

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: CHARTERMARK APPLICATION
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 12 JANUARY 2006	Ref:Res/P&I/MMcK	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

The purpose of this report is to draw attention to the fact that an application has been made by the Social Work Department for an assessment of the whole department against the Chartermark Standard.

2. Background

2.1 Chartermark is the UK Government's national standard for excellence in customer service. It is a registered certification mark, owned by the Office for Public Services Reform in the Cabinet Office and is a positive force for change and customer service improvement.

The department currently holds nine Chartermarks for individual services and units.

2.2 Testing the service against the Chartermark standard is part of the Social Work Department's approach to Best Value, particularly in relation to service-user involvement and continuous improvement. The model is also an appropriate yardstick against which corporate and departmental communications can be measured.

2.3. The Council's Corporate Plan 2004-2008 requires that Chartermark accreditation be sought for 80% of appropriate frontline services across North Lanarkshire by 2008. Should the department be successful in achieving accreditation, this will fulfil Social Work's responsibilities in respect of the Corporate Plan as well as ensuring the other benefits which Chartermark brings.

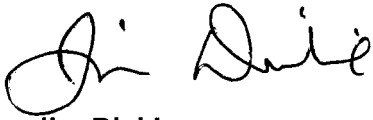
2.4. By applying for Chartermark on behalf of the whole service, the department is inviting a formal assessment of its strategic processes, policies and practices by an external assessment body. Training in the process was held for key staff in June and a self-assessment exercise was carried out part of the sessions. This led to the production of an Action Plan which indicated that a formal assessment be sought in the early part of 2006. The assessment body contracted by North Lanarkshire Council for all Chartermark assessments is SGS Ltd. and they have been invited to carry out their assessment in March, 2006. The assessment will take the form of appraisal of a written submission (including backing evidence), site visits and stakeholder interviews. The department will receive a decision from the assessors in March.

3. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

3.1 There are no Legal or Personnel implications of the report. The fee for the formal assessment by SGS will be in the region of £5,000.

4. **Recommendation**

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
9 November 2005

For further information on this report please contact Ronnie Paul on telephone 01698-332009.