

**Date: Thursday 12 February 2004**

**Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales**

**Title: Review of the Interface between Health and Social Care Services – Response from Care & Repair Cymru**

Care & Repair Cymru is delighted to be offered the opportunity to respond to the review of the interface between health and social care. The response will focus on key areas where Care & Repair Cymru has gained experience and insight in relation to the interface between health and social care services in Wales.

The review is welcomed as an opportunity to highlight areas of good practice and areas where further development is needed. In addition, there is also the opportunity to highlight the important of appropriate and healthy housing, as a key to ensuring the health and wellbeing of people living in Wales.

Care & Repair Agencies across Wales, work closely with the statutory bodies, health and social care, in accepting and making referrals in respect of the housing, health and social care needs of older people living in Wales.

## **1. To review the mechanisms for joint planning and provision of services in health and social care and the quality of the evidence base**

From Care & Repair's experience at a local level, there have been some positive steps forward in developing joint planning mechanisms, particularly in the area of older people's services.

For example in Pembrokeshire, the Clinical Governance Development Programme has a strategic group that is made up of officers from the NHS Trust, the Local Authority and Pembrokeshire Care & Repair. The aim is to jointly develop and deliver services that have long term benefits for the independence of older people in Wales.

In Newport, there are mechanisms being put in place for the development of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy. These mechanisms are at both an operational and strategic level.

In Wrexham, there are clear examples of joint planning mechanisms, with an on going consultation in line with the development of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy. Needs Assessment mapping has taking place and the findings sent for consultation.

A key area for setting mechanisms for joint planning and the provision of service, is the Needs Assessment Mapping process within each local authority area. Through the identification of need within the area, clear strategic and operational plans can be developed.

The Unified Assessment process clearly highlights the need for the development of protocols for joint working across health and social care.

In Care & Repair Cymru's experience, there are difficulties accessing quality evidence as to how joint planning and service delivery are being developed at a local level.

Possible solutions to this dilemma could be seen through the development of compatible and accessible Information Technology (IT) Systems for both Social Care and Health Departments.

A clear understanding of all health and social care systems and services is needed. This is vital in ensuring the development of mechanisms for joint planning for the provision of services to meet the needs of service users living in Wales.

## **2. To evaluate the effects (both positive and negative) that decisions in one service can have on another**

There are clear beneficial possibilities for joint working. However, through working closely with and for older people, Care & Repair has gained a clear understanding of the impacts on service delivery if a decision is made without consultation or when there are difficulties with the delivery of service by one service.

A clear example of this is:

In Wrexham currently there is the introduction of the new eligibility criteria. The National Assembly for Wales published the "Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) Guidance" in 1992. This guidance applies to all Social Services Departments when carrying out their Community Care duties in respect of all adult groups. Wrexham County Borough Council's Social Services Department has now set their eligibility criteria at "moderate", which means that "low" are excluded from the services. However, "low" includes those individuals with difficulties in one or two areas of domestic or personal care. Thus, a client with bathing needs alone is no longer eligible for a service. This means that more people are signposted to Care & Repair for various services, such as the Handyperson Service to fit rails in the bathroom, or for technical advice on the provision of showers, or for assistance with charitable fundraising. So instead of solving the problem, the introduction of the eligibility criteria just means that waiting lists are shifted from one place to another.

All stakeholders and service users need to be involved in the decision-making process to ensure that good practice is continually developed. Clear lines of communication, including IT systems, are vital to ensure positive outcomes and to reduce any negative impacts on the service received by service users.

### **3. To examine key areas that impact on the equality and provision of a seamless service, particularly:**

#### **Hospital discharge**

Inappropriate housing, that no longer meets the needs of older people impacts on the ability to be discharged from hospital. This, in turn, impacts upon the provision of a seamless service. The Unified Assessment process identifies housing needs and requirements as a key indicator within the met and unmet needs assessment criteria for older people, when delivering a seamless service.

The Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP) is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, administered by Care & Repair Cymru and provided through Care & Repair Agencies across Wales. The service focuses on hospital discharge and reducing hospital admissions. It has a 'Safety at Home' component which the majority of Care and Repair Agencies in Wales operate but with a wider remit in the nature of the repairs covered. It was introduced in June 2002.

The Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP) aims to ensure that older and disabled people who are to be discharged from hospital have a safe home to which to return. It also has a significant role in preventing hospital admissions by addressing problems of homes that are no longer safe or appropriate for older and disabled people.

RRAP services can be accessed through referrals to a local Care & Repair Agency by either health or social care professionals.

RRAP has been rolled out across Wales and is delivered through partnerships with health and social care bodies.

#### **Involvement of the independent and private sectors**

Care & Repair has been involved with the health and social care agenda in Wales since 1987. Through developing and brokering packages of repair and adaptation for the improvement of the homes of older and disabled owner-occupiers, there have been clear health gains for older people themselves, as well as for health and social services.

These gains can be seen in terms of the reduced risk to independent living and the need for health and social care intervention is also lessened.

Partnerships have developed with and through the Care & Repair service, with health professionals and social services departments.

## **Support for carers**

Care & Repair Cymru believes that support for carers is vital in ensuring a seamless service. This belief is supported within the Unified Assessment process, with carer's needs being considered in conjunction with the cared for persons needs. Carers play a key role in providing care and support and without this, often voluntary service, there would be a greater demand for services to be provided by both health and social care departments.

### **4. To review the role of health and social services in promoting the independence of patients and the prevention of unnecessary admission or readmission to hospital.**

Care & Repair Cymru firmly believes in the development of partnership working in the promotion of independence and prevention of hospital admission, especially in relation to older people.

In Care & Repair Cymru's experience, gained through working with and for older and disabled people in Wales, appropriate housing is key to both of these aims.

Care & Repair Agencies have worked in partnership with Social Services Departments across Wales since the late 1980's and has demonstrated clear gains to older and disabled people and to the social care sector. Partnerships are currently being developed with Local Health Boards and through working with frontline health care staff.

Care & Repair Cymru in partnership with Shelter Cymru have produced a Housing Checklist and Information Pack for Health Professionals, highlighting the importance of appropriate and safe housing, to prevent injury through falls, slips or trips, which result in admission to hospital. Areas around damp and cold homes are also highlighted as these conditions can exacerbate existing health problems such as arthritis or asthma.

This Information Pack is being delivered through seminars to local frontline health care professionals across Wales. The aim has been to highlight what health and social care professionals can do to help prevent hospital admission or re-admission.

Partnership working between health, social care and housing is key to promoting independence and reduce risks to health and wellbeing, particularly of older and people in Wales.

**Care & Repair Cymru**  
**December 2003**