

Social Services Standing Sub Committee
8 February 2006

IRVINE, 8 February 2006 - At a Meeting of the Social Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Margaret Munn, Ian Clarkson, Margie Currie, Jean Highgate, Alan Munro, David O'Neill, and Nan Wallace.

In Attendance

B. Docherty, Corporate Director, and S. Paterson, Head of Service (Children, Families and Criminal Justice) (Social Services); C. Kirk, Head of Service (Educational Services); and M. McKeown and E. Fisher, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

John Reid.

1. Provision of Educational Services to Looked After and Accommodated Children

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Social Services) on the educational provision put in place by the Council for looked after and accommodated children not in full time education.

The Education Act (Scotland) 1980 gives all children the right to an education appropriate to their needs. All schools within North Ayrshire have a Looked After and Accommodated Children Co-ordinator who supports the educational progress of this group of children.

An analysis carried out in September 2005 of the educational provision for looked after and accommodated children revealed that:-

- 53% of the young people accommodated at that time were attending full time mainstream education provision
- 5% attended a special educational provision
- 13% attended alternative day placement
- 8% were in further education
- 3% were actively seeking employment

- 11% attended educational outreach support
- 8% had no educational provision due to exclusion

Statistics based on children admitted to children's units between 17 August 2005 and 7 December 2005 indicated, that of the 22 admissions over this 4 month period:-

- 20 had a school placement at the time of admission, 2 did not have placements
- 16 had a full time placement
- 4 had a part-time placement
- 16 of the 20 young people had periods of non-attendance recorded
- The number of periods of non-attendance was 61 half days
- Reasons for non-attendance included - exclusion (26), training (5), refusal (12), other (18)
- 2 young people had 1 period on non-attendance
- 5 young people had less than 5 periods
- 5 young people had over 5 periods on non-attendance

Looked after and accommodated pupils in North Ayrshire, as a group, experience more exclusions than other pupils in the Authority. Details of these children are provided to the Pupil Support Service Manager on a weekly basis.

The Educational Support Resource, based within Stanley Primary School provides outreach support to primary pupils who have additional support needs. There is also a Secondary Outreach Team for secondary aged pupils including looked after and accommodated children. Service delivery emphasises the importance of effective partnership working with parents/carers, schools and concerned agencies. A range of educational settings outwith school are also used. These are designed to promote pupils achievement in line with the Scottish Executive's guidance for the development of a flexible curriculum.

Ongoing support to children and young people accommodated in the authority's Children's Units include:-

- weekly contact by telephone and regular visits by Outreach teachers to the Children's Units to discuss pupil's needs
- identification by unit staff of children requiring urgent support, primary those facing imminent SQA examinations or on longer term exclusion
- tutorial support sessions for individual children on request and as resources allow
- contact arrangements for all units in the case of educational or general homework queries
- provision of additional educational resources, including ICT to support homework
- provision of Standard Grade core texts in a range of subjects
- links with the Library Service to ensure a regular supply of books and related materials to each unit.

Educational Services have been successful in a bid to secure funding for a pilot project aimed at raising the educational attainment of looked after and accommodated children. Direct support to young people began in January 2006. A Strategy Group will oversee the effectiveness of this initiative and report to a Sub Group of the Children's Services Planning Group.

The outcome of the Strategic Review of Residential Child Care Services is awaited.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.