

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

POST SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To seek approval for the use of funds allocated under the Scottish Executive strategy “More Choices, More Chances”.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Scottish executive has set a policy priority of reducing the number of young people who fall within the “NEET” group. That is those who are “Not in Education Employment or Training”. Over the summer of 2006 this strategy was published under the banner title “More Choices, More Chances.” The first indication of the impact of the strategy is that East Ayrshire Council has been allocated additional funding specifically to support the work of 0.5 FTE of an educational psychologist to support “More Choices, More Chances”. This funding is for less than two years only from September 2006 to March 2008.
- 2.2** There are wider national proposals under the “More Choices, More Chances” strategy. The basis of these was subject to Ministerial public announcement before the summer recess. Once firm details of the funding and the conditions under which it is to be awarded are known, a further report will be brought to Committee. The funding here was the subject of a separate and explicit from the Scottish Executive.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1** Due to the support from the Education Committee, East Ayrshire was one of the first authorities in Scotland to have a fully recruited Psychological Service. This team works directly with children, parents and schools to support all children, but particularly those who have additional support needs as defined by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act, 2004. The statutory basis for the service is given in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980.
- 3.2** Of necessity, the work of psychologists tends to focus on the younger age groups where the bulk of the need in terms of assessment and early intervention rests. The focus of this strategy is on the older age groups – those who have either entered the NEET group in post-compulsory education, or who are of school age as part of the “CHARM” group (Children At Risk of Missing out). It is proposed therefore that the principal focus of this additional resource should be to support children and young people who are in either of these two groups.
- 3.3** In working with and on behalf of these groups, the main targets will be:

- those aged between 14 and 19 years of age;
- looked after children (including those who are accommodated);
- children who have additional support needs;
- children and young people known to criminal justice services; and
- other children and young people who are assessed as potentially benefiting from such a service.

These groups mean that it will be important for this work to be conducted in association with the schools, social services, local colleges, Careers Scotland and the community learning and development service.

3.4 The types of work that will be undertaken will include:

- additional work in relation to transition under the additional support needs legislation;
- supporting young people who lack confidence and self esteem;
- advice on interviews and aspects of recruitment;
- development of life and counselling skills; and
- development of assessment and individual action planning schemes to support young people.

3.5 It is to be noted that the funding mechanism will not allow the appointment of an additional permanent member of staff. This work will therefore focus on development of systems, training and approaches that will endure beyond the funding period.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This development is central to the Improving Opportunities and Promoting Community Learning themes of the Community Plan.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The funding is in two blocks:

Upto 31 March 2007	£15,170
01 April to 31 March 2008	£26,534

This will be used to support Psychological Services in the delivery of paragraph 3.4.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve the use of the resource allocated by the Scottish Executive under “More Choices, More Chances” to support Psychological Services between September 2006 and March 2008; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report;

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/GRS
28 August 2006

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services (01563-576017).

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. “More Choices, More Chances”, Scottish Executive 2006**

Implementation Officer: Graham Short