

**CARE AND REPAIR FORUM SCOTLAND  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 1 JULY 2011  
AT FESTIVAL THEATRE, 13 NICHOLSON STREET, EDINBURGH**

**Present:** David Belfall, Chair  
Cllr Karen Clark, COSLA  
Gerry Power, NHS  
Stewart Wilson, Region 1  
Beverley Jones, Region 3

Robert Thomson, National Director  
Stephen Sandham, Scottish Government  
Angela O'Brien, Scottish Government

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

David welcomed those attending. Apologies were received from Richard Grant, Cllr Ronnie McColl, Les Robertson, Hanna McCulloch, Kay Hutcheson and Judith Leslie. David advised that we will try and establish a pattern for future meetings of May, August, November and February. He welcomed Gerry Power and Angela O'Brien. Gerry has replaced Mike Martin as the NHS representative on the Board. Stephen and Angela have taken over the responsibilities of Valerie Sneddon's section for Care and Repair within the Scottish Government.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Stewart, Beverley and Robert declared an interest in Agenda item 9 as they are members of the SFHA Pension Scheme.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

### **4. Matters Arising**

It was agreed that Robert would provide a quarterly report on website traffic.

It was agreed that Hanna should continue as a Board member to represent the interests of disabled people.

We have not yet seen the local authority reporting framework for Scheme of Assistance cases.

The Highland Regional meeting did not take place due to issues around the tendering process.

### **5. National Director's Report**

#### **Scottish Government**

Robert reported on the work of the Wider Planning for an Ageing Population working group.

The working group's review of evidence had highlighted five areas where improvements are needed in particular:

- **Housing adaptations services** – making alterations to people's homes to increase or maintain their independence and reduce the risk of an accident;
- **Repairs services** – making improvements to people's homes, particularly where basic amenities fall below standards which are acceptable today;
- **Support to move home** – helping older people with the emotional and physical demands of moving home, so they can move to a property which better suits their needs;
- **Housing with care or support** – making better use of our existing stock of housing which has been built specifically for older people, particularly sheltered housing; and
- **Personal resources and investment in housing** – assisting older people to use the assets in their home to provide themselves with the housing which is most suitable for their needs.

Five working groups have been set up to examine these areas of improvement and Robert has been invited to join the Housing Adaptations Services and Repair Services groups.

The Repair Services group has recognised the need to build a national picture on the extent of preventative support services that are available – handypersons, small repairs, gardening services – and has recently issued a questionnaire to all local authorities Care and Repair offices and other providers/commissioners to examine the coverage of these services.

### **Newsletter for Councillors**

Hazel has established a database of Elected Members within each local authority. She has contacted each local C&R office to request local news but the general view seems to be that the offices wish to advise Councillors themselves about local issues. It is proposed that CRS will issue a national newsletter within the next few weeks. There have been issues with software that are now resolved. Robert will send a draft to David, Ronnie and Karen for comment.

### **Age Scotland**

Hot Tips is Age Scotland's annual guide to older people on keeping healthy, safe and warm in winter. Each year, tens of thousands of older people benefit from this advice, published in the form of a booklet and containing a host of information and details of how to access key services. This year Hot Tips will be published as a calendar. The calendar will run from October 2011 to December 2012 and Care and Repair has been asked to contribute information for the months of October 2011, December 2011, January 2012, and May 2012.

## **Local Issues**

Orkney HA has contacted Robert to discuss some issues relating to the transfer. The staff are happy about the transfer process although there is still uncertainty about the level of funding that Orkney Council will commit.

Highland Council has given each office a one year contract on the understanding that it will tender Care and Repair services at the end of 2011 as a block tender. The tender will have a value of nearly £1 million. The Council has held an initial discussion with existing managing agents to set out their proposals for the tender process. Robert has been updated and has requested that the Council considers how to include as many community benefit clauses in the contract as possible. A further meeting, which Robert will attend, will take place July/August. The Board agreed that it was important that the service to clients should not be diminished and that the tender process should result in a stable organisation. Robert is to gauge the interest Care and Repair staff may have in bidding as a consortium to establish an independent service.

