

Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol
Cymru
Royal College of Nursing
Wales

Royal College of Nursing
Ty Maeth
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27 January 2009

Ann Jones AM
Chair of the Equality of Opportunity Committee
The National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1NA

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Dear Ms Jones,

Re: Committee Inquiry into Home Maintenance and Adaptations Services for Older People in Wales

The Royal College of Nursing in Wales believes that this is an extremely important inquiry into an invaluable service which too often does not receive the attention or resources it requires. The comments below are drawn from the experience of our district nursing members. I regret that we were unable to provide these comments to you before the end of your written consultation period but I do hope these comments will still be of assistance to you.

- Our members report that information on home maintenance and adaption services and eligibility criteria is frequently not supplied to them. This leaves our members unable to advise patients increasing the frustration of both.
- The process of awarding a grant takes far too long and the patient has to wait an unacceptably long time for the equipment to be installed. As well as the impact on the patient and their family life this also has an effect on the NHS system as a whole with patients delayed from entering hospital because others cannot leave.
- There are frequently long delays in obtaining the services of an occupational therapist, thereby delaying the submission of a grant application
- There are cases where neither Social Services nor Health Authority are prepared to recognise whose responsibility it is to provide the equipment and funding has to be sought from charitable sources because of a lack of flexibility on the part of administrators.
- Sometimes the rules on eligibility of application are unnecessarily rigid meaning that our members cannot request the most appropriate solution, e.g. the installation of a stair lift or through the floor lift is requested when a simpler (and cheaper) solution is to adapt a ground floor room.

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*Eiddo ac incwm y Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol: elusen gofrestredig, rhif 276435
RCN property and income: registered charity, number 276435*

***Mae'r RCN yn cynrychioli nyrsys a
nyrsio, gan hyrwyddo rhagoriaeth
mewn arfer a llunio polisiau iechyd***

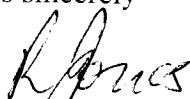
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nursing, promotes excellence in
practice and shapes health policies***



- Grants are not available for a new build, e.g., a disabled man building a new property to meet his needs was not able to request a grant for a Clos-o-mat toilet to be installed from the outset, but had to have an ordinary toilet installed and subsequently applied for a grant for a Clos-o-mat.
- Equipment usually comes with a five-year service contract. At the end of the five years, service and repair becomes the responsibility of the patient and this may be beyond their means.
- When a patient dies the family is left with the responsibility of removing the equipment and disposing of it. This is sometimes an expensive process and as the equipment is often scrapped it is also a waste of potential resources.
- There is often inadequate supervision of the work undertaken. Contractors who do shoddy work or leave the work incomplete face no penalty and continue to get work from the Local Authority or the NHS.
- Elderly people frequently put money aside for their funeral and find it distressing to declare this when an assessment is made on the ability to pay.
- Owners of former council owned houses have a much poorer service than many others. They have frequently bought houses that were already in poor repair and these houses lack central heating, insulation and double glazing.
- Minor works (up to £350) are undertaken by the Care and Repair Agency and our members report an excellent service from this agency.

If you would like to discuss this further with me or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely



RICHARD JONES
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, RCN WALES

ABOUT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING (RCN)

The RCN is the world's largest professional union of nurses, representing 400,000 nurses, midwives, specialist community public health nurses, health care support workers and nursing students, including over 23,000 members in Wales. The majority of RCN members work in the NHS with around a quarter working in the independent sector. The RCN works locally, nationally and internationally to promote standards of care and the interests of patients and nurses, and of nursing as a profession. The RCN is a UK-wide organisation, with its own National Boards for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The RCN is a major contributor to nursing practice, standards of care, and public policy as it affects health and nursing.

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies.