

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

<p>Social Work Committee : 5th October, 1999.</p>	<p>Subject : Expansion of Support to Very Young Children</p>
<p>From : Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work Prepared by : Sandra Paterson, Principal Officer, Child Care</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the detail of proposals for expansion of support to very young children.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Scottish Executive, in line with their family support strategies allocated £217,000 full year costs to North Lanarkshire Council for the Social Work Department to expand its support to very young children, that is children aged 0 - 3 years of age.

2.2 At the same time, North Lanarkshire Council was allocated funding for the Education Department to expand their provision.

2.3 It was requested by the Scottish Executive that these two strands of money be used to develop jointly a strategy which would support vulnerable families. This was reported to Social Work Committee earlier this year with broad proposals for how it was intended to spend this funding. This report now provides details.

2.4 There has been consultation between the Education Department, the Health Promotion Section of Lanarkshire Health Board and the Social Work Department on the social work proposals. There is to be ongoing discussion with the National Health Service Primary Care Trust regarding the social work proposal.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The Social Work Department already has a family support strategy in place and a number of facilities and services which are available to users such as respite care, home care, the family support team out of hours and the parent and child team which also provides parenting skills groups for very young mothers. Training has recently taken place to ensure that best practice for these groups was shared across the department.

3.2 This strategy and services are set within the context of the Children's Services Plan.

3.3 There is therefore within each geographical locality of the six area teams basis for support to very young children.

- 3.4 This proposal intends to build on existing services and good practice and seeks to expand these, while ensuring that all relevant agencies and departments are involved in the further development of these services.
- 3.5 The two main Social Work Department services will be the provision of individual support to families through a home care worker who could offer practical advice and guidance, the provision of parenting skills groups and facilitation of access to other community services. The latter could be co-led with other relevant departments or agencies such as Health Promotion, or Education staff from local early years provision.
- In Year 1, the proposal will set up multi-agency steering groups in each area team location to identify local need, existing services and the gaps.
- 3.6 Funding will be 'dedicated' for the specific purposes agreed, performance indicators will be fixed, targets set and a system of evaluation and feedback will be put into place.
- 3.7 One of the main principles involved in the development of the service will be parents and carers as partners.
- 3.8 There will be scope for health visitor involvement or community services staff involvement as well as direct support to the child through attendance at local early years provision where appropriate.
- 3.9 In the second year it is intended to further extend the service through the appointment of co-ordinators and recruitment of volunteers.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 The development seeks to fully utilise existing services and resources but in a focused strategic approach targeted specifically at vulnerable families who have very young children.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Committee is asked to note these proposals (see Appendix 1 for further details).



**JIM DICKIE,
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
SEPTEMBER, 1999.**

(For further information contact Sandra Paterson, Principal Officer, Child Care - Telephone 01698 332032).

PROPOSALS FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES **DEVELOPMENT FUND**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposal is set in the context of the Children's Services Plan and the Family Support and Child Protection Strategy. Relevant departments and agencies have been consulted such as Health and Education.
- 1.2 The use of volunteers has been proposed. There are already other initiatives within North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department which utilise volunteers.
- 1.3 The use of the existing voluntary sector provision would be considered on a local basis.
- 1.4 The proposals encompass a broad range of support including health promotion, support and advice for parents regarding health issues and parenting skills groups as well as individual practical support for parents.
- 1.5 The proposal is strategic in that it is intended to establish core support elements in each area within North Lanarkshire. However, within this strategic framework local needs can be identified and prioritised.
- 1.6 While funds are still limited and services need to be targeted to vulnerable families, there requires to be an assessment of need. However, where the provision of services can be delivered by a range of departments either jointly or separately within the context of more general or universal support services then these services can be made or be viewed as less stigmatising. Ensuring that the services are provided in partnership with parents can also destigmatise them. This may include regular consultation and feedback to users and a discussion at the local child care partnership.
- 1.7 Wherever possible the local steering groups will ensure that local initiatives will be built on and use will be made of funding which specific areas may attract such as S.I.P.'s.
- 1.8 There has been discussion about the use of funding at the local child care partnership.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To assist Social Work input to the government initiative on expansion of family centres in support of families in the 0-3 age group.

