

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: NORTH LANARKSHIRE CARERS TOGETHER CONFERENCE 7 NOVEMBER 2002 – “WORKING FOR YOU”
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 19 DECEMBER 2002	Ref: GS/GS	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with information about the recent Conference organised by North Lanarkshire Carers Together.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. North Lanarkshire Carers Together was set up in 2001 by carers to represent the issues and views of carers in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.2. During 1999, the Social Work Department, other Council Departments, Health, Carers Strategy Organisations and Carers came together to develop the North Lanarkshire Carers Strategy. They were keen to develop one organisation that could form an active link between carers and professionals with the aim of ensuring more effective support to carers.
- 2.3. A carers conference was held in November 2000 attended by almost 200 carers and professionals. A report containing the views of the carers who had attended was produced. Carers decided that their interests would best be served through the creation of one umbrella organisation. The organisation, North Lanarkshire Carers Together, was established in May 2001 with a management committee of 15 members
- 2.4. The aims of North Lanarkshire Carers Together are:
 - to be a potent force for change
 - to raise the profile of carers issues and need
 - to influence policy development and service provision at the planning stage
 - to form an active link between carers and professionals
 - to establish innovative and productive consultation processes with service providers
 - to promote the inclusion of carers
 - to represent the views of all carers
- 2.5. In its relatively short history, the organisation has made good progress, including:
 - responding to the Scottish Executive’s consultation paper on carers legislation
 - active lobbying of the Scottish Parliament to influence the recent changes affecting carers contained in the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002
 - responding to a consultation paper on the Blue Badge Scheme for disabled drivers.

- In November 2001 a conference was held to raise awareness of carers' issues, and over 350 carers and professionals attended.
- 2.6. After the 1st Annual General Meeting in May 2002, a workshop was held, giving carers and representatives from statutory and voluntary bodies the opportunity to discuss and debate how best to develop a mechanism for assessing the needs of carers. The Social Work Department is currently working with others to develop this and aims to have a robust system in place early in 2003.

3. PROPOSALS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. This, the second annual conference held by North Lanarkshire Carers Together, took place in November 2002 at Dalziel Country Club. The organisation chose the theme 'Working for You' to emphasise the partnership approach. More than 200 carers, professionals and council officials attended on the day.
- 3.2. In the morning session, a range of guest speakers gave informative talks stressing the importance of providing support and services for carers. The speakers included Convener Harry McGuigan, Social Work Convener, Karen Whitefield MSP, Airdrie/Shotts, Brendan Gill, Director of Planning, Lanarkshire NHS Board and Margaret Moncrieff, Development Officer, Lanarkshire Community Care Forum.
- 3.3. The afternoon session comprised of three workshop presentations. These were:
- **Person Centred Planning**

This workshop was presented by a Care Manager and a Resource Worker from the Social Work Department and a Mental Health Project Manager from Lanarkshire NHS Board. The workshop outlined the process of planning with people.
 - **Understanding Your Right to a Carer's Assessment**

This workshop was presented by a carer and the Manager, Community Care (Adults). Changes to legislation were outlined, information about what a carer assessment is provided and carers were also given information about how to request an assessment. The carer outlined her experience of a carer assessment.
 - **Carer Support Workers – A Developing Service**

This workshop was presented by the Manager of the Princess Royal Trust, Lanarkshire Carers Centre. She outlined the development of the partnership between the Carers Centre and North Lanarkshire Council which has led to an expanded carer support service, with a Carers Support Worker providing a service out of each Social Work Area Team.
- 3.4. In the discussions following the seminar presentations, carers raised a number of issues, particularly in relation to respite care provision, sustainability of funding to support person centred plans and welfare benefit issues. These issues have been noted and will be taken account of in ongoing support and service development. Several carers requested a carer assessment.
- 3.5. A number of organisations provided information stalls, including the Social Work Department (Shared Care and Welfare Rights). These provided carers with the opportunity to collect information and talk to staff from the organisations.

3.6. While evaluation forms will provide clear information about carers views of the event, feedback received so far from carers indicates that they felt it was a positive and constructive event. A number of new carers have applied to North Lanarkshire Carers Together. It also gave carers the opportunity to directly speak to elected members, officers of the Council, an MSP and representatives from non-statutory organisations about the important issues personally affecting them in their caring role.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
19 November 2002

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor, Manager, Adult Services (TEL: 01698 332177)