Moray Council has received adverse publicity about its decision to close the existing service. One client has challenged the Council in a letter published in the local newspaper to demonstrate how it can replicate the existing service and what cost savings will be achieved. The newspaper has also published letters from the C&R Advisory Group and from Robert. The Advisory Group asked Robert to attend a meeting to discuss how best to take forward the opposition to the decision. The Board expressed concern about this situation. Robert is to take legal advice about the TUPE implications. David was prepared to write to the Leader of the Council and MSPs if this would be helpful.

Gerry will contact Midlothian Council to discuss what progress has been made.

## **Regional Meetings**

No regional meeting dates have been agreed for July/August because of holiday arrangements.

## **Statistical Return**

The return was tabled for discussion. Stirling Council has now submitted a return and the figures will be updated. South Lanarkshire has chosen not to include financial details. Stephen and Angela requested copies of the report as it will help them build a case for continued support of C&R. It was noted that the Scheme of Assistance has moved grant assistance away from repair work to adaptations for disabled people and it was agreed that the imbalance needs to be addressed in order to meet the aspirations of the Wider Planning for an Ageing Population agenda. There was also discussion about how to gauge unmet need. David suggested we could compare the figures with the proportion of older and disabled people per local authority area.

## **6. Change Fund Applications**

The Board considered the report from James Grant, Policy Officer, on the outcomes for Care and Repair through the Change Fund.

Gerry explained that the Fund is not intended to promote a bidding process. It was designed to be a catalyst for change to allow a shift in the balance of care from institutional to primary and community settings. The Third Sector interfaces are having difficulty engaging with statutory bodies. Stephen confirmed that feedback showed that the housing sector has struggled to get access to the process. Amanda Britain has written to the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers to assess their

involvement with the application process. Gerry advised that Ministers have not given formal confirmation about the future of the fund, due to the spending review discussions.

It was agreed that Nigel Appleton's work should assist C&R offices in making the case for funding in future applications.

David asked if it would be helpful to hold a seminar on how C&R can access the Change Fund next financial year. Gerry advised that the Joint Improvement Team are holding a seminar in Aberdeen and planning an annual conference in December. Care and Repair should also look at how they can develop links with volunteer services and time banks.

David then invited Stephen to introduce the draft **National Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People 2012 – 2021**. Stephen explained that the Government had committed in its manifesto statement to publish a strategy by the end of 2011. The report has not been shown to Ministers so it may require revision before clearance for a summer engagement process. Robert is a member of the working group that will take the strategy forward. It is an evolving document and as the Board will not meet again until September, Stephen has shared the draft to allow comments. Richard submitted comments to Robert and these have been passed to Stephen. Specific comments made during the discussion were:

- We need to reflect on family/social responsibility as well as the community role in the future care of older people.
- It is expected that Telehealth and Telecare will play a significant role in this agenda.
- Scottish Government is looking for case studies. Robert confirmed that he will arrange for C&R to provide these.
- There is considerable support for Scottish Government to be more prescriptive about the recommendations but the report is written against the policy context set by the Parliament.
- The reference to equity release is vague and non-committal. Given the cuts in public spending this was an important potential source of funds for improvements.
- Are the figures on page 18 about numbers of adaptations trebling correct? How many of these were for disabled adaptations rather than being specifically directed at older people?
- Major repairs need to be included as maintaining the fabric of the property is essential to a policy that aims to assist people to remain in their own homes.
- Page 30 needs to be revised as most C&R offices provide handyperson's/small repairs services.
- It should be recognised that advice in a C&R context often involves elements of project management and can be highly involved. Fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues need to be considered.
- JIT cannot find evidence to support some of the figures referenced on page 4

David concluded the discussion by asking if there will be an action plan associated with the strategy. Stephen confirmed that some of the items are already being taken forward by working groups while the timescale for others are still to be considered. There would be a consultation process in the autumn when the wider C&R movement would have an opportunity to make an input.

## 7. Implementing the Performance Monitoring Report

The four regional meetings were given the opportunity to discuss the report and the main comments are:

- Some concerns about the increase in workload for administration staff
- Care must result in repair. The long term benefits of intervention on property may not be known for some time
- Small repairs/handyman staff do not have time to make assessments about outcomes
- Small repairs/handyman staff do not think in terms of the impact of their intervention therefore the sign off process may be problematic
- It will be difficult to obtain returns from all clients
- Clients are often referred by other agencies – should they be given an opportunity to comment
- Client may have desires for their life/properties. Are we here to meet their desires or their needs?
- Over time, how many C&R staff will indicate that the intervention was unsuccessful? Who will score the intervention as having made little or no impact?
- How are we defining advice cases?
- Can aborted works be made a strand for measurement?
- Will Councils and managing agents accept these new performance measures? CRS has no authority to introduce them
- Each region agreed that the main problem in the report is the officer's sign off assessment on page 18 of Contact's report.

