

Social Work Committee  
7 October 1998

**Irvine, 7 October 1998** - At a Meeting of the Social Work Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

James Jennings, Margaret Munn, Elliot Gray, Patrick Browne, Jack Carson, James Clements, David Gallagher, Jane Gorman, Joseph McKinney, Elizabeth McLardy, Robert Reilly and Gena Seales.

**In Attendance**

The Director of Social Work; The Head of Planning and Development; The Head of Accountancy (Financial Services); A McEvoy, Marketing Officer and S Paxton, Administration Officer (Chief Executive) and Mrs Karen Darling, Commissioner, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board.

**Chair**

Mr Jennings in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Ian Clarkson, George Steven, Samuel Taylor and Richard Wilkinson.

**1. Minutes Confirmed**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 26 August 1998, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

**2. Mental Health Issues in North Ayrshire: Ayrshire and Arran Mental Health Strategy**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work regarding progress towards the publication of a Mental Health Strategy for Ayrshire and Arran. The Committee also received a presentation by Karen Darling, Commissioner, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board and Philip Bryers, Head of Planning and Development on the extent of mental illness in Ayrshire and Arran and the joint working arrangements between Ayrshire and Arran Health Board and the Social Work Directorate.

Mental illness affects around 49,000 people in the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board area. The Government's aims for mental health services in Scotland were set out in the report "Framework for Mental Health Services in Scotland" and the two Circulars accompanying the document required Health Boards, NHS Trusts and Local Authorities to prepare local Mental Health Strategies.

The three Ayrshire authorities and Ayrshire and Arran Health Board formed a Mental Health Project Board, which included service users and have now produced two strategies relating to the local delivery of mental health services:- the Mental Health Strategy and A Strategy for People with Dementia and Disabilities, which will, in due course be published for consultation. The Strategies (a) made a series of recommendations for future action covering a range of issues including developing community and primary care and community support services; and (b) recognised the importance of providing support services in the community to prevent unnecessary admission to psychiatric hospitals and to assist the return to the community of people who have been in long-term care. The complementary roles of health and local authority services in addressing mental health issues were also highlighted. The Project Board is currently preparing a Strategy for

Children and Young People with Mental Health and Behavioural Problems.

Certain recommendations contained in the Strategies can be addressed by improving current working practices while others will require additional investment in services. The Social Work Directorate will progress recommendations through a variety of measures including enhanced levels of mental health service and support by Community Care Teams and the establishment of stronger links with primary health care, particularly through GP Co-operatives.

The Committee agreed (a) to the publication of the two Strategies for consultation; and (b) that a further report on the implementation of the Strategies be submitted by Spring 1999.

### **3. Criteria for NHS Continuing Care**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the Scottish Office Department of Health Circular "NHS Responsibility for Continuing Health Care" which requires Health Boards, local authorities and other providers of care in the community services to review the existing arrangements and consider alternative delivery mechanisms.

The Council was represented on a Working Group, convened by Ayrshire and Arran Health Board to examine the implementation of the Circular. The Working Group has completed its task and produced a series of documents detailing the criteria for NHS continuing care, admissions to Nursing Homes, residential care, rehabilitation, NHS responsibility for respite care and associated protocols. The criteria, details of which were provided in the report, will be incorporated into the Planning Agreement for Hospital Discharge.

The Committee agreed the criteria for NHS Continuing Care.

### **4. Occupational Therapy Service**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the Occupational Therapy Service.

Occupational Therapists assess and advise on the provision of aids and adaptations, provide therapy programmes and specialist support to disabled persons. The Council has given priority to maintaining and developing the service as there is a national shortfall of qualified Occupational Therapists. The Council also provides student placements for Trainee Occupational Therapists undertaking studies at Langside College or Glasgow Caledonian University.

To meet the current needs of the service it is proposed that the post of Occupational Therapy Assistant within the Disability Resource Centre, Irvine be re-designated and upgraded as an Occupational Therapist (Qualified) and transferred to the Three Towns Area Team. The post of Occupational Therapy Technical Assistant, Disability Resource Centre, Irvine will be deleted from the establishment. The proposals will result in an overall saving of around £6,000 per year which will be used in accordance with the ongoing review of staffing at the Disability Resource Centre.

The Committee agreed (a) to increase the Occupational Therapy establishment in the Three Towns Area Teams by one new post of Qualified Occupational Therapist; and (b) to remit the staffing implications to the Support Services Committee for its consideration.

### **5. Sex Offenders Act 1997: Revised Guidance**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work regarding revised Guidance issued by the Scottish Office on the Sex Offenders Act 1997 which consolidates previous Scottish Office Circulars for Police, Social Work and other authorities.

The Guidance gives details of the roles and responsibilities of various agencies working with sex offenders within the Criminal Justice System including the Courts, Scottish Prison Service, other local authority departments and the Health Service. It also requires local authorities, amongst other things, to establish joint working with the Police, which has already been achieved in North Ayrshire, details the role of Social Work Departments in relation to Registered Sex Offenders either placed by Courts on a Community Supervision Order or released from prison on a

Supervision Requirement and recommends the extension of Police and Social Work responsibilities to include sex offenders not covered by previous registration requirements. The Guidance also advises of the planned introduction from November 1998 of a new Sex Offender Order under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The Committee, in noting the revised Guidance and proposed introduction of the Sex Offenders Order, agreed to extend the system of monitoring offenders to include sex offenders not previously registered.

