

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Best Value Review of Children's Residential Units
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 22 August, 2000.	
REPORT AUTHOR: Sandra Paterson, Principal Officer Child Care	
REF: MF/SP/HS	

1. CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the progress made on the action points identified in the Best Value Review. The report identifies that significant progress has been made in several areas including the balance of residential and community care, extension of recreational activities in each unit, individual transport and improvements in ensuring minor repairs were carried out.

Other areas still require improvement including the accessibility of care plans and the management of resources within the units.

- 1.2 The Best Value Review was undertaken in the Autumn of 1998. It covered the five residential units within North Lanarkshire, Pine Court, Leslie Street, Torrance Avenue, Cecil Street and Mitchell Street.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The review undertook to embody the principles in the Children (Scotland) Act, 1995 including making sure children are safe and secure; providing homely well maintained environments; ensuring children are placed in settings which meet their educational, social and developmental needs; ensuring the participation of young people in the home; ensuring young people are adequately prepared for leaving care; that they have access to the complaints procedure, and that services are delivered on the basis of minimum intervention.

3. PROGRESS MADE ON ACTION POINTS

- 3.1 *Improve Balance of Provision Between Residential and Community Based Settings*

At 31st March, 1998 the balance was 40% residential and 60% community based.

At 31st March, 1999 the balance is 35.5% residential and 64.5% community based. Progress has therefore been made.

3.2 *Care Plans Complete and Accessible*

There has been only limited progress in this area although there are ongoing developments in the assessment and care management package which will address this specific issue.

3.3 *Written Information Such As The Childrens Services Plan Needs To Be More Widely Available*

Strenuous efforts have been made to ensure that each unit has the appropriate material available.

An information pack for children is currently awaiting a cover before its launch in the units.

3.4 *Improve Clarity of Unit Meetings, Structures and Frequency*

Each area team was asked to ensure this at a local level

3.5 *Sustain Improvements In The Effective Management of Resources*

Unfortunately the effective management of resources has proved difficult to achieve because of a turnover in staff and resultant vacancies.

The use of a large number of temporary workers in post is to be addressed with the introduction of permanent posts to meet the peaks and troughs of the service.

3.6 *The Management and Development of Staff With Respect To Use of Existing Procedures*

The application of employee development plans is still patchy.

3.7 *Fuller Implementation of Training Plans for Staff in conjunction with the Regular Review of the Training Strategy*

Funds were made available to each unit for them to buy in services for minor repairs and decoration. A 'handy person' has also been appointed who can do minor general running repairs.

3.8 *Greater Access to Improved Education Related Resources*

Each of the young person support units has teaching input. A working group, led by Education will deal specifically with the educational achievement of Looked After Children with the target being set of two standard grades or modular equivalents.

3.9 *Reduce Number of Moves Young People Experience*

The number of young people who at the 31st of March 2000 had one placement was 119, 2 placements was 57, 3-5 placements was 51 and 6+ placements was 11.

Work is being undertaken to compare this figure with the previous year.

3.10 *Children Should Have Improved Levels of Contact With Social Worker*

This action point has not been measured due to the vacancy of the Children Scotland Act post.

4. SUMMARY

4.1 On the whole most of the action points have been met, others are ongoing and for some there still needs to be information gathered.

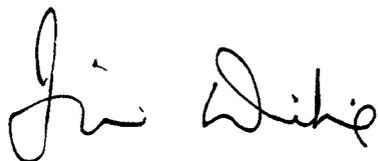
4.2 A major impact on the service has been the loss of a couple of unit managers. These posts are now being advertised.

4.3 The task of continuous improvement is ongoing through the individual continuous improvement plans and these will continue to be monitored.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Committee is asked -

- to note the contents of this report.



**JIM DICKIE,
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK,
2ND AUGUST 2000.**

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