

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH LANARKSHIRE RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE SERVICES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 24 OCTOBER 2002	Ref: JB/JH	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the ongoing activity being undertaken to improve the quality of the Council's Residential Child Care Sector.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report provides further information on action being taken to continue to improve the quality of service provided as well as action being undertaken to robustly progress a number of recommendations contained within the Scottish Institute Residential Child Care (SIRCC) Report.

## 3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

### 3.1 Partnerships with health.

- 3.1.1 Officers from North and South Lanarkshire Council continue to be involved in Lanarkshire Health Board's strategic Review of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services across Lanarkshire.
- 3.1.2 The review, in line with nationally identified priorities, is robustly considering services provided for young people who are Looked After and Accommodated. Issues such as diet, smoking, self harm, mental health, sexual health as well as drug and alcohol misuse remain at the forefront of this review process and may be the focus of Service development.
- 3.1.3 A working party has been convened in partnership with health colleagues to review medical services available to young people who are looked after and accommodated. This group is reviewing current arrangements for accessing the range of health services available within Lanarkshire for young people with a view to developing joint protocols and improving service delivery.
- 3.1.4 As part of the Changing Children's Services fund in North Lanarkshire NHS Lanarkshire will lead on the establishment and development of a Youth Emotional and Well-being Worker linked to the Children's units.

### **3.2 Education of young people who are looked after and accommodated.**

North Lanarkshire Social Work and Education Departments are involved in a partnership with British Telecom and Microsoft to pilot an internet based educational support package for young people who are looked after and accommodated. The pilot, which involves 2 other Local Authorities, will provide free educational software and internet access to a controlled group of young people in children's units or living with foster families. The pilot will be evaluated by the officers from the Authority as well as BT and Microsoft staff. This is an Executive supported scheme which it is anticipated will eventually be available across the country.

### **3.3 Partnerships with Strathclyde Police**

Positive relationships with the Community Safety Branch of Strathclyde Police continue. A working party will be initiated to look at consistency in response to incidents by both the Police and Social Work staff across the Authority based on a model used in the Border's which is viewed as best practice.

### **3.4 Building Maintenance**

The issue of building maintenance remains ongoing in line with the Council's responsibility to provide care for young people with regard to national standards. A team from Housing and Property Services is currently surveying all Residential Units and will report during October 2002 with regard to upgrading work required to ensure current accommodation meets national standards.

### **3.5 Performance**

Audit Scotland undertook a Performance Management and Planning (PMP.3) audit during November 2001-February 2002 with regard to Children's Residential Services. The report is now available and provides a positive view of North Lanarkshire's residential services in relation to a best value perspective.

### **3.6 Partnerships with other Residential Providers**

The twelve Local Authorities which made up the previous Strathclyde Regional Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council recently met with the West of Scotland Independent sector providers of residential care to

- review service outcome
- financial pressures
- future partnership arrangements

It was agreed that the event was positive and should be repeated on a regular basis. The objective is to provide better outcomes for Looked After and Accommodated Young People.

### **3.7 Member/Officer group – Children's Services**

At Social Work Committee on 9 May 2002 it was agreed to establish a member/officer group to consider children's services within the Authority. The group will be chaired by the Convener of Social Work Committee. It is proposed this group will provide a report to future Committees and will supersede current arrangements.

The report provided to Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 noted to proposed remit and membership of the group.

This report also noted areas of consideration and the proposed production of a report in 2003.

The Officer/Member Group held its first meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2002. Councillor McGuigan chaired the meeting, advised as to the scale of the review, statutory responsibilities placed on the local authority and the challenge of allocating and implementing resources effectively.

Mary Fegan, Head of Social Work Services provided an overview of Children's Services and Members of the group considered the use of secure accommodation, residential and community resources, forthcoming legislation, early intervention and expenditure.

### **3.8 It was agreed that future meetings would focus on:**

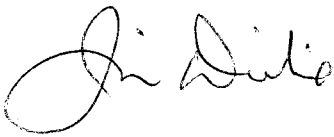
- (i) Community resources, early intervention to intensive services.
- (ii) Residential provision and Throughcare
- (iii) Family placements

The group will also consider information provided by Officers, service users, service providers and key partners and visits will also be undertaken.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the information provided
- (ii) note that the new Member/Officer Review of Children's Services will provide future updates to Social Work Committee.
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**3 July 2002**

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