

To: The Chief Administrative Officer of  
Each Health and Social Services Board

12 November 1980

Dear Sir

**THE FUTURE PROVISION OF THE HOME HELP SERVICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Introduction

1. The purpose of the circular is to set out the Department's policy on the future provision of the Home Help Service and to introduce a new "Model Scheme for the Provision of a Home Help Service".

Background

2. The Department recognises that the Home Help Service make a major contribution to the overall development of community care by enabling people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and thus avoids or delays the need for admission to hospitals or residential accommodation.
3. Prior to the reorganisation of the health and personal social services in 1973 each County and County Borough Welfare Committee operated a Home Help Service in its own area and the standard of service, rates of pay, etc for home helps varied considerably throughout the Province.
4. Following reorganisation there was a rapid development in the extent and cost of the Service and in 1974, following consultation with Boards, the Department issued guidelines for the Service in Circular HSS (OS2) 5/74 "Revised Model Scheme for the Provision of a Home Help Service".

THE CPSSAC REVIEW

5. In 1975 a review of the Revised Model Scheme was undertaken and the Central Personal Social Services Advisory Committee (CPSSAS) was asked to consider this and to advise the Department of its views. In June 1975 the Central Committee appointed a Sub-Committee "to examine and give advice on the future provision of the Home Help Service in Northern Ireland".
6. The Sub-Committee decided to pursue its examination in three stages:
  - (1) the needs of clients and the role and responsibilities of home helps;
  - (2) the administration and organisation of the Home Help Service;
  - (3) the recruitment and training of home helps;and to make interim reports as appropriate to the Central Committee.
7. A first interim report on the "Needs of Clients and the Role and Responsibilities of Home Helps" was published in August 1976 and a second interim report on the "Administration

and Organisation of the Home Help Service” in November 1978. The Sub-Committee is currently examining the “Recruitment and Training of Home Helps” as the third stage of its remit. The CPSSAC endorsed the interim reports and asked the Department to implement their conclusions.

8. In January 1979, the Department published both interim reports and sought views on their recommendations. Comments were received from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies, Trade Unions and professional bodies.

#### Future Development of the Service

9. The Committee’s examination of the Home Help Service afforded a welcome opportunity to consider the overall patterns and needs now emerging. With the rapid expansion in the extent and cost of the service, it is important to ensure that an approach is developed which concentrates available resources on the areas of greatest need and that the service is provided efficiently and effectively to meet identified needs. The review also provided an opportunity to look at the home help task and to consider the extent to which this can be modified to take account of current perceptions of needs.

#### Nature of Service

10. The Department fully endorses the Committee’s view that the service should continue to be largely a part-time and flexible service. This is a positive feature of the Service enabling it to respond quickly to the varying needs of clients. Boards will be free, however, to employ full-time home helps wherever this is considered appropriate.

#### Duties of Home Helps

11. The CPSSAC have advised that the duties of a home help, who is recognised as an integral member of the domiciliary care team looking after the needs of the client, should cover basic household tasks and some personal and social care duties. They prepared a list of those tasks and these are reproduced in Appendix 2 of the new Model Scheme annexed. The Department accepts those tasks as being appropriate to the service. It should be stressed, however, that the specific tasks to be carried out in any particular case depends wholly upon a professional assessment of the individual needs of each client.

#### Management of the Service

12. The CPSSAC recommended that the Home Help Service should continue to be managed within the existing social work team structure. After careful consideration of the Committee’s analysis of the respective team structures where home help organisers are employed and where they are not, the Department considers that the existing social work team structure is best suited to provide the Service.
13. At present the prime responsibility for determining whether the Home Help Service is required, and the nature and extent of that help in individual cases, rests with District Social Services Staff. While confirming this position, the Department considers that, as the Service has close links with the primary care services, it is essential to have effective liaison with the General Practitioner and Community Nursing Services in assessing the nature and extent of need in appropriate cases.

### Development of a “Night Sitter” Service

14. With a caring role having been identified for the Home Help Service the Department invited comments on whether the Service should be extended to include a “Night Sitter” Service. It is clear from the comments received that there is a demand for such a Service. A “Night Sitter” Service is not a nursing service; it is essentially an aid to families. It provides support for families looking after seriously ill relatives at home by removing one of the major causes of stress viz lack of sleep. As with the Home Help Service, effective liaison with other services such as community, medical and nursing services will be essential.
15. The only existing scheme in the Province is provided by the Extra Care Committee of the Belfast Voluntary Welfare Society which is grant aided by the Eastern Board. Boards are encouraged to consider whether within existing resources, such a service should be developed in their areas, either through support for suitable voluntary activity, or by setting up their own pilot schemes to assess need and effectiveness.