- 2.2 To allow special emphasis on preparation with vulnerable families including development of parenting skills programmes and sustained practical support in the home.

3.0 PRINCIPLES

- To ensure the services are developed in partnership with parents
- Regular consultation with users of the services
- Regular evaluation and feedback to users about the service

4.0 MONIES AVAILABLE IN THE YEAR 1999/2000

£217,000.00

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To allocate responsibility for the development of a support service and implementation of that service to one member of staff at PO2 level within the area team and to allocate on the basis of vulnerable child population monies to each area team.
- 5.2 The designated worker will be responsible for convening and chairing a multi-agency steering group which will develop a local action plan including local protocols for the development and implementation of this support service targeted at vulnerable families who have children of 0-3 years old. Where possible this will include users of the service.

The group will wish to consider:

- The numbers of vulnerable families who could make use of this service including those who have children with disability and who are vulnerable as a result of socio economic disadvantage, as a result of the needs of their children or of their own needs.
- The current support services, facilities available.
- The gaps in these services.
- In particular the Social Work Department will be looking to identify:
 - Individual practical supports for families through the appointment of home care workers. (See Appendix 2).

Page 3

- The development and implementation of parenting skills groups.
- The appointment of a worker to recruit and co-ordinate volunteer support workers.
- ♦ The criteria and process for accessing the service. (See Appendix 1).
- How services, including those supplied by the Social Work Department, can be delivered in a non-stigmatised way e.g. this may involve other agencies such as Education or a local Health Promotion Project or Community Services co-delivering a “parenting skills” group or offering to accommodate such a group in their premises or health visitors offering support and advice on specific health issues.
- ♦ In areas where other social inclusion initiatives are taking place whether links should be made with these initiatives.
- ♦ In teams where there are existing initiatives to build on these initiatives.
- The training needs of staff who may be included in providing support (this may be joint or multi-agency training depending on the configuration of the service).
- ♦ The development of a monitoring and feedback system for monies spent.
- ♦ The development and monitoring of P.I.’s to establish whether the objectives have been met. (See Appendix 3).
- ♦ The production of a report at the end of the financial year (it is likely that the Scottish Office will request a report from the council with regard to the impact of the service).

**THE USER OF THE SERVICE AND THE PROCESS FOR
REFERRAL & CASE MANAGEMENT**

(1) NEW CASES

- ◆ Referrals should be made via the Social Work Department.
- ◆ An assessment should be undertaken to identify the specific needs of the user and carer and child.
- ◆ The users should be encouraged to provide information regarding self assessment.
- ◆ A care plan should be agreed and signed by the user and the relevant agencies with targets set and tasks agreed. (This may require a meeting to be held). A copy of the care plan should be given to the user.
- ◆ Where appropriate, the home care worker should be appointed to provide support.
- ◆ The case should be reviewed within prescribed timescales. (One month and three month intervals and progress recorded.)

(2) EXISTING CASES

The service may be provided as part of an existing care plan following the usual assessment of need.

APPENDIX 2REMIT OF THE CARE WORKER

- ◆ To offer regular support and practical help, if appropriate, with regard to budgeting, cooking and household tasks and establishing routines and safety within the home.
- ◆ Encourage the strengths and positives within the family unit while reflecting a good parenting model.
- ◆ Encourage and enable families to access a greater range of community facilities particular early years provision and services including parent skills groups.
- ◆ Encourage families to develop education and skills training.
- ◆ Developing self esteem.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- ◆ Improvement in well being of parents and children in both physical and mental health.
- ◆ Increased confidence in the management of children.
- ◆ Increased confidence in the management of the home and improved standards within the home.
- ◆ More frequent use of community facilities.
- ◆ Fewer children looked after or on the child protection register.