

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by the Director of the Community Health and Care Partnership

Community Health and Care Partnership Committee: 20 February 2013

---

**Subject: Provision of maintenance for stair lifts previously installed in non Council & Housing Association properties**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 At its meeting in November 2012 the CHCP Committee approved a revised model for the funding of the provision of stair lifts to owner occupiers. All new stair lifts, regardless of housing tenure will, once assessed as being required by our OT service, be provided, installed and maintained under our Agreement with EquipU. The equipment will remain in public ownership and will be able to be re-cycled once no longer required in the home.
- 1.2 The Committee also sought a report on the costs of maintaining stair lifts previously installed in private homes.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That committee approve the adoption of maintenance by Equipu for equipment provided following assessment and funded by the grants scheme. Installations which are deemed unsuitable or unsafe will not be covered.
- 2.2 That as with the stair lift policy agreed at the November meeting this is reviewed in January 2014

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council as a partner of the Equipu service is benefiting from significant cost savings for the purchase installation and maintenance of Aids and Equipment for those with an assessed need; the Service provided by EquipU was extended to include stair lifts in November 2010.
- 3.2 Following a review of the costs of the current grant scheme in which owner occupiers are means tested and a proportion of the cost met by Council it was agreed that from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2013 all such applications would be funded in full if the clients assessment recommended it, including the costs of the ongoing maintenance of the equipment.
- 3.3 Other Local Authorities adopting this policy have not financed the cost of stair lift maintenance for installations undertaken before the adoption of this model. They have estimated that the number of such installations would be a significant and incremental cost reducing the benefit of adopting the change.

#### 4. Main Issues

- 4.1 Since the last meeting, officers have been in discussion with EquipU to ascertain whether or not they would be prepared to take on the maintenance responsibilities for stair lifts that had previously been installed by others at the same cost as lifts that had been installed in Council and Housing Association properties.
- 4.2 They have indicated that, with certain conditions and some restrictions, they would be prepared to take on this additional level of activity.
- 4.3 A review of the number of grant scheme stair lifts per annum shows that over the last 5 years an average of 25 installations has been undertaken. Currently approximately 125 star lifts are in use. The maintenance cost is £95 per year as part of the Equipu scheme. The approximate total additional cost would be £11,835.
- 4.4 This will reduce the predicted margin which would have enabled the CHCP to install additional numbers off stair lifts to meet growing demand.
- 4.5 However owner occupiers will be relieved of a sometimes considerable financial burden in the cost of maintenance programmes.
- 4.6 It is now proposed that subject to the following conditions, the CHCP will now fund, through its service level agreement with EquipU, the annual costs of maintaining star lifts previously installed in privately owned homes in West Dunbartonshire where:
- The stair lift was installed under the former grants scheme;
  - The stair lift has been maintained in a reasonable condition and its manufacturer/supplier is regarded as reputable provider of such equipment;
  - The owner occupier signs over ownership of the stair lift to the Council; and
  - The assessment of client need still indicates that the stair lift is required.

The definition of reputable provider to be regarded as those suppliers who currently are contracted by EquipU to supply such equipment or suppliers who would have been contracted by the local authority to supply such equipment at the time the equipment was installed.

- 4.7 It is also proposed that the costs of maintenance will **not** be covered in the following circumstances:
- Where the stair lift was installed outwith the former grant funding model and their had been no assessment of the clients need for such equipment by the OT service at the time of installation;
  - Where the current assessment of the clients needs by the OT service indicates that the equipment does not meet their needs;
  - As a general rule EquipU will not take on the maintenance responsibility where they deem the installation to have been poorly maintained or unsafe.

## **5. People Implications**

5.1 None

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 The cost of adopting the maintenance programme is approximate and will need to be reviewed in the light of experience.

6.2 The cost of the programme will reduce the availability of finance to fund the growth in demand but should be contained within the overall existing budget

## **7. Risk Analysis**

7.1 The incremental costs of maintaining an increasing number of stairlifts may become unaffordable within the current financial envelope. In addition the current budget will not release savings which would have allowed an expansion in provision to meet the expanding elderly population

7.2 However risk is reduced by enabling owner occupiers faster access to safe and well maintained equipment following assessment as recommended here.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

8.1 The proposal seeks to ensure that all clients with an assessed need get access to appropriate aids and equipment.

8.2 There is no adverse equalities impact.

## **9. Consultation**

9.1 No additional consultation has been undertaken.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

10.1 The proposal will contribute to the strategic objectives by;

- Improving care for and promoting the independence of older people;
- Improving local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure; and
- Improving the well-being of communities and protect the welfare of vulnerable people.

**Person to Contact:** Christine McNeill  
Head of Community Health and Care Services  
Chris.McNeill@ggc.scot.nhs.uk  
01389 737351

**Appendices** **None**

**Background Papers** **None**

**Wards Affected:** **All.**