

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE	Subject: FUNDING TO IMPROVE FOSTERING SERVICES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 20 February 2006	Ref: DC/BC

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

- 1.1 To inform committee of the additional monies being made available by the Scottish Executive to improve Fostering Services across Scotland.

2. Background

- 2.1 In November 2004 a ministerial announcement was made that an additional £12 million was to be made available across Scotland for the improvement of Fostering Services.
- 2.2 The money has been allocated to local authorities based on the number of young people looked after and accommodated away from home in each authority.
- 2.3 The funding allocated to North Lanarkshire Council is:
- | | |
|--------|----------|
| 2005/6 | £91,500 |
| 2006/7 | £183,000 |
| 2007/8 | £91,000 |

3. Proposals/considerations

- 3.1. There are three key areas in which the Scottish Executive is seeking improvements:
- Recruitment of foster carers
 - Retention of foster carers
 - Increased placement choice
- 3.2. North Lanarkshire Council currently has 50 foster carers and 67% of children and young people currently looked after away from home are cared for by them.
- 3.3. A comprehensive review of fostering services in North Lanarkshire is nearing completion. It will outline an action plan for the use of these additional monies. In addition, the Council has recently agreed to establish a Member/Officer Review Group to consider how to develop and modernise all aspects of these services.
- 3.4. This funding will be prioritised on actions which will increase numbers of foster carers and improve arrangements for retaining foster carers.

- 3.5. The Council will be required to report at the end of each year on the targets and outcomes of the funding.
- 3.6. Committee had previously considered a number of reports in relation to link carers. It is proposed that these arrangements be incorporated within the review of fostering services for consideration at a future committee.

4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

- 4.1. It should be pointed out that North Lanarkshire Council receive a disproportionately low allocation of national resources because of the relatively low numbers it has of looked after and accommodated young people, though this is consistent with best practice.
- 4.2. There are no personnel implications at this time.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
 - (i) Agree the proposal in section 3.6 of the report to consider link carers as part of the wider fostering review
 - (ii) Request a further report once the fostering review is concluded and;
 - (iii) Otherwise note the report.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
January 2006

For further information on this report please contact David Carver on telephone 01698-332651