

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 3 NOVEMBER 2005

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUPPORTED CARERS SERVICE

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Committees approval to establish a supportive service principally for young adults who are in transition from the care of East Ayrshire Council to living independently in the community.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Supported Carer Scheme was established in the 1980's in the Kilmarnock area as a resource for adults with additional learning needs. The scheme was later extended to provide placements for young people who had been accommodated but for whom establishing their own tenancy was deemed to be premature. The Scheme declined in the mid nineties due to benefit changes.
- 2.2 Over a period of time carers withdrew from the Scheme as there was no satisfactory resolution for benefit payment to carers at periods of transition.
- 2.3 Other changes of personnel and budgetary restrictions resulted in the demise of the scheme over time.

3. THE ROLE OF SUPPORTED CARERS

- 3.1 Supported carers offer to share their own homes with a relevant young person for a payment.
- 3.2 It is expected that the carer will offer advice, guidance and assistance to enable the young person to gain confidence and competence in developing skills for everyday living.
- 3.3 The relationship to the young person should be based on respect for the young person's individuality and rights and should contribute to a caring environment which is safe and supportive.
- 3.4 Everyday household rules should be negotiated having regard to mutual respect and an awareness of age appropriate behaviour.
- 3.5 A process of introductions and matching meetings will feature prior to the establishment of a placement agreement.
- 3.6 The supported carer and the service user will each have a different support worker who will endeavour to ensure that any potential conflict is resolved without undue compromise to the views of either party.

4. CURRENT USE OF SUPPORTED CARER SCHEMES IN SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND

- 4.1 Contact was made with Leaving Care Teams in various parts of the country who provide supported carer placements.
- 4.2 In all cases the schemes were regarded as providing appropriate placements for young people who were in continuing or further education.

5. SCHEME OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1 The payment scheme varies across different authorities. Some, though not all, of the schemes are part funded through the Supporting People Grant.
- 5.2 All schemes made payments in the range of £150 - £180 per week. This comprised three elements:
 - (a) Rent element generally recovered as Housing Benefit in the range of £40 to £50 per week.
 - (b) A means tested contribution from the service user up to a maximum of £15 per week, if the person was in employment or training.
 - (c) A carers allowance of £100 - £120 per week having regard to the demands for support that the young person required. Supporting People Grant payments (where agreed) were included in this figure.
- 5.3 The payments are regarded as all inclusive and are designed to reimburse the carer for the young persons household costs.
- 5.4 It was acknowledged that carers are generally advised to purchase enhanced insurance to cover loss caused by "non family" residents within the house. Wear and tear on the fabric and fixtures of the house are also to be anticipated and the carers should budget for redecoration and renewal of items as required.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) made provision for funds to be made available for the "transfer of responsibilities to the Local Authorities" from the DWP in 2004. An element of the settlement paid by the DWP to the Scottish Executive was enhanced by the Executive to enable the development of services for young people.
- 6.2 Consequently, this scheme can be established within the existing budget and will not require any additional funding. Opportunities to expand the scheme may be available through future supporting people money.

7. LEGAL/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Nil.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The development of this scheme is consistent with the Improving Opportunities and Eliminating Poverty themes of the Community Plan.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Supported carers offer additional choices for certain young people in making the transition to independent living.

9.2 The scheme has the potential to offer support to young people engaged in education, training or employment who might otherwise struggle with the pressures encountered in living independently.

9.3 The scheme affords the opportunity for young people to obtain advice, guidance and assistance when they need it.

9.4 The scheme offers good value for money in comparison to other care alternatives

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is requested that Committee:

- (i) agree to the recruitment of two carers as an initial objective towards establishing and developing a “fit for purpose” supportive resource for care leavers; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
10 October 2005
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report from the Working Group on the Throughcare and Aftercare of Looked After Children in Scotland

For further information please contact: Sally Ann Kelly, Senior Manager Children and Families and Criminal Justice, telephone: 01563 576845

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY