

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: MODERNISATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 11 MARCH 2004	Ref: MW/dm	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report advises Committee of progress in relation to the modernisation of local authority residential services for adults with a learning disability.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. "The Same As You?" - the national strategy for people with learning disabilities - was published in June 2000 and envisaged major change in the provision of services across Scotland. The emphasis was on the transition from segregated services such as day centres and residential care to ordinary living situations, access to employment and meaningful day opportunities.
- 2.2. In North Lanarkshire the approach since the inception of the Council has been to commission supported living and gradually reconfigure existing residential care by replacing it with supported living or giving people the opportunity to return from out of authority residential care. This has been reinforced by a belief that the Council should, wherever possible, be able to meet the needs of people with disabilities within its own boundaries, where that is the preference of the individual concerned.
- 2.3. The approach was further endorsed by the Report of the Member / Officer Review of Day Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities which was approved by Social Work Committee on 27th February 2003. The recommendations included the need for review of the local authority's two hostels at Craig St, Airdrie and Branchal House, Wishaw.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1. Supported living was introduced in 1998, initially for people with learning disabilities and subsequently for people with mental health problems. It is characterised by:

- A separation of housing and support
- Focussing on one person at a time

- Having real choice and control (over where you live who with, who supports you and what you do with your time)
- Having a real disposable income.

3.2. Previously people who needed high levels of care were required to live in residential care. This presented a number of issues. For the individuals concerned:

- There was little or no choice about where you live, who you live with or who supports you
- Sometimes the accommodation was located long distances from your home area
- You only had an income of a small “personal allowance” of around £15 per week
- You had to fit in to an existing service that was home to at least several other people
- If the care provider decided they couldn’t meet your needs in that establishment you could lose both your home and care arrangements.

3.3. For the Council:

- It was not possible to disaggregate funding for each individual as most services are provided in “blocks” (the recent legal obligation to make a Direct Payment available therefore has serious financial implications for the Council for people who wish to leave residential care)
- People with challenging behaviour and high support needs often could not fit in to communal services so placements were at higher risk of breakdown
- The model ran contrary to principles of inclusion, empowerment of individuals and community participation.

3.4. Supported living enables people to live in the communities they know and maintain close connections with families, friends etc. It enables people to spend their income (typically an adult with high levels of disability will receive over £180 per week in benefit as well as full Housing Benefit and 80% rebate on water and sewage charges) to the benefit of the local community and furthermore stimulates the local economy through the creation of a large social care workforce. Supported living arrangements alone have generated over 700 jobs in North Lanarkshire.

3.5. Most people in supported living live on their own or with one other person. They have entirely individualised packages that are not contingent on the service being delivered to a group of people. Many people receive 24 hour care in their own home because of their high levels of needs.

3.6. In 1996 there were 154 registered residential care home places in North Lanarkshire for people with learning disabilities and no supported living. There were also 86 people who were living in residential care all over the United Kingdom, mainly because the former Regional Council was unable to meet their needs locally. There remain 80 people living in registered residential care home places for people with learning disabilities in North Lanarkshire, plus 20 people for whom care is provided by the Council itself, and less than 30 people living in residential care arrangements outwith the authority.

3.7. As at 31 December 2003 the Council funded supported living arrangements for 235 people with learning disabilities. There are 10 different providers commissioned to provide over 16,000 hours of support per week. Services are monitored and reports provided to Committee on a regular basis. There are also small numbers of people living in low-level support arrangements known as Neighbourhood Networks. Despite the scale of change and improved outcomes, until now no steps have been taken to reconfigure the two residential hostels run by the Social Work Department at Craig Street, Airdrie and Branchal House, Wishaw.

4. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. Craig Street & Branchal House provide accommodation for 10 and 12 people respectively, though both have 10 people in residence currently. The review process undertaken to date has included the completion of a number of tasks namely:

- person centred planning for each person
- an audit of physical resources
- staff profiling
- budget profiling

4.2 The review has established that:

- most people wish to live with support in homes of their own
- current accommodation does not meet the needs of people with physical disabilities and does not comply with registration requirements.

4.3 Even if the Council supported the model of providing registered residential care, neither establishment comes close to meeting future care standards required by the Care Commission as they have internal stairs and no en-suite bedrooms. Craig Street, in particular, is entirely unsuitable accommodation for people with any significant level of disability. In completing the review people, their family carers and staff members have been involved throughout. It is clear that present services neither provide the preferred model of care nor what people want for themselves. There is an imperative therefore to redesign services on the basis of accommodation with support.

5. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The Social Work Department spends £613,965 on running the two residential services and employs 22 staff in these settings. The revenue budgets will be required to directly fund replacement high quality care arrangements for the individuals concerned. There are expected to be "bridging" issues in funding the transition from existing to new support services. Potential change to the service has been raised in discussion with trades unions. As replacement care is likely to be provided by a range of existing external providers a suitable plan for the staff concerned will be jointly agreed. This is likely to be approached at the same time as specific staffing proposals are brought forward to achieve the modernisation of local authority day services, as set out by the Report of the Member / Officer Review of Day Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities, approved by Committee in February 2003.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Committee is asked to:

- (i) agree the proposal to reconfigure existing Council local authority residential care for people with learning disabilities, in keeping with the established strategic direction
- (ii) further reports to follow at future committees and;
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.



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5 February 2004

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