

Motherwell, 2 May 2006 at 11 am.

A Meeting of the **SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE**

PRESENT

DATE: 2

Councillor Sullivan, Convener; Councillors J. Coyle, Fagan, Gemmell, Gormill, Higgins, Irvine and McAuley.

CHAIR

Councillor Sullivan (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Corporate Freedom of Information Officer; Director of Social Work; Manager, Social Work Strategy; Development Manager; Service Co-ordinator, Supported Employment; Service Co-ordinator, Strategy, and Senior Childcare Officer.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Chadha, M. Clark, McCabe and McElroy and L. Seaton, North Lanarkshire Carers Together.

PRESENTATION - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

1. The Service Co-ordinator, Supported Employment provided a presentation on the Supported Employment Service and advised the Sub-Committee on:-
 - the background to the supported employment service which was developed following the 1997 Community Care Plan Consultation;
 - the principles of supported employment which include users being paid the going rate for the job and being placed in full time posts (16 hours plus);
 - the involvement of partner agencies and private sector companies with the employment service;
 - the process of supported employment from vocational profiling through to job searching, job supporting and job monitoring;
 - the successful performance of the scheme to date, and statistical evidence to demonstrate that users were staying in posts;
 - a breakdown by department of jobs allocated within North Lanarkshire Council;
 - a typical case study example demonstrating financial gain from working, and no loss of overall income;
 - the social and financial advantages to be gained by users of the service.

After responding to Members' questions, the Convener thanked the Service Co-ordinator, Supported Employment, for her informative presentation.

Decided: that the terms of the presentation be noted.

COMMUNITY DAY PROGRAMME

2. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 29 June 2005 there was submitted a report dated 30 March 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of plans to expand the Community Day Programme; (2) outlining the background to the Programme, which aims to provide a structural scheme of intervention for people who are at serious risk due to their alcohol misuse; (3) indicating (a) that since April 2005, four, eight-week programmes had been organised at Carfin, Airdrie, Viewpark and Coatbridge, and (b) that a total of fifty people took part in the scheme with thirty of those completing the full eight-week programme; (4) intimating that the programme had been financed through the Community Regeneration Fund, and (5) advising that (a) due to the successful outcomes being achieved, the Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Addiction Team (ADAT) had agreed to allocate £113,000 to provide more programmes throughout the North Lanarkshire area, and (b) the additional resources will result in the employment of three new officers by NHS Lanarkshire.

Decided: that the terms of the report be noted.

FUEL POVERTY AWARENESS TRAINING

3. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 3 April 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of the Safe, Warm and Well initiative which had been established to deliver Fuel Poverty and Health Awareness Training to frontline Social Work and NHS staff; (2) outlining the background to the initiative; (3) indicating that the Fuel Poverty and Health Task Group had successfully delivered the first year of awareness training between September 2005 and March 2006 which comprised 21 separate briefing sessions and had been attended by 267 frontline staff; (4) summarising the learning outcomes of the training, which had been intimated by the participants; (5) intimating that, since the delivery of the training, 15 referrals for assistance or advice had been processed, and (6) advising that over the next two years a rolling programme of fuel poverty and health awareness training will be delivered to frontline staff from each agency over the winter months when fuel poverty issues are more prevalent.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

WELFARE BENEFIT REFORM: GREEN PAPER

4. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting of the Economic Regeneration Committee held on 14 March 2006, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 31 March 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) highlighting the implications of the government's Green Paper: A New Deal for Welfare Empowering People to Work, and how the proposals will impact upon the residents of North Lanarkshire; (2) indicating the background to the report which stems from changes to the benefit system to support the transition from welfare to work; (3) outlining concerns about specific elements of the proposals, and (4) highlighting the potential impact on 27,000 people within the North Lanarkshire area claiming incapacity benefit or receiving disability premium, and the anticipated rise in the number of requests for assistance, advocacy and representation at appeals.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

“UNLOCKING POTENTIAL” - A STAKEHOLDER EVENT FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT HELD ON 6 APRIL 2006

5. With reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of the Social Work Committee held on 27 October 2005, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 April 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of a stakeholder event for the Mental Health and Financial Inclusion

Demonstration Project held on 6 April 2006; (2) outlining the background to the project; (3) indicating that two new initiatives had been launched at the event to assist service users: these being (a) a Personal Log to help improve access to information and advice services for people with mental health issues, which is being piloted in North Lanarkshire during April to June 2006, and (b) the North Lanarkshire Mental Health Information Service which includes a Free Phone Information Link, and (4) advising that the work of the project and the linked initiatives assist in meeting the requirements of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 which came into effect in April 2005.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP (IIMHL)

6. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 18 April 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of the involvement of North Lanarkshire Council in an initiative which is supported by the Scottish Executive and designed to promote good practice in services and support for people with mental illhealth; (2) outlining the background to the initiative which involves representatives from Health and Social Care service agencies in different countries meeting annually to share learning opportunities, and (3) intimating that a visit to North Lanarkshire from a representative agency had been scheduled for 5 and 6 June 2006.

Decided:

- (1) that the involvement of North Lanarkshire Council in the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) be supported;
- (2) that the Director of Social Work bring forward a further report on the initiative to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee, and
- (3) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF MR. L AND MR. M

7. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 5 April 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) summarising the contents and recommendations of the Mental Welfare Commission Inquiry into the care and treatment of Mr. L and Mr. M, which was published in March 2006; (2) outlining (a) the background to the inquiry; (b) the main findings of the inquiry, and (c) the changes being made by the Scottish Executive in response to representations received, in respect of the management of restricted patients, which changes will be reflected in the revised Memorandum Procedures for Restricted Patients, the requirements of which will be applicable from 1 April 2006, and include the establishment of a Working Group by the Mental Health Division to look at the skills, competencies and knowledge required by Social Workers working with forensic patients, and (3) indicating the Council's position in relation to the recommendations.

Decided:

- (1) that the Director of Social Work bring forward to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee, a progress report on the findings of the Mental Health Division Working Group, scheduled to be reported in 2007, and
- (2) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.

FUNDING FOR AN ADAPTATION TO AN OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSE - AIRDRIE

8. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 17 March 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) recommending approval of funding to assist the provision of a major adaptation to a house in Airdrie owned by Mr. and Mrs. McC; (2) outlining the background to the proposal which had been recommended by the Adoption, Fostering and Family Placement Panel, and (3) intimating that competitive tenders had been obtained for the work, the total cost of which was estimated at £35,055, including professional fees and VAT.

Decided:

- (1) that the Sub-Committee, for its interest, approve the grant of financial assistance to Mr. and Mrs. McC. in the sum of £8,800 towards the total cost of major adaptation works to their home, to be met from the discretionary fostering budget, and
- (2) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.

CHANGES IN ADOPTION LAW IN ENGLAND AND WALES AND THE PROPOSALS FOR LEGISLATION IN SCOTLAND

9. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 29 June 2005, there was submitted a report (docketed) dated 6 April 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of changes in the Adoption Law for England and Wales which will also impact on Scotland, and (2) outlining the key provisions for legislative changes in Scotland as contained in the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Bill.

Decided:

- (1) that the Director of Social Work bring forward a report to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee on the outcome of the implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which was fully implemented in England and Wales in December 2005, and
- (2) that the contents of the report be otherwise noted.