community Services	28.6.13	1.7.13
Simon Brake	Assistant Director	Community Services	28.6.13	14.7.13
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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Ewan Dewar	Finance Manager, Community Services	Finance and Legal	11.7.13	14.7.13
Legal: Julie Newman	Solicitor. CLYP and Adults Manager	Finance and Legal	11.7.13	16.7.13
Director: Brian Walsh	Director	Community Services	28.6.13	1.7.13
Members: Councillor Gingell	Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services)		28.6.13	1.7.13

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

1 Equality and Consultation Analysis

Name of analysis	Integrated Community Equipment Service Review of Equipment Stock
Officer completing analysis	Sheila Lucid Ron Innes
Date	10 July 2013

2 Briefly describe the area of work this analysis relates to:

The Council is responsible under Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to provide items of equipment to disabled children and adults whose ordinary place of residence is Coventry. The duty under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act is to provide specialist items, supplied to the individual because of the individual's disability. The Council is not duty bound to provide ordinary equipment, which is described as equipment that could be used by people without disability.

Equipment is recommended following a professional assessment from a Health or Social Care staff member. The Integrated Community Equipment Service is responsible for the provision of equipment. The service reviews the stock list of equipment it provides on an annual basis. Following a review of stock it was identified that the service continues to provide some items of equipment that are not specialist.

At present individuals wishing to purchase the kind of equipment that will be offered by the online provision are signposted to other providers. As it is not known whether they ultimately make a purchase, no profile is available of these individuals. This analysis therefor only looks at the impact of removing the ordinary items of equipment from the standard stock list.

Scoping the analysis

3 Who are the key stakeholders, both existing and potential, that could be impacted by this work?

- Prescribers - across health and social care
- Coventry Residents with a disability.
- Carers

4 From the list above, which of these constitute protected groups

- Coventry Residents with a disability

5 Which of the key stakeholders (including representatives of protected groups) will need to be kept informed, consulted or actively involved in this area of work?

Key Stakeholder	Type of Involvement*	Method(s) used
Prescribers	Involvement	Clinical Reference Group - representatives across health and social care sectors
Coventry Residents with a disability	Information	Media and Partnership Boards
Carers	Information	Media and Partnership Boards

6 Which, if any, parts of the general equality duty is the service relevant to? Please mark with an 'X'.

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

7 What information is available to be used as part of this analysis?

Data on the equipment provided is held on a computerised stock control system. Reports have been generated to show age groups, ethnicity and locality of residents who may be affected by this change in provision.

8 What are the information gaps?

There is no information available to demonstrate that people have the financial resources to pay to purchase items themselves, however, the items are of low cost and readily available from a number of retail outlets. There is no information available on all of the protected characteristics.

Data analysis

9 Please summarise below the key issues that your data is telling you.

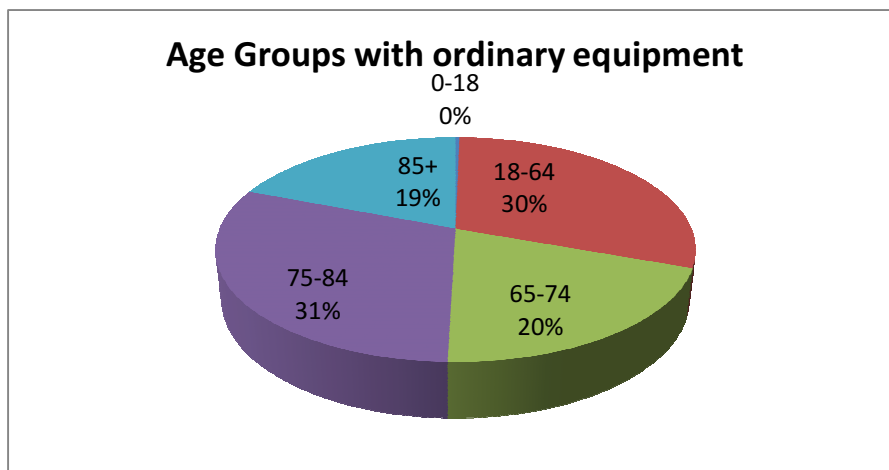
The Integrated Community Equipment Service delivers approximately 27,000 items per annum to around 8,000 users. The monetary value of equipment provided in 2011/2012 was £1.4 million. 18,851 items were returned to ICES with 72% of this equipment being re-cycled. The service performance for the delivery of equipment within 7 working days is 96%.

