

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 18 March 2002

REPORT ON: RESEARCH BY SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS UNIT: DUNDEE YOUTH DRUGS SERVICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 231-2002

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report informs members of national interest in the Dundee Youth Drugs Service. It provides summary details of this initiative, which is aimed at reducing the drug and alcohol misuse of children and young people who are "looked after" by the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the contents of the report and commends all those involved in this successful initiative.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The Youth Drugs Service is improving the health, well being and life outcomes for children and young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse. It is also contributing to the safety of all the citizens of Dundee through reducing offending and anti-social behaviour related to drug and alcohol misuse.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The work of the Youth Drugs Service promotes improved equality of opportunity and social inclusion of children and young people involved in problem drug use.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Introduction

The Youth Drugs Service, a collaboration between Dundee City Council Social Work Department, Tayside Primary Health Care Trust and Dundee Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), has been highlighted as an example of good practice in research currently being undertaken by the Scottish Executive.

The Executive's Effective Interventions Unit has commissioned York Consultancy to examine the national provision of services addressing problem drug use by young people. Their research has focussed on the innovative outreach practices of the Dundee Youth Drugs Service, in addition to the strong partnership arrangements that are seen to be integral to its success.

The Service is provided by a psychiatric nurse who is seconded to the CHOICE Project (the Department's Young Offenders Resource Team). Clinical supervision is provided by the Drug Problem Service.

6.2 Service Description

The Service accepted its first referrals in May 2001. Its main objective is to offer drugs counselling and harm reduction work to Dundee's population of "looked after" children and young people aged 12 to 17yrs.

Work with each young person may address drug awareness, anger management, low self esteem, peer pressure or coping with withdrawal. An innovative outreach model is used, whereby the young people referred are visited wherever they are and every effort is made to engage them in the programme.

Advice and support is also provided to parents, foster carers and residential care workers to enable them to confront problem drug use.

The focus of the service on "looked after" children and young people was highlighted in the Social Work Department's Action Plan arising from the Review of Residential Childcare Services completed in August 2001. The close working relationship between the Service and residential establishments has allowed any problem drug use to be speedily identified and addressed through a multi-agency approach.

6.3 Service Outcomes

Outcomes to date have been positive. Of the 32 young people referred, 9 have successfully completed a programme, of whom all have either reduced or eliminated their drug use. In addition, all have made at least some positive life changes, including stopping offending, gaining employment, reconciliation with their family, or moving to live independently.

6.4 Conclusion

The Social Work Committee is asked to note the national focus on this Service's contribution to tackling problem drug use among Dundee's "looked after" children and young people.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The Director of Support Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date

8 March 2002