

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: CHOOSE LIFE (NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN IN SCOTLAND) : PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 25 AUGUST 2005	Ref: ST	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To advise committee of progress in implementing the second North Lanarkshire local action plan for Choose Life submitted to the Scottish Executive in December 2004.

2. Background

2.1 Choose Life : A National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Suicide in Scotland was published by the Scottish Executive in December 2002. The Strategy is a key component of the National Programme to improve mental health and well being, and aims to reduce suicide in Scotland. This is a priority for Scotland due to the high (and increasing) suicide rate. Currently 600 people commit suicide in Scotland each year.

2.2 In guidance issued to local authorities in July 2003, the Scottish Executive encouraged Choose Life action plans to be developed in the context of community planning partnerships and to be incorporated into Joint Health Improvement Plans.

2.3 The Scottish Executive made funding available over a three year period to assist with the implementation of action plans and encourage investment in the community and voluntary sector. The North Lanarkshire allocation for

- 2003/04 was £116,000
- 2004/05 is £128,000
- 2005/06 is £141,000 respectively.

2.4 The Scottish Executive has confirmed that funding in 2006/07 and 2007/8 will continue. An announcement about allocations to local authorities will be made in September 2005.

2.5 The first North Lanarkshire Choose Life Action Plan was approved by the Health and Care Partnership in December 2003 and by Social Work Committee in January 2004. The second North Lanarkshire Choose Life Action Plan was approved by the Health and Care Partnership in December 2004 and by Social Work Committee in January 2005. Each action plan has been supported with a financial framework indicating proposed expenditure.

3. Proposals/Considerations

3.1 The North Lanarkshire Choose life Implementation Group comprises of representatives from the community, the independent sector, health and council departments. The group has continued to meet to ensure that work is implemented and monitored. The group also ensures effective participation and communication between all stakeholders.

3.2 The needs assessment work has been undertaken by the Choose Life Co-ordinator. This post was created with the funding available in year 1, and is employed by the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH). The needs assessment has highlighted the need for:

awareness raising/training

local support groups

individual and group support for young people

information

services which are responsive and flexible, with staff skilled in listening to people in emotional distress

3.3 Progress has been made by:

- developing information which highlights the importance of suicide prevention work (eg newsletter, website)
- raising awareness (eg suicide talks)
- increasing skills and confidence in supporting people in distress (eg training of professional staff). 187 people have attended ASIST training , 185 have attended a Suicide Talk.
- undertaking mapping of all current resources and services which contribute to suicide prevention work
- undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment which highlights the key gaps and needs in North Lanarkshire
- developing a local training strategy consistent with the national training strategy while being responsive to local needs
- developing local plans for sustainability
- devising an evaluation framework
- establishing initiatives such as support groups for adults, launch of the R U OK? educational pack and promotion of Samaritan services

3.4 An original proposal to fund a full time development manager for CRUSE Bereavement Care has been revised within previously agreed financial costs. The service will offer an approach more geared towards building capacity and ensuring future sustainability of new services once the initial funding period has passed. This will include the expansion of existing services through the recruitment of more volunteers and improved awareness raising activity.

3.5 Suicide prevention week takes place week beginning 5th September, 2005 and a range of events are planned in North Lanarkshire which will further promote awareness.

4. Corporate Considerations

- 4.1 The work outlined in preventing suicide in North Lanarkshire is consistent with national and local policy in promoting positive mental health and well being.
- 4.2 The funding allocated to North Lanarkshire (as detailed at 2.3) will be used to implement the action plan and was previously agreed at committee.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:
 - (i) approve the change of service proposed by CRUSE Bereavement Care
 - (ii) request that the Director of Social Work report on future progress to Committee
 - (iii) note the contents of this report



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
2 August 2005

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor, Manager (Community Care, Adults) or Jan Brown, Senior Officer (Mental Health), Community Care Adult Services on telephone 01698- 332827

* A copy of the full North Lanarkshire Action Plan has been made available in the Members Library.