

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: TENDER FOR ADVOCACY
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 12 JANUARY 2006	Ref: MD/CD	

1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks Committee approval to award a contract to The Advocacy Project following the outcome of a tender exercise in December 2005.

2. Background

- 2.1 The North Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan 2004 – 2007 recognises the importance of access to advocacy, since reinforced by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 which asserts the right of everyone falling within the terms of the Act to access independent advocacy.
- 2.2 Approval to enter into a tendering process for advocacy for people with learning disabilities and people with communication support needs was given by Committee in August 2005.

3. Outcome

- 3.1. Eleven expressions of interest were received, resulting in the submission of five tenders within the prescribed timescale. Four organisations were short-leeted for interview following scrutiny of the applications: North Lanarkshire Advocacy Project: The Advocacy Project; People First (Scotland); and Ace Advocacy.
- 3.2. The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability was engaged to help inform the process from a service user perspective and ensure transparency, and was involved at all stages of the process. Two of their members (with no local connections) were independently supported to play a full part in the process, representing 50% of the interview panel.
- 3.3. The selection process was conducted in two phases. The first was a single score generated from the short-leeting process by examination of written submissions. It assessed areas such as understanding of advocacy, independence, involvement, and diversity.
- 3.4. The interview process itself assessed the following areas:
 - Description of service to be provided
 - Accessibility of presentation
 - Experience of providing advocacy
 - Value for money
 - Organisational development
 - Community connections

- 3.5. The maximum score of carried forward from the short-letting exercise was 32 points. A further 30 points were available from the assessment of each of the four panel members. The maximum total that could be obtained was therefore 152 points. The three unsuccessful organisations interviewed achieved scores ranging from 82-106.
- 3.6. The highest ranked provider was The Advocacy Project (TAP) with a total of 114 points. TAP have provided advocacy for 13 years, initially in Glasgow but also now in three other local authorities. Their material was well presented and they were very clear about the scale and type of service they could deliver for the money. An independent evaluation of their services in March 2005 by the Advocacy Safeguarding Agency stated that "it is amongst the most effective advocacy projects we have seen in Scotland" and that it would "recommend them to other projects as an example of best practice in advocacy." A testimonial received from Glasgow City Council was also extremely positive.

4. Financial / Legal / Personnel Implications

- 4.1 As reported to Committee in August 2005, the value of the contract is £100,000, drawn from current funding of North Lanarkshire Advocacy Project and Speak Out Advocacy Project. The latter is advocacy for people leaving long stay hospital care and includes a £29,000 contribution from NHS Lanarkshire. It is planned that North Lanarkshire will have concluded the discharge of the remaining twelve people to leave Kirklands Hospital by 31 March 2006, hence the release of this resource.
- 4.2 The letting of the contract will be the subject of a separate report to Committee.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the commissioning of The Advocacy Project (TAP) to provide advocacy for people with learning disabilities and people with communication support needs; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
22 December 2005

For further information on this report please contact Robert Miller, Service Manager, (Planning & Development)
Tel: 01698 332069