

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 4 September 2018
Subject:	Community Equipment Store		
Report of:	Director of Social Care and Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cllr Paul Cummins Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care		
Is this a Key Decision?	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The review of the Community Equipment Store has now concluded. During the review, there was consultation and engagement with Citizens. Considering the findings of the review and the feedback from Citizens we now make some proposals about a new service approach. The proposed new service model is described within this report.

Recommendations:

- 1) Note and comment on the content of the report
- 2) Note the “new model”

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The new service model is proposed to improve the service provided to Citizens and the help manage the resources better.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The Council’s revenue budget for community equipment is £372.8k. There is also a £91k contribution from the Better Care Fund. To assist with revenue budget pressures in the last few years some of the equipment expenditure has been capitalised. Under the proposed service model, careful consideration of the equipment categories chosen to gift

will need to be made to ensure maximum value is obtained from equipment purchased allowing capitalisation where possible.

(B) Capital Costs

none

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):
Legal Implications:
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: yes
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: yes
Commission, broker and provide core services: yes
Place – leadership and influencer: yes
Drivers of change and reform: yes
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: yes
Greater income for social investment: yes
Cleaner Greener: yes

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources has been consulted and any comments have been included in the report. (FD5253/18)

The Head of Regulation & Compliance has been consulted and has no comments on the report. (LD4477/18)

(B) External Consultations

External consultation conducted to inform the approach contained in this report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Appendices:

- A What equipment we provide
- B A quick guide to the store for Committee members
- C The Legal Framework for the Community Equipment Store

Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction

Community Equipment is vitally important in supporting care at home. In recent years the increased focus on prevention, rehabilitation and care at home, together with an increasing ageing population has meant that the service has experience an increase in demand of 19% over an 8-year period and a 65% increase in collections in the same period.

2. The Section 75 Partnership Agreement

The Community Equipment Store undertakes a Health and Social Care function in that it delivers equipment to meet health needs and social care needs as such it is funded by Health via South Sefton and Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning. The legal framework for this arrangement is a Section 75 Agreement.

3. Background

The review commenced in 2016 following a report to Cabinet in November 2015. The initial findings were reported then to Overview and Scrutiny in June 2017 and the Health and Wellbeing Board in the same quarter. In late Autumn 2017 Consultation took place via the Council portal and subsequent attendance at community forums.

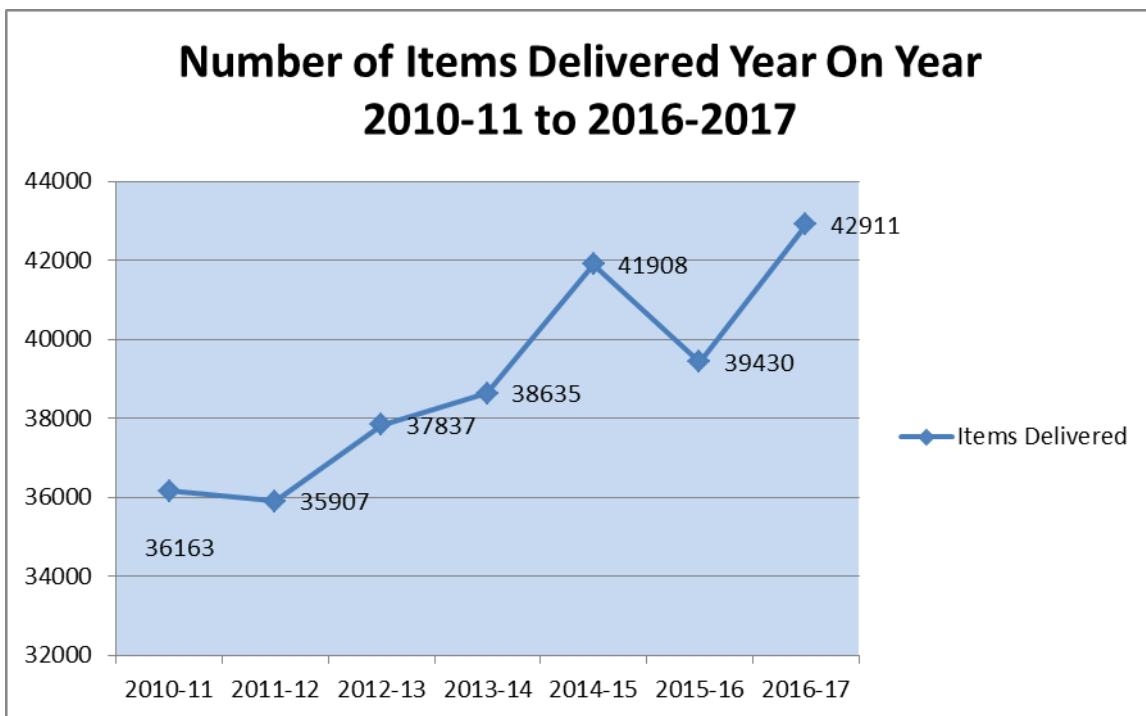
4. What the review examined

The National Policy Context - There has been limited policy specifically focusing on Community Equipment. In June 2006, the Department of Health launched an initiative “Transforming Community Equipment” to transform the way Community Equipment and Wheel Chair services were provided.

