

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: GROUP CONFERENCING – RESTRICTED TENDERING PROCESS
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 5 JUNE 2003	Ref: MH/MN	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval to proceed to Restricted Tendering Process for the award of a Group Conferencing Service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Committee authorised the commissioning of a Group Conferencing Service in North Lanarkshire in the report dated 20 September 2002. (Service Developments Criminal Justice, Youth Justice and Restorative Justice).
- 2.2 As part of the Youth Crime Agenda, financial resources were allocated to Local Authorities in 2002 - 03 to promote restorative justice developments with young people. Restorative Justice seeks to balance the concerns of the victim and the community with the need to re-integrate the offender in society.
- 2.3 Group conferences, in which members of the child/young person's extended family or significant others meet to consider the child's welfare and plan for the future, are increasingly used in a range of circumstances including child welfare and youth justice setting.
- 2.4 For Youth Justice, conferences include the victim or some representation for the victim. The plan addresses any identified reparation issues on the part of the victim and provide suitable supports to prevent the young person re-offending.
- 2.5 North Lanarkshire is implementing a new restorative justice service which will have a strong emphasis on reparation in the community. This coupled with victim empathy as an integral part of the Departments work leads the authority to opt for a child welfare model of conferencing rather than youth justice.
- 2.6 Family Conferencing will focus on working with younger children and families where identified risk factors leading to subsequent offending exist. This early intervention strategy benefits all members of the family rather than focussing on one young person with an established pattern of offending behaviour.
- 2.7 Group conferencing requires a great deal of preparation, planning and co-ordination. There are currently two organisations in Scotland involved in conferencing, SACRO and Children 1st. Both organisations have developed a high level of skill in delivering this type of service to a number of local authorities.

3. PROPOSALS/CONSIDERATIONS


- 3.1 The Tendering Process will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders applicable to Social Work. The exercise will be conducted under the Restricted Tendering Process rather than the Negotiated Tendering Process since the later specifies "only one provider". The tender will be awarded to one of two providers so Restricted Tendering is appropriate.
- 3.2 Each organisation will be invited to submit a Note of Interest. A Service Specification will then be drafted and each organisation will then be invited to make a presentation to the Tender Panel.

4. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 North Lanarkshire was allocated £143,000 from the Youth Crime Agenda financial resources and proposes to use £50,000 per annum to develop the Group Conferencing Service.
- 4.2 The requisite Financial Schedule will be developed in liaison with, and approved by the Finance Section, prior to the issue of Tender Acceptance documentation. It is proposed to report to future Contracts Panel Meetings on progress.
- 4.3 Legal Services will be involved at each stage of the Tendering Process to ensure that all formalities have been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders applicable to Social Work.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Committee is asked to
- (i) Approve the use of Restricted Tendering process for the award of the Group Conference.
 - (ii) Request the Director of Social Work to prepare a future report detailing the progress of this Service; and
 - (iii) Otherwise note the contents of the report.



JD Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
19 May 2003

For further information on this report please contact Susan Devlin, Manager Children and Families and Criminal Justice TEL: (01698 332190)