

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 14 SEPTEMBER 2000**

#### **REPORT ON THE BEFRIENDING SERVICE**

##### **Report by the Director of Educational & Social Services**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present proposals to consolidate the Council's Befriending Service within the Social Work Service and to seek approval for the related staffing recommendations to be referred to Personnel and Property Sub Committee for consideration.

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Prior to reorganisation in 1996, Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department had contracted with Community Service Volunteers (CSV) to provide a befriending service for the Kilmarnock area through the Urban Program.
- 2.2 When the project terminated Policy and Resources Committee on 12 March 1998 [Item 3121, Page 12] agreed the project be incorporated within the responsibility of the Social Work Department with a saving of £56,446.
- 2.3 In February 1999 the management and location of the befriending service was transferred to Social Work's Community Youth Support Team.
- 2.4 This work has been supported by a seconded member of staff from the Social Work's Family Support Team who has maintained a service to children and young people and ensured the continuation of the befriending service.
- 2.5 The Befriending project is one of a range of community based supports for young people aged between 8 to 16 years who are known to social work. The demand for the service has always been extremely high. With an increasing number of single parent families children often miss a positive adult role model, which can be detrimental to their personal and social development.

#### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 It is proposed that a Befriending Co-ordinator post be created at AP3 (£15,240 - £16,770) plus employer costs and mileage. Also, a post of Clerical Assistant Grade GS1/2 (£8,652 - £11,685) at 17.5 hours be established to support the worker.
- 3.2 Befriending Co-ordinator postholder will be responsible for recruiting, training and supporting befrienders who will provide a service to a range of young people with varied difficulties. They will assist in selecting and matching children with appropriate befrienders. This is a complex task as the safeguards which require

to be in place to protect children cared for by the local authority need to be ensured.

- 3.3 In addition it is recommended that 7.5% unsociable hours payment be agreed as the successful candidate will be expected to organise and facilitate three six week induction courses per year for newly recruited befrienders which will, of necessity, be in the evening. The co-ordinator will also offer out of hours support to befrienders who will carry out most of their work in the evenings and at weekends.
- 3.4 The proposals set out within this report have been discussed and agreed with the Trade Unions.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The posts will be funded from within the resources allocated to the Social Work Department for this purpose. The total cost, including oncosts and travelling, is £29,569. The posts will be funded by a virement of resources from Other Employee Costs in the Befriender Service budgets. Under Section 5.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations, this virement requires to be approved by the Social Work Committee

#### **5.0 POLICY/LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This development supports the Council's duties under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to children in need by supporting children and young people and their families within their own community. It also supports the social inclusion agenda of the Council by helping ensure vulnerable children are assisted in accessing all opportunities available to them.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:

- (i) agree the proposals contained in the paper and refer the staffing implications to the Personnel and Property Sub Committee for further consideration and approval;
- (ii) agree the virement of resources noted in the report; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
**Director of Educational & Social Services**  
BD/DB/LG/LMcB  
Enc(0) 26 September 2000

#### **List of Background Papers**

1. "Our Children Service Plan For Children and Young People" 1998-2001, Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.
2. Scottish Office: Scotland's Children – Children and Young People, Children (Scotland) Act 1995 Regulations and Guidance Volume 1 Section 1.7, 1.16, 1.38 and Volume 2 Section 2.47.
3. Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

For further information please contact Lesley Gibson, Service Unit Manager (Services), Children and Families, Civic Centre, Kilmarnock. Tel (01563 576901).

**AGENDA**