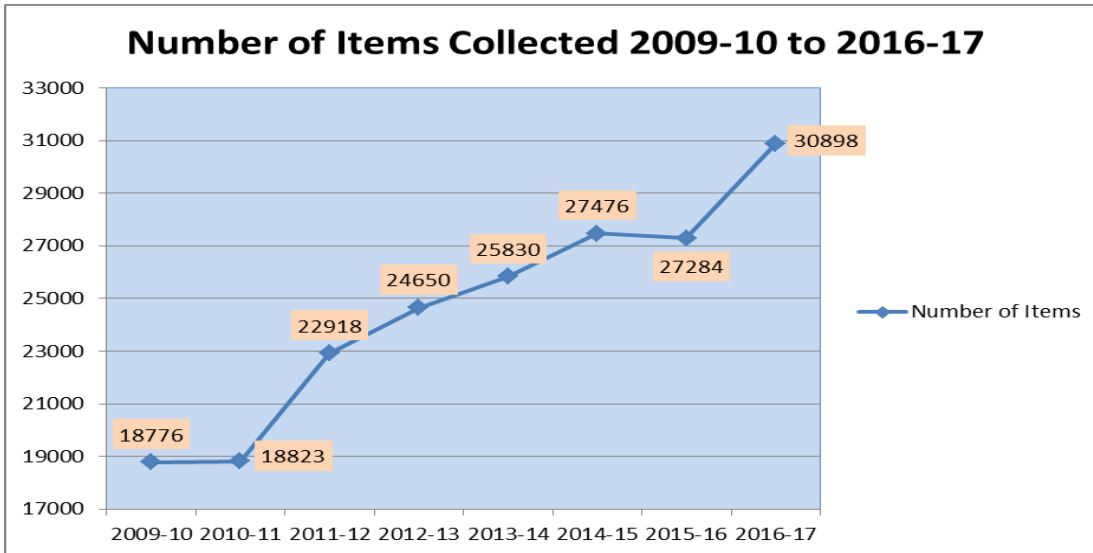
The Local Policy Context - The changes to funding and the policy agenda for Local Government continue to change significantly. This means that the Council must take a transformational approach to the delivery of our and partner services and as a result the role of the Council will inevitably change. This will include creating new revenue streams, new models of service delivery, new demand management methods and new operating models. Our Citizens expect public services to be delivered in a way that they recognise. In order to achieve the ambitions that are articulated through Imagine Sefton 2030, the Council, its partners and communities must work together. The impetus that the Vision brings will be a key factor in enabling the Community Equipment Service Review outcomes to be realised.

The Legal Framework for Equipment Provision - In terms of the Community Equipment Store there are many Acts and Regulations to be mindful of. These Acts and Regulations cover the span of duties across Health and Social Care. Others are more universal in application for example the Health and Safety at Work Act. Some of the Acts are more relevant to the assessment process prior to referral. The interpretation of the Legal Framework and the assessment processes need to be carefully considered when determining any recommendations.

Demand for Community Equipment (both Health and Social Care) - Number of Deliveries The chart below shows the increased demand for the number of deliveries from 2010 to 2016-17 demonstrating a 19% increase over the period. In 2010/11 the number of core stock items was reduced as small aids were removed from stock, which accounts for the drop in the number of items delivered at that time.



