

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 28 OCTOBER 2004	Ref: JD/RM/NS	

## 1. Introduction

This report seeks Committee approval to negotiate a contract with a named voluntary sector organisation to provide a mental health information service in North Lanarkshire.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Previous reports to Committee have advised that people with mental health problems and their carers have expressed their need for good quality, accessible information about mental health. This relates to mental health issues in general but also how to access services. The perceived gap in provision of information has been consistently raised at a range of meetings attended by service user and carers. This was highlighted to Committee in January 2003 in a report on a mental health stakeholder event.
- 2.2. Whilst there are a number of organisations who can provide mental health information, there is no clear single contact point, which could be used by members of the public, service users and carers, to access information specifically relating to their own circumstances and needs. North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire have agreed to jointly fund and develop such a service.
- 2.3. There are five main components envisaged for an information service to be useful in North Lanarkshire. It needs to be:
  - accessible across the Council area
  - have the capacity to act as a Library/Resource Centre about mental health
  - have good contacts and links with mental health services
  - have the ability to reach out to the wider community rather than simply waiting for people to contact it
  - able to provide information in different ways to suit choice.

## 3. Proposal

- 3.1. To give as wide an opportunity as possible for local mental health organisations to be considered as potential providers of the service, an advert was placed by the Council and NHS Lanarkshire, in local newspapers, seeking expressions of interest. 3 organisations subsequently submitted proposals - Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health, Penumbra and the Scottish Association for Mental Health. Proposals were assessed against the following criteria:

- Management
- Finance
- Quality of Proposal
- Experience of Service Requirements

3.2. Officers from North Lanarkshire Council Social Work Department and NHS Lanarkshire considered that the submission by the Scottish Association for Mental Health to be the best proposal to meet the aspirations for this service.

3.3. The Scottish Association for Mental Health is an existing service provider in North Lanarkshire. It was recently specified by the Scottish Executive to be the provider of a demonstration project to secure financial inclusion in North Lanarkshire. There is much scope to join up its existing range of services and the proposed information service, so as to achieve best use of resources.

#### **4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications**

4.1. The service will be funded from resources received by the Scottish Executive to implement the new Mental Health (Scotland). It is envisaged that the Council will provide up to £30,000 per annum and NHS Lanarkshire £15,000 per annum. It is proposed that a contract would be for a three year period and subject to review at the end of that period.

#### **5. Recommendations**

6.1 Committee is asked to:

- approve the negotiation of a contract with the Scottish Association for Mental Health to provide a mental health information service;
- remit the Director of Social Work to report progress to a future Committee; and
- otherwise note the content of this report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**29 September 2004**

For further information on this report please contact Bobby Miller, Development Manager, on telephone: (01698 332286)