## **6. Accommodation**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work regarding the use of accommodation throughout the Directorate.

The Directorate is currently in negotiation with North Ayrshire and Arran NHS Trust regarding the possible use of a vacant section of Pavilion 4, Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine as a base for the Head Injury Service currently accommodated in the Dirrans Centre, Kilwinning. Alternative accommodation is being sought for the Directorate's Training Section currently located in Bank Street, Irvine and the relocation of the Family Support Unit from the campus of the recently closed Moor Nursery, Irvine to within the grounds of Ayrshire Central Hospital.

The Committee agreed that the Director of Social (a) implement the proposals contained in the report; and (b) submit a further report in due course.

## **7. Admissions to Nursing Homes and Private/Voluntary Homes for the Elderly**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on admissions to nursing homes and private/voluntary homes for the elderly.

The Council is currently funding 243 persons in nursing homes and 106 persons in residential homes for the elderly. In addition, 41 elderly persons have been admitted to nursing homes and 30 to residential homes for the elderly for short periods of respite care.

As at September 1998 the Waiting List for Funding was 108 elderly people. This consists of an actual waiting list of 78 elderly people and a potential waiting list of 30. The latter group are currently resident in nursing homes or residential homes for the elderly but are funding their own placement.

The cost of clearing the actual waiting list would be £635,156. The budget for nursing homes and residential homes for the elderly for 1998/99 is £3.3m and is on target. In order to address the current waiting list for funding the Social Work Directorate will continue the current admissions group system whereby admissions are prioritised, monitored and rationed in terms of available finance and maintain the current admission level of 6 per month.

Noted.

## **8. A Study of Foster Care and Foster Carers in Scotland**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work on the findings of a Scottish Office Report entitled "Fostering Good Relations - A Study of Foster Care and Foster Carers in Scotland" undertaken by the Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde.

The results of the first part of the study were published in October 1997 and the second part of the study has now been completed. The study found, amongst other things, that about 1 in every 1,000 households in Scotland foster children, that most carers were aged over 40 years, although some carers had been fostering for more than 20 years and the average length of time spent as a foster carer was around 7 years. Although the majority of carers found that preparation, continual training and support groups were of assistance there was concern over a lack of preparation for fostering and the training offered. The study also found that the majority of foster carers were dissatisfied with the level of allowances. The Council has already addressed this by

agreeing a new Foster Carers Allowance Scheme.

The recruitment campaign for foster carers will be influenced by the research findings and the requirement for foster carers for older children and children with special needs will be highlighted.

The Social Work Directorate will (a) introduce a revised preparation programme which will be the first of an ongoing training scheme for all foster carers in North Ayrshire; (b) develop performance standards for staff involved with the fostering service which is currently being addressed as part of a Best Value Service Review; (c) clarify the difference in the role of the child's social worker and foster carer's link worker; (d) enable social workers to have the necessary time to work directly with children, their parents and foster carers; and (e) endeavour to recruit, through a publicity campaign to be launched later in the year, more foster carers from ethnic minority communities, especially the Chinese community.

The Committee agreed (i) the proposals as detailed in the report; and (ii) that the Director of Social Work submit a further report on the new initiatives already undertaken in relation to the financial support and recruitment of foster carers.

#### **9. Review of Community Care Authorised Providers List**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work regarding a review of the Authorised Providers List inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council following the reorganisation of local government.

There were over 840 Authorised Providers on Strathclyde's list and following assessment of the List it is proposed to remove 662 Providers, none of whom provide services to or within North Ayrshire. This will result in a revised Authorised Providers List of around 200.

The Committee agreed (a) to the removal of the 662 Providers from the Authorised Providers List inherited from Strathclyde Regional Council; and (b) that the Director of Social Work update the Authorised Providers List accordingly.

#### **10. Advisory Committee on Inspection: Minutes**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive, being the Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Inspection held on 14 September 1998.

Noted.

#### **11. Appointment of a Safeguarder**

Submitted report by the Chief Executive advising on the appointment of Mr Michael Bailey to the North Ayrshire Panel of Safeguarders.

The Social Work Committee on 17 April 1996 agreed that the Chair and a Vice-Chair of the Committee be authorised to exercise, in consultation with the Chief Executive, the powers conferred upon the Council regarding the appointment of Safeguarders.

Upon receipt of Mr Bailey's application to join the Panel of Safeguarders, appropriate consultations were carried out. All the consultees approved Mr Bailey's application, the Chair and Vice-Chairs have met with Mr Bailey and in exercise of their delegated powers, appointed him to the North Ayrshire Panel of Safeguarders.

Noted.

## **12. Exclusion of Public**

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

## **14. Mr R M: Supported Living Proposal**

Submitted report by the Director of Social Work regarding the present situation concerning Mr R. M.

The Social Work Committee on 3 December 1997 had agreed not to fund an additional care package for Mr R. M. in view of the costs involved. A package of care has now been identified at no additional cost to the Council which should enable Mr. R. M. to live in his own home with support.

The Committee, in noting the report, agreed that the Director of Social Work (a) negotiate a package of care for Mr R. M. at no additional cost to the Council; and (b) submit further reports in due course.

The meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.