

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Social Work Committee - 20 January 2003
Personnel & Management Services Committee - 10 February 2003

REPORT ON: Social Work Department - Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy

REPORT BY: Director of Social Work and Director of Personnel and Management Services

REPORT NO: 788-2002

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks formal approval of the Council's Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy and the steps that will be taken to implement the Strategy (a copy is available for inspection in the members' lounges and, in addition, a copy has been passed to each Group and to independent members).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Social Work Committee is requested to:-

- 2.1 approve the Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy;
- 2.2 instruct the Director of Social Work to implement the Strategy and form a specialist Throughcare and Aftercare service to young people who have left or who are leaving the City Council's care;
- 2.3 The Personnel and Management Services Committee is requested to approve the establishment of the following posts:-
- 2.3.1 one post of Senior Officer (Throughcare and Aftercare), graded PO7-10, £28,187-£30,323;
- 2.3.2 one post of Resource Worker, (SCP27-35), £18,878 - £23,930;
- 2.3.3 one post of Clerical Assistant, graded GS1/2, £9,680 - £12,899.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy will cost £371,320 in a full financial year and will be met from existing resources within the Social Work Budget as illustrated in the attached financial appendix.

4 **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

5 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

6 **BACKGROUND**

6.1 Existing responsibilities

6.1.1 Since the implementation in 1996 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, local authorities have had duties under Section 29 to plan and prepare for young people leaving care after their school leaving age, and to advise, guide and assist them up to the age of 19, or beyond in certain circumstances.

6.2 Current Provision

6.2.1 Dundee City Council provides a throughcare and aftercare service in partnership with the Carolina House Trust, a local voluntary organisation with a long established record of working with children and young people in Dundee.

6.2.2 The Social Work Department currently employs 3 Throughcare and Aftercare Resource Workers who are attached to Care and Assessment Teams. These Resource Workers work jointly with the Carolina House Trust Outreach Team. This team provides a 24-hour service and also manages a small number of supported tenancies for young people leaving care.

6.2.3 However, the fragmented nature of the current service can lead to inconsistency in service delivery and to inequality of access to the service for a small number of young people.

6.3 New duties

6.3.1 Duties introduced under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 reinforce local authority obligations in respect of young people leaving care. These duties require local authorities to ensure that sufficient measures are in place to provide equal access and consistency of service provision to young people leaving care.

6.3.2 In addition, local authorities will be required to carry out and record individual needs assessments in respect of these young people, and will incur an obligation to meet their identified needs.

6.3.3 In addition, from April 2004, the Department of Work and Pensions will no longer pay certain benefits to some of these young people. At that time, the local authority will assume financial responsibility for them until they reach the age of eighteen.

6.3.4 Local authorities are required to nominate a 'Lead Implementation Officer' who will be responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of these duties and who will liaise with the Scottish Executive on a regular basis.

6.4 Improving Outcomes for Young People

6.4.1 Two reports have been commissioned by the Scottish Executive and published in 2002: "*Still A Bairn*" (University of York) and "*Throughcare and Aftercare of Looked After Children in Scotland*" (Throughcare and Aftercare Working Group). Both reports express concern about the standard of throughcare and aftercare services across the country and make a number of recommendations for change and improvement.

6.4.2 The Throughcare and Aftercare Strategy sets out the Council's considered response to the identified needs of young people leaving care and details the new statutory duties. It notes some of the poor outcomes for young people leaving local authority care. Proposed actions to improve the existing service in Dundee arise from this. These are summarised in the following section.

7 PROPOSALS

7.1 The Carolina House Trust Outreach Team and the existing Social Work Department staff group will be combined to form a specialist Throughcare and Aftercare team, operating from a city centre location. This will allow equality of access to the young people receiving a service. Existing working arrangements will be strengthened and the consistency and quality of service improved. The combined team will be led by a Senior Officer, who will be the 'Lead Implementation Officer' referred to in paragraph 6.3.4 above. This officer will also oversee continuing service development.

7.1.1 There is a clear need for more supported lodgings places. A formal system for the recruitment, assessment and support of these placements is required, serviced by the establishment of a new post of Resource Worker.

7.1.2 A Clerical Assistant is needed to support the administration of assessments and systems for the financial support of young people, as well as the day to day functioning of the office base.

7.1.3 The Throughcare and Aftercare team, in conjunction with the Housing Department, will implement proposals for a joint assessment protocol for all vulnerable young people presenting as homeless. This proposal was included in the Children's Service Plans of 1999 and 2002.

7.1.4 Corporate responsibility for the provision of appropriate services will be held across departments and agencies. Through the Senior Officer, the Social Work Department will develop closer working arrangements with providers of housing, health, training, education and employment, and take a lead role in working to develop additional supported accommodation options in partnership with local providers.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The implementation of the proposed actions in response to recent research and new legislation will improve the Council's service to young people who leave care, and to vulnerable young homeless people. This will have a direct impact on their life chances. The improved outcomes will be to their and society's benefit.

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services and Director of Finance have been consulted on the preparation of this report

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 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.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

9 January 2003

J C Petrie
Director of Personnel and Management Services

9 January 2003

FINANCIAL APPENDIX

FULL YEAR EFFECT - START DATE 1/4/03

Post	FTE	Grade	Cost £
Senior Officer (Throughcare & Aftercare)	1.0	PO7-10	28,187
Resource Worker	1.0	SCP27-35	18,878
Independent Living Worker	3.0	SCP27-35	56,634
Clerical Assistant	1.0	GS1/2	12,296
Total Staff Costs	6.0		115,995
Employer's Costs			20,885
Payments to Clients & Service Providers			234,440
Total Costs (2002/03 Prices)			371,320
Financed By:			
Third Party Payments			168,991
Children's Service Development Fund			33,261
Redesignation of 3.0 existing posts			66,828
Throughcare Budget			65,470
Supported Accommodation			36,770
			371,320