Approximately £10k per annum is spent on the purchase of ordinary items of equipment. The ordinary items are generally used around the home, also to support eating/drinking. They range in value from £0.95 pence up to a maximum of £25.00.

Table 1: Ordinary items of stock

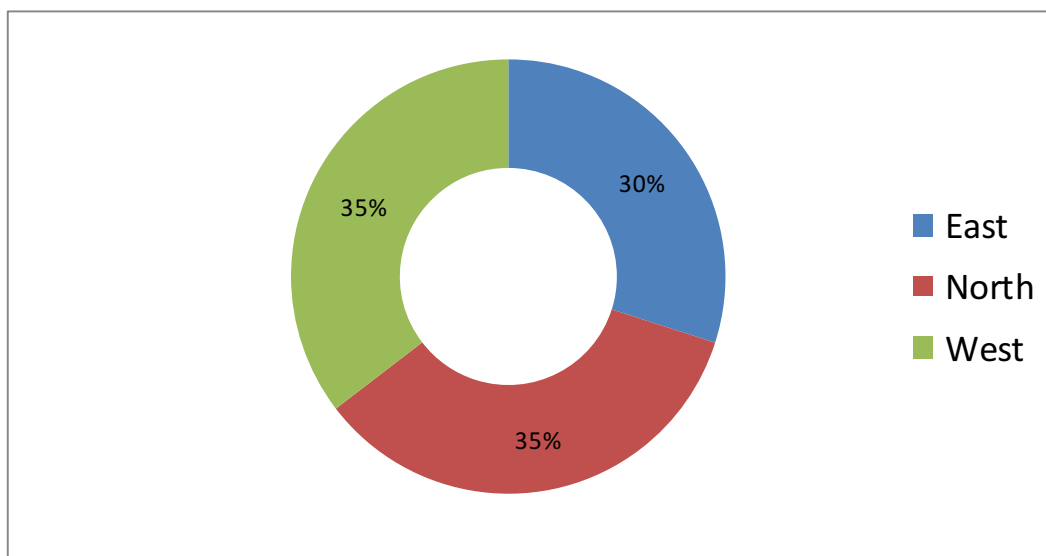
Items	Price Range
Mugs	£4.50 - £5.00
Plates	£3.00 - £6.00
Kitchen Knife	£3.00 - £9.00
Jar Opener	£3.00 - £13.50
Trays	£3.00 - £25.00
Sponges	£2.25 - £3.00
Window opener	£25.00
Long handled comb	£7.00
Button hook	£3.20
Long handled shoe horn	£0.95
Helping Hands	£3.00 - £4.50
Cutlery	£1.00 - £7.00

Table 2 below demonstrates the profile of the usage of ordinary equipment by age group from a sample taken in 2012/13.



Data on the location/residence of people who received ordinary equipment demonstrates that residents in the North and West of the city receive a small percentage more items than those in the East of the City.

Table 3: Residence geographical location



Ethnic data of users of ICES compared against Coventry population

Ethnic Groups	% of Coventry population*	% of users of the ICES
People of White Ethnicity	79.2%	86.8%
People of Mixed Ethnicity	2.3%	2.3%
People of Asian/Asian British Ethnicity	12.3%	6.1%
People of Black/Black British Ethnicity	3%	1.3%
People of Chinese or other ethnicity	3%	3%

Generating and evaluating options

10 What are the different options being proposed to stakeholders?

It is proposed to develop and implement an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment, and that ordinary items of stock are removed from the standard stock list.

