

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM No. 7 REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS & SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE	Subject: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE IN SCOTLAND
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 24 th February 2004	Ref: DC

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT/INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The report is to inform Committee of the progress made to support young people leaving care in terms of the changes in Regulations of Care (The Support and Assistance of Young People Leaving Care (Scotland) Regulations 2003) coming into operation on 01.04.04.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The final version of the new Regulations are with the Scottish Parliament for acceptance. The Guidance to the Regulations will be published in February 2004.
- 2.2 The Scottish Executive have created a strategy to improve and develop the support for young people leaving care in Scotland.
- 2.3 At the heart of this strategy is the increase of responsibility that Local Authorities will have with particular reference to the continuation of support for young people leaving care.

3. PROPOSALS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Regulations stipulate that a Local Authority will undertake the following responsibilities:
- Carry out an assessment of need within prescribed time scales
 - Seek the Pathway views of a young person leaving care
 - Prepare a written policy statement on how it will carry out a Pathway Assessment
 - Prepare a Pathway Plan where required within prescribed time scales (including time scales for reviewing it)
 - Arrange for a young person to have a Pathway Advisor
 - Provide a package of support that meets the young person's requirements, including financial support and appropriate accommodation
 - Maintain an appeals procedure in line with the Regulations

3.2 Pathway Plans must include a young person's views on the following:

- Their hopes for the future
- Their lifestyle
- Family and friends network
- Health and wellbeing
- Education, Training and Employment
- Accommodation and support required for living
- Financial and budgeting
- Knowledge of rights and legal issues

All care leavers must have a Pathway Plan. This describes in detail how a young person will be supported from care into the community. It must be informed by the young person's Pathway views and be supported by a Pathway Advisor.

3.3 Implicit in the Regulations is the intention that there be an integration of services provided by the Local Authority to enhance and improve the outcomes for young people leaving care.

3.4 A particularly significant change that the Regulations make is the financial support to 16-18 year old care leavers. This category of young people will no longer be eligible for Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits. Their financial support needs will now be met by the Social Work Department, unless they are single mothers or are affected by disability.

4. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICIES/IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The implementation of the new Regulations in North Lanarkshire is being led by the Throughcare Implementation Group, consisting of senior officers in the Social Work Department who are responsible for Operations, Finance and Information Technology.

4.2 The Throughcare service was reconfigured and centralised in 2002 with a view to meeting the responsibilities and duties required in the regulations.

4.3 The arrangements for the transfer of DWP Funds to Local Authorities for 16-18 year olds has been completed. It has been equated to an approximate amount based on trends of young people leaving care during the past 3 years. A minimum of 30 young people eligible during the course of 2004/2005 is anticipated.

4.4 The transfer of DWP monies to North Lanarkshire are:

2003/04	£73,210(Administration and Set Up Costs)
2004/05	£292,841
2005/06	£366,051

The Department will require to set support rates to at least the rate of the DWP equivalent.

- 4.5 Young people leaving care will need to be encouraged to open a bank account to enable weekly payments to be made via the BACS method. It is anticipated this will be done via the Municipal Bank.
- 4.6 The Throughcare Implementation Group will provide a strategic plan leading up to the implementation of the Regulations in April 2004. This plan will be remitted to the Children's Services Strategy Group for consideration for inclusion in North Lanarkshire's Children's Services Plan.
- 4.7 The Regulations stipulate that all Local Authorities set up an independent Complaints and Resolution system. This will require to be separate from existing Complaints Procedures. It will allow for young people to appeal against any decisions on the manner or level of support to be provided.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) request the Director of Social Work to provide future reports to the Committee on the progress of the development of services under the new Regulations
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
30 January 2004

For further information on this report please contact: Susan Devlin, Manager - Children, Families and Justice TEL: 01698 332032

A copy of the Regulations is available in the Member's Library.