

AGENDA ITEM NO. 18

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: ADVOCACY FOR PEOPLE WITH COMMUNICATION SUPPORT NEEDS
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 25 AUGUST 2005	Ref: MD/CD	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks Committee approval to enter to tender for the provision of advocacy for people with communication support needs in North Lanarkshire.

2. Background

- 2.1. The North Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan 2004 – 2007 was produced by the Lanarkshire Advocacy Planning Group, which comprised of officers from North Lanarkshire Council, NHS Lanarkshire and representatives from the North Lanarkshire Advocacy Forum, including user and carer representatives as well as independent advocacy providers.
- 2.2. The Plan recognises the importance of the availability of advocacy, since reinforced by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 which, by October 2005, asserts the right of everyone falling within the terms of the Act to access independent advocacy.
- 2.3. The Plan acknowledges the extent of existing advocacy for people with mental health difficulties and dementia, but stresses gaps to be filled, including advocacy for people with communication support needs.

3. Proposals

- 3.1. It is therefore necessary to commission advocacy for people with communication support needs arising from impairments such as deaf/blindness, acquired brain injury, degenerative conditions such as Motor Neurone Disease, and learning disabilities.
- 3.2. No new funding is sought for this purpose. Instead it is proposed to combine existing funding for advocacy for people with learning disabilities to create a single, more comprehensive service. The resources attached to this are:
- The North Lanarkshire Advocacy Project (group and peer advocacy) - £50,666 per annum; and
 - Speak Out Advocacy Project (for people leaving long stay hospital care) - £49,000 per annum inclusive of £29,000 contribution from NHS Lanarkshire.
- 3.3. In the case of the latter, the project's work will be concluded at the point of hospital closure, which is scheduled for mid 2006. This leaves a total of up to £99,666 available to reinvest in an enhanced service.

- 3.4 It is proposed to seek notifications of interest from existing and potential providers, including the above organisations. It is also proposed to involve independent representatives from the Scottish Consortium for People with Learning Disabilities in the tendering process at a non-recurring cost of £3,000 to ensure the process is undertaken to highest, and most transparent, standards.

4. Financial / Legal / Personnel Implications

- 4.1 As stated, the costs of the scheme will be met by better use of existing resources.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
- (i) Approve proposals at Section 3; and
 - (ii) Otherwise note the content of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
4 August 2005

For further information on this report please contact Robert Miller, Development Manager, Tel: -1698 332069