



**The University of Sydney**

Faculties of Health Sciences and Architecture

**Home Modification & Maintenance:  
Information Clearing House Project**

## **Advisory Committee Minutes**

### **Meeting of the HMM Information Clearinghouse Advisory Group**

**Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 2002**

**At 3.00 p.m.**

**Deans Meeting Room, Darlington Campus,  
The Faculty of Architecture,  
the University of Sydney**

#### **Present**

Ms Jane Bringolf (Independent Living Centre of NSW)  
Mr Cec Maloney (Home and Community Care Policy, Dept of Ageing Disability & Home Care)  
Ms Susanne Pierce (Manager Policy Innovation, Dept of Ageing Disability & Home Care)  
Mr Mark Nutting (Housing Policy NSW)  
Mr Neil Tucker (Council On The Ageing)  
Mr Louise Prosser (NSW Statewide Home Modification Service)  
Ms Rebecca Rodgers (Commonwealth Department of Veterans Affairs NSW State Office)  
Ms Christine Regan (NCOSS NSW Council Of Social Service)  
Ms Christine Regan (NCOSS NSW Council Of Social Service), Mr Dougie Herd (Physical Disability Council of NSW Inc)

#### **Apologies**

#### **Chair**

Assoc Prof Peter Phibbs (Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney)

#### **Note taker**

Ms Catherine (Katy) Bridge (School of OLS, Faculty Of Health Sciences, University of Sydney)

#### **Notes**

#### **Actions**

##### **1 Welcome, introduction & apologies**

Peter welcomed everyone to the meeting and because a number of people were different to those at the first meeting each person gave a brief précis of their interests and role. Cec and Suzanne are replacing Phillipa Brennan and Denise Ward due to the internal restructure at DADHC. Alan Meldrum, the Manager of the NSW Statewide Home Modification Service was replaced by

## Notes

## Actions

Louise Prosser as he is currently on long service leave.  
Stephanie Smith has resigned as she has been transferred from the housing portfolio and this position is currently vacant. Robert Champion was on jury duty so sent his apologies.

### 2 Minutes from the last meeting

Neil Tucker pointed out a grammatical error but all agreed that the content was an accurate record and were acceptable.

### 3 Invitation to Level 1 & 2 Home Maintenance and Modification Services for addition representatives

Katy reported that she had spoken with Cec Maloney and that he had suggested Sue-Ellen Tange, Sandi Lightfoot-Collins, Anne Reeve and or Ian Maxwell might be approached. Katy has also written to Pam Tobin the Administrator for the State Council HMMS about this requesting advice on how to approach this in the most inclusive manner.

Awaiting response from the HMMS State Council.

### 4 Feedback from two previous papers

Katy reported that Alan Meldrum circulated the papers to representatives from the level 1 and 2 services as requested and some written feedback was received. Jane Bringolf gave her apologies for not responding.

### 5 Home Maintenance and Modification Service Provider Needs Assessment paper

Katy spoke to this and explained that this was still in progress. All three levels of the Home Maintenance and Modification Services are being interviewed. So far level 3 and all but two of the level 2 services had agreed to be interviewed and the level 1 interviews were in progress. Once the interviews are finalised the draft summary paper will be sent out to all the Home Maintenance and Modification services who participated for feedback and validation prior to it being made public.

In general it appears that whilst most services have access to a computer and use email, very few use the web for getting information or to provide information about their services online. Katy then went on to comment briefly on some of the key themes so far emerging:

Spatial requirements -The primary source for this information is the referring OT and the Australian standards on access and

## Notes

## Actions

mobility. However a number of services have raised concern about access to Standards information primarily because of the high cost burden to individual services.

Carer requirements -The provision of this sort of information is seen to be the responsibility of the OT.

Product requirements - Most services were aware of the Independent Living Centre Services, but few used them on a regular basis despite a number of services commenting on difficulties locating new or unusual products. Most product information required is obtained through sales reps and at home modification meetings.

Requirements for community inclusion -Almost no services had information available in anything other than English.

Requirements for meeting standards of care -All services have HACC standard of Care Documentation the major concern here surrounded the amount of time it took to develop and maintain them. Sharing these resources would ease individual service administrative load and improve uniformity across services.

