

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH THE CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

30 September 2014

Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT PROJECT

1 Purpose of Report:

To approve a request for funding to provide door chimes to people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

2 Information and Analysis:

This project aims to improve home security for people with sensory impairment, by supplying and fitting door chimes and pagers which would alert individuals with a hearing impairment to visitors at the door.

It has been found that service users who have a hearing impairment regularly leave their doors unlocked or open for visitors because they cannot hear when someone knocks on the door. This makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim of 'sneak in' burglaries and distraction burglars. This project will continue the work of previous successful projects in 2010/11 when 400 systems comprising door transmitter, door chime with flashing light and portable vibrating pager with chime and flashing light were fitted and 2012/13 when a further 300 systems were fitted. Evaluations of the previous two projects revealed that 68% and 77% of people receiving these units responded to a survey and 97% and 99% of these respondents said that the systems made them feel safer at home because they were now able to lock their doors knowing they would be alerted to visitors.

Previous projects have used the Handy Van scheme to distribute, fit and explain the systems provided. Recipients will again be identified through Adult Care referrals as part of the Universal Offer and Derbyshire Fire Rescue Service (DFRS) Home Safety Checks, multi-agency First Contact referrals and referrals from the third sector agencies helping to distribute the systems. Handy Vans will have access to the alarms as a stock item to install as they encounter clients in the course of First Contact etc. In addition, chimes will be distributed through community groups for example 50+ forums, Befriending Network Groups, Faith Organisations, Derbyshire Carers Association etc. The project will also link up with key countywide events such as the

DFRS Electric Blanket testing sessions where the alarms will be advertised as available.

The door chimes will be simple to install and operate, requiring no wiring or technical input for either bell push or chime unit. As part of the targeted process of distributing the alarms, non-statutory sector organisations e.g. Faith and Befriending groups will distribute application forms for the alarms to their clients. On receipt of completed forms the alarms will be given out and this will also enable the project to contact recipients as part the evaluation process.

The product comprises of a door transmitter with a battery powered portable door chime with a flashing light which can be carried to whichever area of the dwelling a user inhabits at any time. A stock of vibrating alarms will be purchased for those clients with sight and hearing loss. The project would also help ensure that Derbyshire residents with a hearing impairment received a home security service suitable to their needs. It is proposed to purchase 750 flashing door chime systems at approx £17.00 per unit, 500 Vibrating door chimes at approx. £13.00 and sufficient batteries to install both types of alarm, the total cost of the project is £20,000.

Feedback from both Derbyshire County Council Sensory Impairment Team and Derbyshire Handy Van Scheme providers was that the door chimes were well received. Further consultation with the Handy Van Operators has also identified that this type of alarm is regularly requested by residents with hearing impairments.

3 Financial Considerations:

£20,000 funding can be met from the Communities budget.

4 Other Considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

5 Officer's Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member approves sensory impairment project at an estimated total cost of £20,000 to be met from the Communities Budget.

David Lowe
Strategic Director
Health and Communities