

AGENDA ITEM No. 9

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Scottish Executive Central Research Unit Report: "If you don't ask you don't get". Review of Services to People with Learning Disabilities
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 25 January 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: Morag Dendy	
REF: MD/CM	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the content of the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit review of services to people with Learning Disabilities - "If you don't ask you don't get".

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the national review of services to people with learning disabilities the Scottish Executive commissioned SHS (Scottish Human Services) to carry out a survey of user and carer views about social and health care services. The research commenced on 1 March 1999 with a completion date of 28 May 1999.
- 2.2 Twenty five focus groups and six supported interviews with people with communicative disabilities were held across Scotland involving 124 people, 74 with learning disabilities, 41 carers and 9 parents accompanying children to focus groups.

3 MAIN FINDINGS

The Scottish Executive set out seven topics for enquiry the main findings of which were:

- ◆ **Community Participation:** The overall picture was one of social isolation with community facilities used most often as part of a group or with a staff member. Many participants wanted to meet people and be enabled to choose their own activities including work.
- ◆ **Availability and Accessibility of a range of mainstream Services:** People expressed "ordinary" aspirations - to exercise choice over their lives, to have friends, to get a job, to go out and about and to have their own home. Carers' major concern was a lack of information available about services.

- ◆ **Recognition and Assessment of Social Need:** Few people were aware of their rights to an assessment. A good Social Worker was seen as one who arranged practical help, provided information, acted as a link to other supports, had time to listen and allowed users to remain in control.

- ◆ **Recognition and Assessment of Health Care Needs:** Overall, the service people received was said to depend a good deal on individual health care practitioners.

- ◆ **Consultation and Involvement in Decisions about Meeting Needs:** People with learning disabilities want to be consulted more and have greater involvement in decisions about their lives. Participants were enthusiastic about advocacy but few had access to citizen and self advocacy

- ◆ **Availability and Quality of Help with Communication:** Carer felt that some professionals do not take enough time and trouble to communicate with their relatives, especially children.

- ◆ **Extent to which services are age - appropriate and non-discriminatory:** The availability of services varied widely in different parts of the county. This applied to both between and within authorities, in relative to certain aspects of social work, education, health and voluntary sector provision.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE

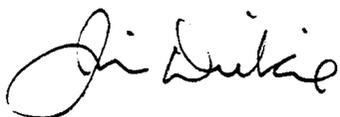
- 4.1 North Lanarkshire Council has been embarking on a major programme of developmental activity which has resulted in increasingly diversified housing and support options. A range of employment options and citizen advocacy services are being developed.

- 4.2 The draft joint learning disability strategy sets out a vision of improving services in the future. The findings of this report are consistent with the direction of service development in the Council.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is requested to

- (i) note the content of this report;
- (ii) that a further report will be brought forward when the Scottish Executive review of Learning Disabilities Services.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
December 1999

For further information on this report please contact Duncan Mackay, Principal Officer (Planning & Development) (TEL: 01698 332072)