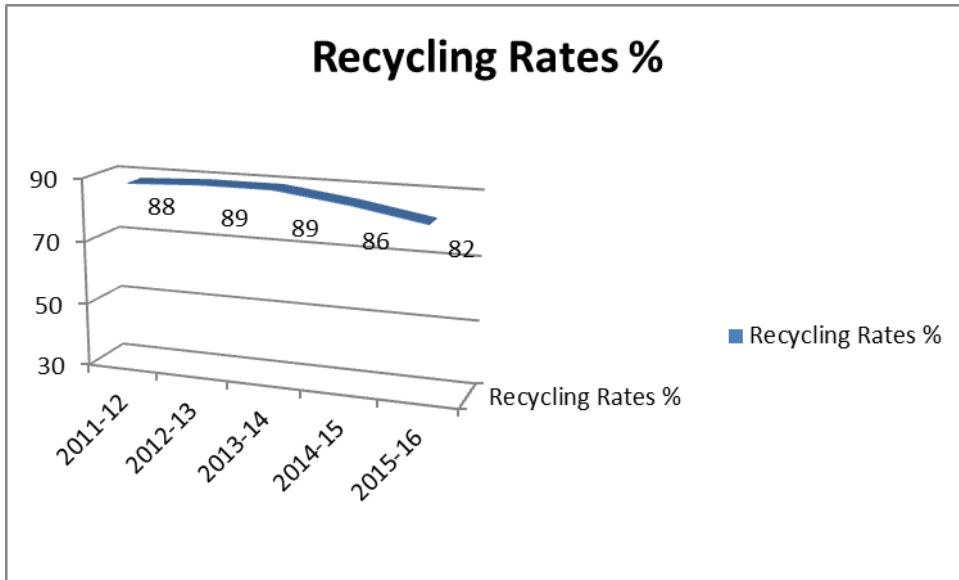
Collections by number of items - This chart shows the increased number of items collected over the period 2009-2016/17, a rise of 65% over the eight years.



The Budget Arrangements for the Provision of Equipment - Over many years the demand for the equipment has been more than the Allocated Budget and has required virements from other areas to enable the provision of Equipment for health and social care needs including to enable children to access education. For health, funded equipment the CCG have increased the investment to fund equipment.

What Equipment we provide – The types of equipment that has been provided has been shaped by the referrers experience of what meets client need, what is available by suppliers and what is found to be cost effective and fit for purpose. The price that equipment can be purchased for is often determined by the volume of orders expected at year beginning. Predicting spend is hugely important along with sound procurement processes and decisions.

Equipment and Recycling - in some circumstances equipment is issued less than twice in their useful life before return and decommission. With some items, it is a question of length of time they are in use and the purpose for which they are designed. The least expensive Stock item is £1.10 with some health funded equipment can cost many thousands. overall, the equipment supplied by social care is less expensive, needs no maintenance and when returned can have been out on loan a long period.



Some of the areas we explored are;

- a) **The increase in our older population and the increased demand for Equipment** - Although our performance is mostly within the timescales in terms of the delivery against the performance expected. We do think that our citizens expectation understandable e.g. to wait for a shower aid for potentially a week is too long.
- b) **Same Day requests for Equipment** - Nearly all the requests we receive for equipment to be delivered on the same day are from requests that are made between 12 -3 pm. However, with the high demand and no change to staffing levels it is an issue to be able deliver the equipment at a “reasonable” hour. (Some equipment for “end of life” for example a bed and mattress, is delivered after 8pm).
- c) **Constantly looking how we could do better** - The Service has put in place an operational level improvement plan. This will help progress some on the changes that can be done by working with partners better and using the combined resources and facilities better. The entire workforce is involved in this plan.

5. Citizen – Consultation

To ascertain the views of Citizens a consultation exercise was commenced on 21 August 2017 and ran until 29 November 2017. The reviewer also spent time attending meetings organised via Healthwatch to gain a greater understanding of Citizens views.

The aim of the consultation was to find out the experience of using the service and thoughts on:

- The option of citizens being able to collect small items of equipment from the store and/or other local places?
- The idea that we might no longer collect some equipment (that which is not usually reusable on return and relatively inexpensive to warrant collection and cleaning) when they are no longer needed?

The summary is as follows.

70% of people who completed a questionnaire said they had positive experience
55% of those had the equipment delivered and 45% had collected themselves
either at a hospital or from the store
61% of those were satisfied, 17% did not reply, 2% neither satisfied nor
dissatisfied and 3% were dissatisfied

In the main, customers were satisfied with the Service, praising the professional attitude of the staff and the service. Some customers felt that the wait for equipment was too long and referenced opportunities for the future could include the option of a delivery date and timeslots for customers.

There were 48 comments given in relation to the choice of collecting small items of equipment. Some people would be willing to pick up equipment as they believe it would be more convenient and would like the option to pick up from somewhere local to people who are unable to collect due to mobility issues and/or someone to collect on their behalf. Those who have shown an interest to collect, would like the option to collect, rather than it be compulsory.

We asked, *What could we do to make it easy for people to collect their own equipment?*

There were 35 comments given in relation to the choice of collecting small items of equipment. The key themes are:

- Local collection points across the Borough, making use of existing local venues/amenities, for example, day centers, council buildings, centers and hospitals.
- Flexibility for collection/returns – earlier/later times to collect and drop off and weekend collections for convenience would be welcomed, along with the option of timed slots.
- Communication – emailing/texting the customers when equipment is ready to collect and creating awareness of collection points and opening times and having clear instructions.

