

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 22 AUGUST 2002	Ref: GMcI/LMcA	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the conference on Supported Employment which was jointly hosted by the Council and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to highlight issues which were identified at the conference and to seek approval to raise such matters with the Scottish Executive and other relevant Government Departments.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Since embarking with its policy on Supported Employment, North Lanarkshire has made significant progress in assisting people with disabilities into employment. In recognition of the Council's efforts, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation requested that an event be held in North Lanarkshire to launch their Framework Document on Supported Employment. The approach from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation was reported to Social Work Committee at its meeting on 20 December 2001, where it was noted that Joseph Rowntree Foundation would contribute £4,700 towards the cost of organising the event.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. It was agreed that the best way to launch the Framework Document would be at a conference where there were a number of clear objectives:-
- To increase awareness of supported employment initiatives
 - To identify how supported employment can be expanded and to encourage greater participation by Public and Private sector bodies.
 - To hear how Supported Employment can benefit the employing body, but also how it creates self esteem and leads to inclusion for service users.
 - To identify ways of offering real jobs for real people
- 3.2 The conference was held on 23 May 2002. The main speakers who addressed the delegates were the Secretary of State for Scotland, The President of the European Union of Supported Employment, and Dr. Emma Stone from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- 3.3 In addition to the main speakers there were a series of workshops covering:- the employers perspective, overcoming the benefits trap, changing lives, partnership working and real jobs and evaluation. A report of the conference will be available for Members at Committee.

- 3.4 The conference attracted considerable national interest, with the demand for places outstripping the available capacity. In addition to delegates from North Lanarkshire Council, there was representation from 18 other Local Authorities. There were also delegates from 48 other organisations including Health Boards, Health Trusts, Education Colleges, voluntary organisations as well as carers and service users.
- 3.5 The conference on Supported Employment organised by North Lanarkshire whilst not being the first of its kind, was seen as being an important event as it created a forum for policy makers, operational staff and service users to debate the essential issues relating to Supported Employment.
- 3.6 The Secretary of State in a wide ranging address raised a number of important matters. She acknowledged for example, some of the legislative barriers which prevent or obstruct public bodies providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities. She extended an invitation to Local Authorities to speak to Government and the Executive about such matters and how they might be resolved.
- 3.7 Discussions within the conference workshops also highlighted particular policy areas which needed to be addressed to progress Supported Employment. The policy matters which require to be raised with the Executive and Central Government are listed in appendix 1 of this report. Committee is asked to give approval to the Director of Social Work to formally pursue these issues with the relevant Ministers and Departments.
- 3.8 Formal feedback from the conference was positive with the Council receiving positive recognition for its Supported Employment Strategy.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The donation which will be paid by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation coupled with the income received from delegates fees has meant that the conference was undertaken at a neutral cost to the Council.
- 4.2. The proposal that the Director of Social Work pursues the issues identified at the conference as being a barrier to Supported Employment, could in the longer term help the Council with its personnel practices, particularly with the recruitment and selection of people with a learning difficulty.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Committee is requested to:-

- 1) Authorise the Directors of Social Work to raise with the Executive and Central Government the matters detailed in appendix 1 of this report.
- 2) To request the Director of Social Work to report back to Committee on the outcome of the representations to the Executive and Central Government.

³⁾ To otherwise note the report.



Jim Dickie

Director of Social Work

2 July 2002

*For further information on this report please contact George McNally, Manager, Social Work Strategy
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Appendix 1

Employment Issues

1. The Secretary of State in her address to the conference, acknowledged that Local Government must follow proper personnel procedures in the recruitment and retention of staff. However she indicated that Government and the Executive would want to talk to Public Sector Bodies about the procedural barriers which are faced when getting people with disabilities into employment.

Proposed Action

Committee is requested to initiate an approach to the Executive which looks at the legislative issues which people with disabilities have to overcome in order to obtain employment in the Public Sector.

2. Central Government and the Executive should take steps to employ more people with a disability, particularly those with a learning disability.

Action

Draw to the attention of Government and the Executive and ask what plans if any they have to increase the number of disabled people who are given employment within their respective organisations.

Benefit Issues

1. People with disabilities who reside in Registered Establishments are disadvantaged when it comes to considering employment, as potential earnings might not meet the high costs of their residential care.

Proposed Action

Raise with Central Government, to request that where the individual of necessity, has to reside in a Registered Establishment, some form of financial assistance is made available to help meet the costs of same.

2. Implement the recommendations relating to benefits contained in the Joseph Rowntree Policy Framework for Supported Employment.

Proposed Action

Raise matter with Central Government.

Educational Issue

1. Schools should be more active in promoting disability issues. More effort is required to encourage the idea of Supported Employment for pupils with a disability. The concept of Supported Employment should be promoted to all pupils with a disability from an early age.

Proposed Action

Bring to the attention of the Executive and to the Director of Education.

2. Children with a disability should be given the opportunity to participate on work placement schemes, the same as that already running in mainstream schools.

Proposed Action

Draw to the attention of the Executive and to the Director of Education.