### Criteria and Priority Groups for the Service

16. The Department recognises that, as there is a continuing and increasing demand for the Home Help Service and the resources available are limited, it is important to ensure that those whose needs are greatest receive the service. To achieve this objective, criteria for assessing need together with a list of priority groups for the Service have been drawn. These are included as Appendix 1 of the new Model Scheme.

### Guidelines for the Allocation of Home Help Hours

17. The Department also endorses the Sub-Committee’s recommendation that guidelines for the allocation of home help hours should be drawn up to facilitate the equitable distribution of resources. Guidelines based on the recommended list of duties, are set out in Appendix 3 to the new Model Scheme.

### Need for Research

18. The Department considers that there is a need for operational research on a number of aspects of the Service including the cost effectiveness of the Service compared with other forms of care (ie residential, day and hospital care). The advice of the Central Economic Service of the Department of Finance is being sought on this.

### New Model Scheme

19. The Service will be provided free of charge, within an annual budget for the Service and in accordance with published criteria and priorities, to those persons in need;
  - (1) aged 75 and over; or
  - (2) in receipt of Supplementary Benefit (now Income Support) or Family Income Supplement (now Family Credit).
20. While the Department does not consider it opportune at present to introduce a completely free service as recommended by the CPSSAC, it has accepted the revised assessment and

charging arrangements proposed by the Committee, and these, with some adjustments, are included in the Model Scheme (Appendix 4).

21. At present where the service is provided as a result of injuries arising from motor accidents or from criminal injuries, the total cost incurred can be recovered out of compensation received (paragraph 3 of Circular HSS (OS2) 5/74 refers). The Department is reviewing the existing arrangements and proposes to issue further guidance in due course. In the meantime the present arrangements should continue.
22. The effective date for the introduction of the new Model Scheme is 24 November 1980 and all current and new cases should be reassessed under the new provisions. If on reassessment it transpires that the provisions of the old scheme were more advantageous to the client the former decision should stand until there is a relevant change of circumstances.
23. This Circular replaces Circular HSS (OS2) 5/74 which is hereby cancelled (but see paragraph 21 above).

Yours faithfully

P COULSON

## MODEL SCHEME FOR THE PROVISION OF A HOME HELP SERVICE

### Introduction

1. Article 15 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 provides:
  - “(1) In the exercise of its functions under Article 4(b) the Department shall make available advice, guidance and assistance, to such extent as it considers necessary, and for that purpose shall make arrangements and provide or secure the provision of such facilities (including the provision, or arranging for the provision of residential accommodation, home help, and laundry facilities) as it considers suitable and adequate,
  - (2) Subject to Article 99, the Department may recover in respect of any assistance, help or facilities under this article such charges (if any) as the Department considers appropriate”.
2. By virtue of the Functions of Health and Social Services Boards (No 1) Direction (Northern Ireland) 1973, responsibility for the provision of services in Article 15 is delegated to Boards. However, the Department retains responsibility for setting the charges to be levied. Boards are responsible for carrying out individual assessments and for the recovery of charges.
3. Boards have accepted that it is desirable that a uniform scheme should apply throughout Northern Ireland.

### Scope of the Service

4. Health and Social Services Boards will provide a Home Help Service, to such extent as is considered appropriate, for any person in need, where such help is requested and the Board is satisfied that it is required (and not otherwise available).
5. In determining the need for the Service, Boards will give effect to the Criteria and Priority Groups outlined in Appendix 1.
6. The precise nature of the home help will vary according to the assessed need of each individual client. The range of tasks covered by the Service is described in Appendix 2. Guidance on the allocation of home help hours, to be assessed on individual needs, is contained in Appendix 3.
7. Where a person in need does not wish to avail himself of the Board's Home Help Service, the Board may bring to his attention the names of suitable persons with whom he may wish to make his own arrangements.
8. Applicants may be required to submit a certificate from a Medical Practitioner.
9. Except where special circumstances exist, Boards will not employ as home helps, spouses or close relatives of persons in need. For this purpose a “close relative” is defined as:

Grandparent, grandchild, parent, child, brother, sister.