We asked, *Do you think it makes sense to stop collecting some items?*

There were 53 comments given in relation to the choice of collecting small items of equipment. The key themes are:

- Recognition that collecting some items of equipment incurs a cost to the Council and also that if equipment is not collected it is disposed of and goes to the landfill.
- Many people suggested that the equipment could be re-used/recycled and/or donated to charity.
- If there is an expectation for people to dispose of equipment, clear information would be required as to what can be disposed of and the options available for disposal.
- Some concern over not being able to dispose of equipment as not mobile or no access to transport.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to tell us anything else about their experience of using equipment. There were 24 comments received.

- Most people had a positive experience and felt the equipment was of help to maintain independence.

- Some people felt that the equipment was not collected fast enough and some of the equipment that people received was faulty.
- Some suggestions were given on how the service could be improved:
 - Physical and/or online catalogue
 - Emergency collection service
 - Small admin charge
 - Stickers/labels on equipment advertising which charities might be interested in the equipment.

6. What a Good Model Might Look Like

The offer of equipment is made following an assessment. This is a statutory obligation of both health and social care. That said, many citizens will not approach statutory services for assessment either by choice or by the fact that they are not aware and informed of this. The model thus touches on the elements that people will need on the basis that access to advice and information about equipment is useful and helpful to people along with the provision of timely equipment when needed.

Advice and Information at an Early Stage

People need easy access to high quality information, advice and guidance about equipment and whenever possible and appropriate, they need to be able to self-serve or their Carers and families need to be able to do so on their behalf. This approach allows people to maintain control and to exercise choice at whatever point they are at in their lives. Further, it helps the Council to use its resources more effectively.

Building on this, it is essential that when people contact Adult Social Care, they are given a positive response and support to help resolve the issues they face but by emphasising what people can do for themselves, what support is available from other organisations and what support is available in the community. The aim is to ensure that people receive care and support that is appropriate and that enables independence rather than fostering dependency. This means giving information about where people could go to try and buy equipment as well as access to on line directories and web based information and advice. For example, seftondirectory.com

There needs to be **a greater presence on the Council website** for people to know where to go and what to do.

We will do 4 things

- 1) We will make it clear how equipment can help
- 2) We will give information about where to go for advice and information
- 3) We will say what the entitlement to assessment is and what to expect
- 4) We will give information about what people can they can do for themselves if they chose not to have an assessment

The new model will look at the use of the Council website to support the elements described above.

When Equipment is needed

People need access to equipment in a timely, accessible and flexible way. By this we mean not having to wait a week for it to be delivered.

To help with timescales for delivery the store team and number of drivers has been increased by 5 new staff members. This will mean that for people who require equipment on the same day of referral will have the opportunity for that equipment to be delivered before 8pm at night rather than as is now when equipment can be delivered very late into the evening.

When equipment is requested **we don't think people should wait as long as they do currently.**

We will do three things.

- 1) We will enable equipment to be collected by Citizens – those who choose and are able.
- 2) We will continue to service the X satellite stores so that people leaving hospital can take the small items with them as they leave.
- 3) We will look at collections and remove the small items that are mostly not fit for reissue – this will mean that we can focus on delivery of items in a timely way.

When equipment is no longer needed

When the equipment is no longer needed. There should also be **an easy and quick way to return this**, we think that some of the equipment we collect is not fit to reissue, yet we collect it. We will **stop collecting some equipment.**

We will do four things.

- 1) We will work out a way for people to return the small items at a suitable location. Ensuring this is a choice and is done with safety in mind.
- 2) We will gift on issue some equipment and advise as to how to and where to dispose of when no longer needed.
- 3) Some equipment will continue to be collected and we will bring into place a standard and target for collections and report to commissioners on this standard and target.
- 4) All collections will have a prearranged collection slot of a two-hour period.

Doing more when we visit

People require and respond better to personalised services. The approach that works most effectively always puts users and carers at the centre and builds support round them rather than fitting people into rigid services. When delivering equipment there is an opportunity to ensure that the person is also “warm, well and connected”. A good service would ensure that at vital points it uses this opportunity to **“make every contact count”**.

We will do two things

- 1) All of our visiting staff will be trained in “making every contact count”
- 2) We will look at the number of contacts and assessments and visits people have before equipment is provided to make sure that we do things quickly, professionally and proportionate. This might mean staff are trained, remunerated and organised differently.

7. Conclusion

The review of the store has provided the opportunity for the commissioners of health and Social Care to have a good understanding of the demand and capacity associated with the provision of equipment. This has resulted in some key improvements yet to be fully realised in terms of increase in staff resource and changes to working practices. Most importantly it is the insight from people who have

used equipment that has been a key factor in the changes recommended. This review has also given the team working in the store an opportunity to input to the operational improvement plan. We will continue to work with Sefton Healthwatch and take account of citizens views and feedback on the experience of using the service.