Disability access components -Services typically either fabricate or stock items in high demand such as grab-rails. Whereas home modification networks and OT's are the primary source for specific or unusual information. No services have so far mentioned looking for or responsibility for providing information sheets about topics such as decking, ramps or non-slip finishing to consumers.

Funding policy -This varied widely across services but key issues appear to be concern surrounding lack of or unclear policy to assist in determining cut-offs between maintenance and modification; client contributions; job costing; and a general lack of information surrounding sourcing of alternative funds.

Building and Land Regulation-The major concern here was building applications and the length of time this required. A number of service providers have attempted to ease this process by promoting relations with planning personnel.

Natural environment - A number of services felt this was not a priority as most modifications provided were indoor. A few services mentioned this in terms of the need for follow through and in terms of ongoing maintenance.

Built environment -This was only mentioned in the context of repair and maintenance and the impact this had on the decisions surrounding modification viability.

## Notes

### 6 Clearinghouse website development

Peter spoke to this and he handed around the mock up of the home page for comment and feedback and all members were invited to have a look and provide feedback on this, <http://www.arch.usyd.edu.au/hmm/>. Peter then went on to illustrate how the resources available will be ranked and sorted into relevant topic areas. A screen dump of the admin page for achieving this was also handed out to illustrate this again members were invited to contribute feedback and comments <http://www.arch.usyd.edu.au/learn/filelib/listcontents2.cfm>. The general feeling was that this was the right direction to proceed. Katy then mentioned that a half day focus group was being arranged to test the usability of the website on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. The intent is for 6-10 stakeholders (i.e. Home Maintenance and Modification services plus OT's consumers and building industry people) to attend the workshop. Each attendee will be given a number of typical problem tasks to be completed that require them to find information using the website and then comments and feedback will be sought regarding the overall usability rating.

### 7 Clearinghouse Evidence-based practice proforma development

Katy spoke to this, a significant point being that the starting place for evidence based practice in the home modification area differs quite markedly from the more traditional medical one. For instance within medicine a systematic review such as that conducted by the Cochrane group generally focuses on the research already undertaken and critique is typically around sample sizes, methodology and generalisability of results. In contrast, the home modification area we are dealing with has a limited or only indirectly applicable existing research base. Thus the reeded-decking example was presented to demonstrate the suggested evidence based process as applied to a question generated by practitioners from the area and to get feedback about the usefulness or otherwise of the process undertaken. Louise commented that the Home Maintenance and Modification services would only be interested in findings. Whilst there was general agreement that this was true. A number of people felt that

## Actions

All present agreed to provide comments as soon as possible by email, phone or in writing re look and usefulness.

Anyone interested in attending the half-day HMMInfo web usability focus group. Please contact Katy on 9351-9376 to book your place.

All present agreed to provide comments as soon as possible either by email, phone or in writing as to the suitability or otherwise of the example in terms of it's suitability for an industry relevant proforma.

## Notes

both a summary focusing on the findings and the whole document should be made available for credibility and transparency reasons. Rebecca also expressed interest in having access to a full compilation of the relevant reference material. A lively debate then ensued, particularly surrounding the findings section and the need to make this information available to interested parties. Suzanne raised some concern about the wording and the legal ramifications. Katy reiterated that the document was only being presented to the committee for feedback and as such was at this stage to be considered as both draft and confidential. Mention was made of COTA services in ensuring that material is understandable to consumers.

## 8 Expert Panel Formation

Katy spoke of the intent to invite three stakeholder groups (occupational therapists, builders professionals & consumers) to act as advisors for the evidence based practice process. Jane asked if this was the best process as multidisciplinary input was what was needed. Katy said that research from overseas indicated that separate groups tended to work better in terms of ensuring balanced and unbiased input but that the end goal of course was to integrate and share input. Some preliminary discussions had been held with OTAustralia re formalising the invitation process for the occupational therapist group. Jane asked if this was being delegated to the NSW occupational therapist special interest group but Katy indicated that she didn't think so as a number of academics with expertise in home modification from across Australia have already expressed an interest in participating.

There was also some discussion about when to invite some of the other stakeholders such as Insurers and financial organisations to participate. The consensus was that this was an important step but that this could wait until the project was more developed.

## 9 Next Working Group Meeting date

Meeting closed at 5:10p.m.

## Actions

Neil Tucker to supply information as to COTA consumer review service.

3.00 pm the 21 of November 2002 at the Faculty of Health Sciences East Street Lidcombe.