10. The person receiving the Service will be expected to provide the necessary equipment and cleaning materials for use by the home help, but exceptionally where these are not available in the household, Boards should supply them.
11. The Service will be provided free of charge to persons in need aged 75 or over and those in receipt of either Supplementary Benefit (now Income Support) or Family Income Supplement (now Family Credit). Boards will be expected, however, to operate within an annual budget for the service and in accordance with published criteria and priorities.
12. Charges for all other persons in need will be assessed in accordance with the provisions of Appendix 4.

**CRITERIA AND PRIORITY GROUPS FOR RECEIPT OF THE HOME HELP SERVICE**

Introduction

1. The aim of the Home Help Service is to provide practical assistance and care in their own homes for the elderly, the sick, the handicapped and families where parents are absent or incapacitated and who have no one else to help them. Without the provision of the Home Help Service, many people would have to go into a residential home or a hospital. As the resources available are limited it is important that the service is provided to those in the greatest need. To achieve this objective, criteria for assessing eligibility for the Service, priority groups and guidelines for the allocation of hours have been established. These should assist management and staff in ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of service throughout the Province.
2. The guidelines for the allocation of hours of service have been established by reference to the home help duties identified in the CPSSAC's first interim report and accepted by the Department. This list of duties is not a job description, but simply makes explicit what is already implicit in the home help task. The exact duties to be undertaken and the time allocated will vary according to the needs of the family or client.

Criteria

3. Home help may be provided for families and individuals who need help with essential family and household activities such as caring for children, cleaning, laundry, preparing and cooking food, shopping and attending to heating systems, because of the incapacity, over-loading or absence of the person normally undertaking family and household duties and where alternative help is not forthcoming.
4. Home help may be provided also for individuals who need help with personal care tasks such as dressing and undressing, washing and bathing, shaving and hairdressing, personal hygiene and toileting which might be undertaken by a competent and caring relative were he/she available.
5. Priority Groups

Priority for service will be given to families and individuals for whom alternative arrangements would have to be made if the Home Help Service was not provided to meet urgent need or to prevent deterioration in physical and/or social circumstances.

The priority groups are:

1. Those who live alone and have limited mobility and/or impaired self-care abilities necessitating help with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks.
2. Families and households where more than one person has limited mobility and/or impaired self-care abilities necessitating help with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks.

3. One-parent families, with children under school leaving age, where the parent is in full-time employment.
4. Families, with children under school leaving age, where one parent has limited mobility and/or impaired caring abilities necessitating help with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks and the other parent is in full-time employment.
5. Families or households, without children under school leaving age, where one adult has limited mobility and/or impaired self-care abilities, necessitating help with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks and the other adult/adults is/are in full-time employment.
6. Families caring at home for a severely disabled child where help is required with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks to provide support for the family.
7. Families or households, without children under school leaving age, where one adult has limited mobility and impaired self-care abilities necessitating help with essential household activities and/or personal and/or social care tasks and the other adult/adults is/are not in full-time employment, for example a household consisting of an elderly brother and sister.

**LIST OF DUTIES APPROPRIATE TO THE HOME HELP SERVICE**

1. **HOUSEHOLD TASKS**

Undertaking routine/regular household cleaning.  
Preparing and cooking food.  
Washing up.  
Lighting fire and bringing in fuel and/or water.  
Making beds.  
Washing and ironing personal clothing.  
Arranging for the laundering of bed linens and towels.  
Shopping – including errands such as collecting pension and/or prescriptions, posting letters, paying rent and other accounts.  
Emptying commode.

2. **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CARE TASKS**

Caring for children (ie helping families to care for children other than elsewhere specified eg taking children to school or playgroups).  
Helping with washing and bathing.  
Helping with dressing and undressing.  
Helping with shaving and hairdressing.  
Helping with personal hygiene and toileting.  
Contacting GP (ie facilitating contact with GP for example by use of telephone to make appointments or request visits).  
Supervising medicines (ie as would a competent, caring relative).  
Encouraging the use of aids provided.  
Encouraging the continuation with any exercises prescribed.  
Encouraging the continuation with any medication or treatment.  
Encouraging contact with relatives.  
Encouraging the continuation with any hobby or social activity.

NB: This list of tasks is not a job description but simply a composite list of tasks with which families may need help. The exact duties to be undertaken and the time allocated will vary according to the needs of the client or family.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF HOURS BASED ON TASK TIMES FOR ONE RECIPIENT**

The daily times allocated to specific tasks are provided in ranges to take account of differing circumstances and, in relation to the weekly allowance, reflect the maximum time allocation considered reasonable for each type of activity. They are considered flexible enough to meet all normal contingencies and are essentially a guide by which to apply consistent treatment between clients while taking account of their individual needs and enabling them to maintain whatever independence is possible.

<b><u>TASK</u></b>	<b><u>DAILY TIME</u></b>	<b><u>WEEKLY ALLOWANCE</u></b>
Cleaning accommodation	0 to 30 minutes	Up to 3 hours
Preparing cooking, serving meals	0 to 60 minutes	Up to 7 hours
Lighting fire and bringing in fuel	0 to 20 minutes	Up to 2 hours 20 minutes
Carrying water	0 to 20 minutes	Up to 2 hours 20 minutes
Making bed	0 to 5 minutes	Up to 35 minutes
Washing and ironing	0 to 20 minutes	Up to 2 hours
Shopping / errands / pension collection / rent payment / contacting GP	0 to 10 minutes	Up to 1 hour
Helping with dressing	0 to 30 minutes	Up to 3 hours 30 minutes
Helping with undressing	0 to 15 minutes	Up to 1 hour 45 minutes
Helping with washing, shaving, personal hygiene and toileting	0 to 30 minutes	Up to 3 hours 30 minutes (includes time allowance for weekly bath and hair washing etc).
Social Support	0 to 60 minutes	Up to 6 hours
Miscellaneous		Special case to be made for any allocation under this heading.

## **ASSESSMENT OF CHARGES FOR THE HOME HELP SERVICE**

1. In the assessment of the charge, account will be taken of the income of the person in need and his or her spouse in accordance with the following provisions.
2. Income will include:
  - a. salaries, wages, pensions, business profits etc;
  - b. child benefit and other social security benefits and allowances, except where disregarded under paragraph 5 below;
  - c. full value of emoluments, but where these include accommodation, a "set off" figure representing the notional rent will be made after consulting a local valuation officer or the employer;
  - d. rent from property owned and let, but "set off" will be allowed for maintenance and repairs in accordance with the advice of the local valuation officer;
  - e. farm income, which will be assessed in whatever way is most appropriate, eg. by reference to the income tax returns of the previous year;
  - f. £1 out of any payment made by a lodger;
  - g. £1 out of any payment from each non-dependent member of the family living in the household.

### **Treatment of Capital Resources**

3. The value of any interest which the person in need, or the spouse, may have in the dwelling in which he or she resides will be disregarded.
4. The first £3,000 of any capital resources not disregarded by virtue of the last paragraph will be disregarded. A weekly income of £1 will be assumed for each complete £250 above that figure, and this income will be taken into account in full. Any interest on such capital will be disregarded. From 9<sup>th</sup> April 2001, where a claimant is aged 60 or over, or who has a partner aged 60 or over, the first £6,000 of capital is disregarded. The notional weekly income of £1 will apply to each £250 over £6,000.

### **Income to be Wholly Disregarded**

5. The following should be disregarded in full:
  - a. attendance allowance;
  - b. disability living allowance.
  - c. independent living fund payments

### **Income to be Partially Disregarded**

6. Income to be partially disregarded is as follows:
  - a. the first £5 per week of any earnings of a single person, or the first £20 per week for a person in need who is also the head of a one-parent family;
  - b. the first £10 per week of any earnings where the claimant is a member of a couple;

- c. the first £5 per week of any income other than earnings;
- d. the first £20 per week of regular charitable payments and voluntary payments made for the benefit of the client other than payments made for the maintenance of a claimant's family; and subject to the overall disregard of £20, £10 of war disablement/war widow's/war widower's pension or analogous pensions; and
- e. that part of training allowances payment which relates to allowances for lodgings, travelling expenses and other specific expenses.

**Income to be Taken Fully into Account**

- 7. Where the income is an occupational pension or redundancy payment, it should be taken fully into account.