The current provision of equipment ranges from low cost items which are now readily available from local retailers to more specialised equipment. As the market has grown many pieces of equipment have become obsolete or ceased to be specialist disability equipment. Some of the equipment is also able to be sourced at a lower cost by mainstream retailers.

The development of an on-line outlet supports the prevention agenda, in assisting individuals who do not have an eligible need for a community care service, but wish to purchase equipment privately.

The Council proposes to develop a model whereby individuals have access to professional assessment, advice and information from the Opal, Assessment and Demonstration Centre. People will be guided by a professional when looking to purchase equipment.

The introduction of this on-line outlet will attract a percentage income for the local authority for each item purchased through the web-site.

11 How will the options impact on protected groups or those experiencing deprivation?

Individuals will be required to purchase the ordinary item privately or seek an alternative method of carrying out the task. If they were unable to arrange this for themselves they may require support from their family/friend or representative. It is likely that those on a lower income would be at a disadvantage financially.

The on-line outlet will offer support, advice and assessment from a professional to ensure that people make an informed choice when buying equipment. They will also be able to benefit from a discounted cost for this equipment. This will be available to all people regardless of whether they meet the eligibility criteria.

12 Please detail how you could mitigate any negative impacts.

The ordinary items are increasingly available (in local stores, chemists or supermarkets) with many stores now displaying a whole range of specialist and ordinary items of the shelves. The ordinary are low cost items.

Information will be provided to users which detail local stores and other providers as well as the Councils own on-line outlet.

Developing an accessible way to purchase equipment from the Opal will enable users and/or their representatives to visit the centre and receive professional advice from an Occupational Therapist and the opportunity should they wish to purchase the item whilst they are there.

13 Identify which contractors or service users would be negatively affected by the options

Adults and children with a disability.

There may be some loss or movement of business for current equipment providers.

Formal consultation

14 Who took part in the consultation? *Please also specify representatives of any protected groups.*

Not applicable

15 What were the key finding of the consultation

Not applicable

16 Are there any gaps in the consultation?

Not applicable

17 Following the consultation, what additional equality issues have emerged?

Not applicable

18 Which of the options have changed following consultation and equality analysis, and how?

Not applicable

Equality impact of final option

19 Please confirm below which option has been chosen for implementation.

Subject to approval it is proposed that the Council develops a specification for an internet based model for individuals to privately purchase disability related equipment. It is proposed that the on-line model would attract a percentage income for the Council for each item purchased through the web-site.

20 Please indicate which of the following best describes the equality impact of this analysis.

There will be no equality impact if the proposed option is implemented.

There will be **positive equality impact** if the proposed option is implemented.

There will be **negative equality impact** if the preferred option is implemented, but this can be objectively justified.

X *Please state clearly what this justification is and what steps will be taken to ameliorate the negative impact.*

The items of equipment identified are not specialist as described by Department of Health. These items are deemed to be ordinary and are readily available in the high street. Introducing a means to purchase equipment easily and at competitive prices will ensure that no hardship is placed on disabled residents.

The on-line outlet will be open to everyone regardless of eligibility. This will support the prevention agenda.

21 What will be the impact on the workforce following implementation of the final option? *Please make reference to relevant equality groups (with protected characteristics under the Equality Act).*

None

Formal decision-making process

Please detail below the committees, boards or panels that have considered this analysis

Name	Date	Chair	Decision taken
Clinical Reference Group	07/05/13	Ron Innes	Agree with proposal

Approval

This equality analysis has been completed by:

Officer

Sheila Lucid

Service Manager

Ron Innes

Note: Failure to comply with duties on equalities and consultation will put the Council (and specifically the elected member or officer making the decision) at risk of judicial review

Director

Brian Walsh

Elected Member

Councillor Alison Gingell

Date

July 2013