

Motherwell, 3 October 2006 at 11 am.

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

PRESENT

Councillors Burrows, Chadha, J. Coyle, Gemmill, Gormill, Higgins, Homer, McAuley and H. McGuigan.

CHAIR

Councillor H. McGuigan presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Corporate Freedom of Information Officer; Head of Social Work Services; Manager, Sure Start Project; Operations Manager; Service Manager, Justice; Service Co-ordinator Supporting People Strategy; Senior Child Care Officer, Social Worker, Child Protection and Children's Rights Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

L. Setton, North Lanarkshire Carers Together.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Irvine, McCabe, McElroy and Sullivan.

REMIT FROM HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE OF 31 AUGUST 2006 – JOINT PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

1. With reference to paragraph 18 of the Minute of the meeting of the Housing and Technical Services Committee held on 31 August 2006 when that Committee, having considered a report (docketed as relative to the meeting of that Committee) dated 2 August 2006 by the Director of Housing and Property Services advising of a joint protocol for care leavers agreed between Housing and Property Services and Social Work Departments, had agreed (1) that the development of a joint protocol in respect of care leavers, as detailed within the report and the Appendix to the report, be noted, and (2) to refer the matter to this Sub-Committee for information, the Sub-Committee considered the report.

Decided: that the terms of the report be noted

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILY LAW (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006

2. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 30 August 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of the implementation of the Family Law Act 2006 and highlighting the implications for Social Work practice; (2) outlining the background to the Act which came into force on 4 May 2006; (3) setting out the key provisions as listed in Paragraph 3.1 of the report, and (4) intimating that the reforms introduced in the Act are wide ranging, and that issues of particular relevance to Social Work practice include (a) the joint registration of the birth of a child, born after 4 May 2006, by unmarried parents, which confer automatic parental rights and responsibilities to both mother and father of the child, and (b) matrimonial interdicts and the new domestic interdicts which can now be used to prohibit a spouse or partner from entering the house or place of work of their spouse or partner and a child's school.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

CHANGING CHILDHOODS: THE SAME AS YOU? REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (SAYIG)

3. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 6 September 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising on a report commissioned by the Scottish Executive entitled "Changing Childhoods: The Same as You?"; (2) outlining the background to the report which aims to highlight how the social inclusion principles published by the Scottish Executive in May 2000 can be applied to all services for children with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders; (3) setting out in Section 3 of the report the main proposals and considerations which had emerged from the review, and (4) emphasising the need for agencies to work together to ensure that the implementation of "The Same as You?" initiative addresses the need for children with learning disabilities and with autism spectrum disorder, to lead ordinary lives.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

MENTAL WELFARE COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND, DRAFT FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011 - CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

4. There was submitted a report dated 5 September 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of a consultation document issued by the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, on its draft five year plan 2006-2011; (2) indicating that the plan (a) is based on the Commission's view of its role, priorities, approaches and actions on which it should focus, and (b) has been distributed for consultation and feedback from stakeholders by 30 November 2006; (3) outlining the background to the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland; (4) setting out the Commission's strategic direction, identified in key goals, as outlined in Section 3 of the report, and (5) intimating that (a) a copy of the consultation document had been placed in the Members' Library; (b) the consultation document will be disseminated for comment to the North Lanarkshire Mental Health Partnership Board and that a joint response will be forwarded to the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, and (c) details of the response to the consultation by the North Lanarkshire Mental Health Partnership will be reported to a future meeting of this Sub-Committee.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

MULTI-AGENCY CHILD PROTECTION SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

5. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 29 August 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of a multi-agency self-evaluation process which is being undertaken in respect of child protection practice within North Lanarkshire, involving NHS Lanarkshire, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Strathclyde Police and the Council (Departments of Social Work, Education, Housing and Property Services and Community Services); (2) outlining in Section 2 of the report, the background to and the methods and timetable of the process which follows on from Scottish Executive advice that multi-agency child protection inspections would be undertaken, followed by broader multi-agency inspections of children's services on a local authority basis; (3) indicating that in preparation for the inspections, all agencies in North Lanarkshire are involved in self-evaluation activities with (a) the first phase currently being collated, the findings of which will be reported to the Children's Services Strategy Group and Child Protection Committee, and (b) the second phase of the exercise will involve agencies comparing the findings of each Group to enable one multi-agency plan to be compiled, and (4) intimating that the self-evaluation exercise has been co-ordinated by a Quality Assurance Officer, seconded from the Department of Education, and that the seconded post had been funded via the Changing Children's Services Fund.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

A SUMMARY REPORT OF WELFARE RIGHTS ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2005–MARCH 2006

6. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 4 August 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising (a) of the work undertaken and benefit income generated by the Department of Social Work's Welfare Rights Officers in the financial year 2005-2006, and (b) that the period for collection of welfare rights statistical information had been changed to the financial year April to March; (2) indicating that the main role of welfare rights work is the maximisation of income for individuals, for the Council and the community as a whole, and forms part of the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy; (3) listing in Section 2.4 of the report a selection of services which can be offered; (4) outlining the distinct role of the Welfare Rights Officers in (a) training fieldwork staff, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, and (b) supporting the income maximisation service through consultation and guidance; (5) intimating that the income generated for the period from April 2005 to March 2006 was £8,578,641.36, and from April 2006, to 31 August 2006, was £3,607,888.00, and (6) highlighting that in the year from April 2005 to March 2006, Welfare Rights Officers represented at over 900 appeals.

Decided: that the terms of the report be noted.

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF SOCIAL WORK RECEPTION SERVICES

7. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 6 September 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of the progress of the operation of Reception Services Teams within the Social Work Department; (2) outlining the background to the revised Reception Services which became operational in six Area Teams in April 2002 following the findings of a departmental working group; (3) intimating (a) that in 2005, the service dealt with almost 15,000 referrals, and that a customer satisfaction questionnaire had been developed, and (b) that a summary of questionnaire responses from January to September 2006 was attached as an Appendix to the report; (4) outlining developments in the Reception Services, as detailed in Section 4 of the report, and (5) indicating that the operation and progress of the Reception Services will be subject to further review.

Decided:

- (1) that the progress of the Reception Services within the Social Work Department be noted, and
- (2) that the Director of Social Work be requested to bring forward a further report on the progress and operation of the Reception Services Teams.

DELAYED DISCHARGE TARGETS UPDATE

8. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 14 September 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) providing an update on the current position on delayed discharge from hospitals in the NHS Lanarkshire area; (2) outlining the background to the Delayed Discharge Action Plan, introduced by the Scottish Executive and comparing the Lanarkshire partnership position in 2005/2006 with the targets set by the Scottish Executive; (3) setting out the Scottish Executive's targets for 2006/2008 as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report, and (4) highlighting the challenges facing the Lanarkshire Partnership in relation to the 2006/2007 targets, and the requirement for an increased focus to be given to the specific needs of younger adults with complex needs, and to the joint development of appropriate rehabilitation services.

Decided: that the contents of the report be noted.

EVALUATION OF THE ARREST REFERRAL PILOT SCHEMES AND UPDATE ON THE LANARKSHIRE SCHEME (SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH 2006)

9. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 13 September 2006 by the Director of Social Work (1) advising of the Scottish Executive document "Evaluation of the Arrest Referral Pilot Schemes"; (2) intimating that arrest referral is an initiative which aims to improve the uptake of drug services among people who are arrested and whose offending is linked to drug or alcohol abuse; (3) outlining (a) the current situation regarding the Lanarkshire Arrest Referral Pilot Scheme which is operated by Sacro, a voluntary agency under contract to the Social Work Department, and (b) arrangements for evaluation of the Pilot Schemes, and (4) intimating that funding for the Lanarkshire Scheme would be reviewed, and had been extended to March 2008.

Decided: that the terms of the report be noted.