

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 22 MARCH 2010

**REPORT ON:** REVIEW OF THROUGH-CARE AND AFTER-CARE SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

**REPORT NO:** 156-2010

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of developments in the service provided by the Social Work Department's Throughcare and Aftercare Team and the changes in the Throughcare and Aftercare service commissioned from Carolina House Trust following a comprehensive review of the service. These developments are underpinned by the recommendations in the Social Work Inspection Agency Inspection report in 2007. The review was in response to the need to provide a service which meets more effectively and flexibly the changing demands and the differing needs of young people who have been looked after and accommodated by Dundee City Council. The developments are to improve outcomes for these young people and improve life choices through corporate parenting and partnership working.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to support the developments as outlined in the report.
- 2.2 The committee are asked to endorse the full implementation of the changes to the commissioned service.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The revised service arrangements with Carolina House Trust will result in a reduction in expenditure of £25,000k in a full financial year. It is proposed to reinvest this funding in Throughcare & Aftercare services in order to meet increasing demand as outlined in para 4.2.

### **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 Since 2003 the Throughcare and Aftercare Service of Dundee City Council has commissioned a service from Carolina House Trust. The Resource Workers from the Trust have worked in partnership with Dundee City Council's Resource Workers providing a Pathway Planning service to young people. The activities collectively referred to as Pathways, inform the level and nature of support that each young person receives. Examples of this include:

- Ongoing financial assistance through legislation requirements
- The provision of suitable accommodation and support.
- Promoting the development of practical skills to aid independent living.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to follow a healthy lifestyle.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to achieve their maximum potential in terms of education and employment
- Encouraging and supporting young people to establish themselves as successful and independent adults.

- 4.2 As part of the review process it was identified that a more specialised way of delivering the service was required to provide young people with more options and more flexibility around levels of assessed need. The numbers of young people requiring this service has increased and we now have over 100 young people eligible and who are receiving this service, this number will potentially increase over the next few years due to changes in legislation and increasing numbers of looked after children who will become eligible for the service. The service needs to be able to respond more effectively to demands and changing trends as well as meeting standards. The service is inspected annually by the Care Commission as a Housing Support Service.
- 4.3 A number of recommendations were made in the Social Work Inspection Agency Inspection Report which were included and incorporated into the service review. The review also took cognisance of the recommendations contained in the report "Sweet Sixteen?" published by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2008. The review took into account the standards for Throughcare and Aftercare and quality indicators for best practice. In addressing the identified gaps in the service, it was agreed that the staffing structure had to delineate roles and responsibilities and new posts with specific responsibilities were created in Carolina House Trust from the existing staff group. The services now commissioned from the Trust are;

#### ***Independent Reviewing Officer***

The relevant Regulations and Guidance state: "The responsible authority must arrange a review if the young person asks for one, if the Pathways Coordinator asks for one, or at least every six months."

The team has not had access to an independent reviewing service since the introduction of legislation requiring this in 2004. Although the Senior Officer and the Carolina House Trust Team Leader have chaired reviews during this period, they have not managed to meet statutory requirements in respect of this process. The new Reviewing Officer will ensure that all young people will be reviewed according to statutory regulations.

The lack of an independent review system was highlighted as an issue in a recent social work inspection. Another part of the review officer's post will be to look at young person's participation and their input into service improvement.

#### ***Supported Lodgings Worker***

Although not a specific requirement of the legislation, it is widely recognised that supported lodgings provide an invaluable contribution to the provision of suitable accommodation. Regulations and Guidance state, "While there is not one model of accommodation provision, supported lodgings, shared accommodation and independent tenancies should be available for young people."

It is considered that in delegating the service of recruiting, assessing and supporting the providers of supported lodgings for young people to Carolina House Trust, this will separate the tasks of supporting the placement and direct work with the young person in the placement, which can and has had the potential to result in a conflict of interests.

#### ***Support Workers (2)***

It is proposed that 2 Support Workers based with Carolina House Trust will undertake specific pieces of planned practical work with young people as requested by case holding Resource Workers, as well as being involved in the delivery of individual and group work programmes.

The above re-configuration and delineation of roles and responsibilities will allow the Council's Throughcare and Aftercare Resource Workers to concentrate on assessment and Pathway Planning and give more time to focus on education and employment, as well as meeting all statutory requirements.

- 4.4 In terms of the Corporate Parenting agenda, the "Sweet Sixteen?" reports recommended that all Local Authority Departments have to take a responsibility for care leavers and that no young person who was looked after should have to use homelessness legislation to access accommodation. The recent implementation of an agreed joint protocol between the Social Work and Housing Departments acknowledges their responsibilities as Corporate Parents and has ensured that young people who were previously looked after and accommodated by Dundee City Council are no longer required to register as homeless in order to access appropriate accommodation.

In addition, this protocol ensures that these young people can access a wider range of accommodation options and are assured a comprehensive support package.

- 4.5 In addition to the further development of the existing Supported Lodgings Scheme by the Carolina House Trust, the Throughcare and Aftercare Team is committed, through reviews of existing services and reviews of commissioned services to widening the different range of accommodation options for young people in order to meet the wide range of needs that exists.
- 4.6 Although the numbers of service users who are in education, employment or training has improved over the past 2 years, there is still much to be done. Formal agreements with both Dundee College and Skills Development Scotland, which guarantee additional support for our service users, have contributed to recent improvements, but there are still a significant number of young people who require intensive input in order to get them to the stage where they are ready to consider the options that are available.
- 4.7 Dundee was chosen to be one of 5 Scottish Authorities who are currently participating in a programme, initially over a period of 3 years, with Venture Trust. This programme specifically targets young people who have disengaged, or who are at risk of disengaging with education, training or employment. There are 2 Venture Trust staff attached to the Throughcare and Aftercare Team, this service will engage appropriate individual service users for a period of up to 18 months and is intended to offer them individual support in achieving their personal development aims as well as the opportunity to attend a number of residential personal development programmes.
- 4.8 Together with Adult Services, work has started to improve the transition process for looked after and accommodated young people who are diagnosed with either mental health problems or with a degree of learning disability. This will ensure that the need for joint assessment and planning will be identified at an earlier stage and that appropriate supports are identified which will meet the longer term needs of this vulnerable group.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive and the Director of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Reference was made to the Social Work Inspection Agency report 2007 and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People report "Sweet Sixteen?"

**ALAN G BAIRD**  
Director of Social Work

**DATE: 5 March 2010**