

To: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Subject:	
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	A NEW DEAL FOR LONE PARENTS	
Date: 30 July 1997	Ref: CMcA/LC/REP.256	

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update members on a new initiative for lone parents which has been developed jointly by the Benefits Agency and Employment Services.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Government has recently unveiled its plans to assist the unemployed, with particular attention to lone parents getting back in to work. A series of pilot schemes are to be established across the UK in order to introduce the new proposals, including the Clyde Valley.

3 New Deal for Lone Parents

- 3.1 The New Deal for Lone Parents will be introduced nationally across the UK in October. Prior to this there are 8 areas in the UK that are to have the programme launched early. The Clyde Valley is one of these areas and the only one in Scotland. The area covers parts of North and South Lanarkshire and effects lone parents who receive benefit through the Motherwell Benefits Agency Office (Motherwell, Shotts and Wishaw areas).
- 3.2 In the Clyde Valley the programme was launched on 22 July 1997. It is estimated that there are 2,400 lone parents in the Clyde Valley area who meet the criteria, with a further 300 new claims forecast to be made during the life of the programme totalling to 2,700 the number of lone parents who can participate in the scheme. To be eligible for the programme a lone parent's youngest child should be between 5 - 12.
- 3.3 The programme is purely voluntary and for the first time it offers lone parent direct access to the training and job seeking network. Traditionally lone parents received their funding via income support and therefore were not targeted for training and job seeking programmes. The New Deal for Lone Parents will change this and will provide direct access to a wide range of advice and assistance with regards to training, jobs and childcare. In addition, the new deal now offers for the first time the opportunity for lone parents to claim help with childcare costs of up to £60 per week.
- 3.4 Whilst the programme is certain to be introduced nationally across the UK in October, the early launches are being used as test cases in the development of the programme. This is a new area of assistance for Employment Services, and the results and conclusions reached in this area will have implications for the delivery of this programme throughout Scotland. The interest to date has been difficult as the programme has been launched in the school holidays which is always a difficult period for parents, with regards to childcare. It is expected that there will be an upsurge in interest in the programme in September.

4 North Lanarkshire

- 4.1 The programme will be introduced throughout the rest of North Lanarkshire in October along with the rest of the UK. Currently there is no information available on the number of lone parents which currently receive income support. The table below is based on census information and refers to the total number of lone parent households including both those employed and unemployed. It is not possible to comment on a possible percentage of those likely to be affected by the introduction of this programme.

4.2 Table 1

Number of lone parent households in North Lanarkshire

	Southern Division	Central Division	Northern Division	North Lanarkshire
Total Numbers	2,552	2,087	1,368	5,963
% of Households	4.72%	5.53%	4.77%	4.94%

Source: 1991 Census

5 Information leaflet

- 5.1 An information leaflet outlining the services available to lone parents and the benefits of the new programme is available from the Economic Development Unit.

6 Recommendation

Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



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