

# DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 21 OCTOBER 2002  
**REPORT ON:** FAMILY PLACEMENT ACE CARERS SCHEME  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK  
**REPORT NO:** 763-2002

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks approval to increase the professional fostering fee payable to Dundee's ACE foster carers.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that The Social Work Committee:-

- 2.1 Approve the increase to the ACE Carers Fee to the equivalent of SCP25, ie £17,732 per annum to equivalent of SCP35, ie £23,930 per annum to be effective from 1 November 2002.

## 3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The additional cost of £20,000 for 2002/2003 and £49,000 per year thereafter will be met from within the existing Family Placement Budget.

## 4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The work of the Family Placement Service is in line with the principles of Agenda 21 in that efforts are made to keep young people within family settings within the community.

## 5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The work of the Family Placement Service promotes the principles of equal opportunities

## 6.0 MAIN TEXT

### 6.1 Background

In 1999, Dundee City Council using monies from the Children's Services Development Fund, extended their Family Placement Service to include community foster placements for young people 9-18 years who would otherwise be in secure accommodation or residential schools.

The ACE (Alternative Community Experience for Young People) Scheme, recruits professionally qualified or very experienced carers, who view fostering as an alternative employment. The conditions of the scheme provide ACE Carers with:-

- A fee paid on a fortnightly basis (currently £17,732 per annum)
- Fostering allowance of between £4,000 and £6,500 per annum depending on the age of child placed
- Additional financial assistance to cover the purchase of essential equipment, telephone expenses and transport costs
- Six weeks without placements

- Individual training programme and high levels of support

## 6.2 Placements made with ACE Carers

Over the duration of the scheme, 19 young people have been placed with ACE carers. These have been a variety of short and long term placements. There is good evidence that for some of these young people, the ACE placement offered a viable alternative to a secure or residential school placement. It is evident that if we get the timing of the placement; the matching process and the support package right - the placements can make a significant difference to the lives of the young people placed.

## 6.3 Recruiting Ace Carers

The ACE Scheme has a maximum capacity for eight carers. There are currently five approved carers with a sixth carer due to commence work in October/November 2002.

There are difficulties in recruiting this type of carer. Only a small group of suitable people are able and willing to take on our most challenging young people within the context of their own home. An added problem is the increasing competition from other authorities and Agencies, who run very similar schemes and who offer a higher fee structure.

eg a) National Children's Homes Community Alternative Placement Scheme (CAPS) pays an annual fee of £25,976 per annum

b) Angus Council are implementing a similar scheme in January 2003 and are proposing to pay an annual fee of £21,536 - £23,930 per annum

In order for Dundee City Council to retain our existing ACE carers and be able to recruit additional carers, an increase to the carers professional fee is proposed.

## 7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Director of Finance and Director of Support Services.

## 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

A G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date

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October 2002