Following the regional meetings, David, Richard, Jim and Robert met with COSLA on 30 May to discuss how we can get the Councils to buy in to these proposals. Ronnie McColl suggested that the best way to commence the discussion is to demonstrate to Councils that the performance measures link to their Single Outcome Agreements. It was agreed that CRS would make initial contact with each Community Planning Partnership and existing Council contacts to explain our proposals and seek views.

It was also agreed that it would be useful to invite C&R staff, Councils and managing agents to a seminar in September/ October, to allow an opportunity to discuss the progress and findings of the pilots and deal with any concerns and outstanding issues before moving towards full implementation of the new framework.

CRS has now written to each CPP and heads of housing/social work. To date only Fife Council has responded and it was mainly to seek clarification around the definition of some of the performance measures.

Jim and Robert met with Nigel on 3 June and agreed the following:

- Nigel will look at ways to acknowledge the issues raised at the regional meetings in his revision of the text of the final report
- We should use the pilot phase to examine concerns around page 18
- We will issue guidance to the offices that will participate in the pilot phase
- We will arrange a meeting with the managers of the pilot schemes in w/c 11<sup>th</sup> July or w/c 18<sup>th</sup> July

- Nigel has agreed to attend a seminar in September/October to review the experience and evidence emerging from the pilots. All C&R offices, managing agents and local authorities will be invited
- Nigel will aim to complete the section on financial multipliers before the 1 July Board meeting.

The offices that have volunteered to participate in the pilot phase are: Western Isles, Aberdeen, Inverness, Edinburgh and Dumfries and Galloway

## **8. Contact Consulting Paper on Accreditation**

The Scottish Government Review of Care and Repair recommended that Care and Repair Scotland introduce a 'simple accreditation scheme' for Care and Repair services. During the course of the consultative work on developing a Performance Framework, Contact Consulting were asked to consider how an accreditation scheme may work in Scotland. The Board discussed the proposals in the paper. It was agreed that the proposals are very helpful and offer a clear way forward. Stephen considered the main issue to be decided is whether we accept a self certification process or to have an external audit. There was discussion around the capacity of the central office to fulfil this role. This would have an impact on future funding discussions. It was also accepted that it could put the central office in the difficult position of having to both evaluate and assist local offices. David suggested that it would involve a lot of work initially to set up the systems but this would reduce over time as each office gained accreditation.

## **9. The Pensions Scheme**

The Pensions Trust has written to advise us that the Scheme Committee will require each participating employer to complete a financial assessment. The assessment will be used to alert the Committee to those employers that have an increased level of risk. The intention of the exercise is to mitigate risk to the Scheme.

The assessment will be carried out on an annual basis and this year returns must be made by participating organisations before 31 July 2011.

The assessment is based around two Key Performance Indicators:

1. The gross value of housing properties at the time of the latest audited accounts, indicating the basis on which the evaluation was made
2. The value of all secured debt against the properties as at the time of the latest audited accounts.

The return also requests information about operating surplus over the last 3 years accounting periods.

Robert has completed and returned the form, indicating that neither of these KPIs applies to our organisation, and requesting that The Pensions Trust provides an explanation as to how they will evaluate organisations like CRS that do not own properties, or have any secured debts.

The returns will be used by the Committee to assess the ability of the employers to meet their buyout cost. Our buyout cost is currently assessed at £147,000.

It would appear that the Committee will make a quick decision on the position of each organisation, as the appeals process would require to write to them with supporting evidence to challenge the risk category we are placed in by 31 August 2011.

## **10. Financial Statement**

The statement showed the budget for 2011/12. Scottish Government has given written confirmation of the funding. Robert will claim the first quarter payment next week. The next meeting will consider a paper on risks and financial procedures.

## **11. A.O.C.B.**

The date for the 2012 annual conference was discussed. There are merits in holding it at the end of March but the main issue is to avoid Easter holidays. Robert will discuss options with hotels.

## **12. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 30 September at 1.00am in Glasgow, with the venue to be confirmed nearer the time.