**Deductions from Income**

- 8. The following deductions should be made from income:
  - a. allowances in respect of the requirements of dependent members of the family as provided for in regulations made from time to time by the Department in respect of the payment of Income Support. The present rates are outlined in Appendix 5.
  - b. rates, ground rent and either mortgage repayments or rent of the house by the householder;
  - c. reasonable travelling expenses incurred in going to and from place of employment, in visiting a member of the family who is in hospital, or for children going to and from school;
  - d. hire purchase and rental payments (allowed on items considered essential) of up to 20% of net income, subject to a minimum of £2 per week. Where no hire purchase exists, a basic replacement element of £2 per week;
  - e. any reasonable amount attributed to repairs to property (where no exact figure is available, an amount of 20% of general rates paid may be deemed in respect of owner occupiers);
  - f. other outgoings considered reasonable.

**Calculation of Contributions Towards Home Help Service**

- 9. After taking account of the disregards and deductions from income, and subject to paragraphs 10 and 11, the amount payable towards the home help service will be in the following proportions of the residue:

30% of the first £3, 50% of the second £3, 70% of the third £3 and 100% of the remainder.

Amounts payable in respect of the first £9 of the residue are as follows:

Residue	Under £2	£2	£3	£4	£5	£6	£7	£8	£9
Amount Payable	NIL	£0.60	£0.90	£1.40	£1.90	£2.40	£3.10	£3.80	£4.50

The amount payable thereafter will increase penny for penny with any increase in the residue over £9.

- 10. Where the assessed charge amounts to £3 per week or less, no charge will be made for the service. Charges will be rounded off to the nearest 5 pence.
- 11. No person shall be charged more than the actual cost of providing the service (wages of home help plus employer's national insurance contributions plus 10% to cover administrative costs).



**ASSESSMENT OF CHARGES - ALLOWANCES TO BE SET AGAINST INCOME**

1.	ALLOWANCES	10 April 2003
	<b>Single People</b>	<b>per week</b>
	16 and 17 years old	£32.90
	18 to 24 years old	£43.25
	25 years old and over	£54.65
	18 years old and over and bringing up a child on their own	£54.65
	<b>Couples</b>	
	both under 18	£65.30
	with at least one of the couple 18 or over	£85.75
	<b>For each child in the family</b>	
	Beginning on, and including, that person's date of birth and ending on the day preceding that person's nineteenth birthday.	£38.50

2. **PREMIUMS**

Premiums are extra weekly amounts for people with special needs. A person qualifying for more than one premium will normally only get the premium that gives the most money. However, where applicable, the family premium, the disabled child premium, the severe disability premium and the carer premium will be paid in addition to any other premium payable.

**For people with children**

If they have at least one child, they qualify for the **family premium** of £15.75  
This will include new lone parent claims from 6 April 1998.

For those entitled to Income support on 5 April 1998, if they are bringing up one or more children on their own they qualify for the **family premium** of £15.90 (only if this premium was included in their Income Support applicable amount on that date.)

If they have a child who is getting disability living allowance or who is registered blind, they qualify for the **disabled child premium** £41.30

## For long-term sick or disabled people

Single People      Couple

If they or their partner are registered blind, or are getting certain benefits because they are disabled or cannot work, such as long term incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, attendance allowance, disability living allowance or disability working allowance they qualify for the **disability premium**

(a) £23.30    (b) £33.25

If they are living alone (or with another person who is getting attendance allowance or the care component of a disability living allowance at the highest or middle rate) and getting attendance allowance or the care component of a disability living allowance at the highest or middle rate, and no one is getting invalid care allowance for looking after them, they qualify for the **severe disability premium**, paid as well as any other premium that is payable.

(a) £42.95    (b) £85.90    if both qualify

If they or their partner are getting invalid care allowance, or have claimed invalid care allowance, but it could not be paid because the person who claimed already had another higher benefit such as widows pension they qualify for the **carer premium**. This premium is paid as well as any other premium that is payable. Couples can get a double premium if each partner satisfies one of these conditions.

(a) £25.10    (b) £50.20    if both qualify

## For people aged 60 or over

If they or their partner are 60 to 74 years old, they qualify for the **pensioner premium**

(a) £47.45    (b) £70.05

If they or their partner are 75 to 79 years old, they qualify for the **enhanced pensioner premium**

(a) £47.45    (b) £70.05

If they or their partner are 80 years old or over, or 60 to 79 years old and getting attendance allowance, disability living allowance, long term incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, or are registered blind, they qualify for the **higher pensioner premium**

(a) £47.45    (b) £70.05