

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL  
REPORT**

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: "UNLOCKING POTENTIAL" - A STAKEHOLDER EVENT FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT HELD ON THE 6 <sup>th</sup> APRIL 2006
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2006	Ref: JD/GF	

**1. Purpose of Report / Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of a stakeholder event for the Mental Health and Financial Inclusion Demonstration Project held on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006, which launched two new initiatives to assist service users.

**2. Background**

2.1. As reported to Social Work Committee in August 2005 an application to fund a Mental Health and Financial Inclusion Project was jointly developed by Social Work, the Planning and Environment Department and SAMH and submitted to the Scottish Executive in October 2004. The application was successful and the project officially started in June 2005.

2.2. The objective is to create a national demonstration project, which can explore the key Issues of accessibility of advice services, the positive health impacts of increasing money advice and income maximisation services, and the role that improved welfare benefits advice can have in promoting employability.

2.3.1 The general approach being taken by the project has been one of capacity building by examining how existing services can be better equipped to offer advice to those experiencing mental health problems i.e.:

- Mental health aware advice services
- Benefit aware health services
- Mental health aware employment services
- And employment aware money advice services

2.4 The project aims to offer a best practice model for integrating mental health service users into the design and delivery of local advice services. In pursuit of this aim the project has involved service users at a management level within the project and has organised three stakeholder events where service users have attended in significant numbers and influenced the development of the project.

**3. Proposals / Considerations**

3.1. The most recent stakeholder event was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006 in the Shybury Excelsior Stadium in Airdrie attended by 88 delegates. The delegates included 34 from a variety of public sector agencies (mainly NLC and NHS Lanarkshire), 20

voluntary sector representatives, two from the Scottish Executive, five project staff members and 27 service users .

- 3.2. The event was opened by Councillor Peter Sullivan, Vice Convener of Social Work and included a keynote address from Gregor Henderson, Director of the National programme for Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing. The day itself was split into two distinct sections, with the morning session offering delegates an opportunity to discover more about current developments in mental health service provision locally and at a national level. The afternoon section introduced two new innovative services, the Personal Log and the Lanarkshire Mental health Information Service.
- 3.3 The Personal Log has been developed as a result of consultation with service users. It is a service user held document designed to help improve access to information and advice services for people with mental health issues. The Log will enable service users to hold all their relevant information in one document, which would allow them to choose which, how and with whom to share that information. Consultation has demonstrated that service users were reluctant to have to repeatedly verbally disclose information to a number of service providers along with people unknown to them. The Log will be piloted in North Lanarkshire during April to June 2006.
- 3.4 The other initiative launched at the event was the North Lanarkshire Mental Health Information Service. The service is a direct result of North Lanarkshire Council's and NHS Lanarkshire's desire to provide an information and advice service for potential service users, people with mental health issues, their families, carers and indeed other service providers in the area. One part of the service is a Free Phone Information Line 0800 073 0918 is now available. Although operationally initially from 12pm - 2.30pm (Mon-Fri), it is envisaged that through time the information line will be extended to operate for longer hours.

#### **4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implication**

- 4.1. Funding for the Mental Health Financial Inclusion Project has been provided by the Scottish Executive and there are no financial implications for the Council.
- 4.2. The work of the project and linked initiatives assists the Department to meet its duties and powers to provide services for people with mental disorder under the new Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 which came into effect in April 2005.

#### **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1. Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**13<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

For further information on this report please contact Gus Ferguson on telephone 01698 332560