

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 13 SEPTEMBER 2001

LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED YOUNG PERSONS

INFORMATION DIARY & VIDEO

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the production and contents of an information diary and video, prepared on behalf of the Council's looked after and accommodated children and young people.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Some children and young people require to live away from home in accommodation arranged by the Council. They may be looked after in Foster Care, Children's Units, external Residential Schools or Secure Accommodation, according to need. These children and young people are accommodated – (either on a voluntary basis, with parental agreement, through child protection procedures; or by the compulsory regulation of a Children's Hearing) - within the terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. This statute also states that the Council has a corporate parenting responsibility towards its looked after and accommodated children and young people.
- 2.2 The Council has always provided looked after and accommodated children and young people with relevant information about their situation by issuing them with a leaflet prepared jointly by the Scottish Office and the Scottish Child Law Centre. It was recognised, however, that further improvement could be made in the information provided, by directly addressing issues pertinent to the Council's relationship with its looked after and accommodated children and young people.
- 2.3 In order to address this, an inter-departmental officers group was formed with representation from Social Work, Education and Community Services to produce an information booklet specific to the requirement of East Ayrshire's looked after and accommodated children and young people. Advice and guidance was also received from Legal Services. Young people were involved in the production of the booklet from a consumer perspective, with the result that it evolved into an information diary which also aimed to promote self-esteem and encourage positive behaviour.

2.4 In addition to undertaking consultation with accommodated and previously accommodated children, young people and professionals within the Council, consultation was effected with East Ayrshire's Children's panel and Clinical Health Practitioners within Ayrshire and Arran Primary Care NHS Trust. Consultation feedback was positive.

3. LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED YOUNG PERSON'S INFORMATION DIARY

3.1 The information diary covers a range of topics of particular relevance to looked after children and accommodated young people. These include:

- Information about being looked after and accommodated, presented in easily understood language;
- Information concerning personal rights and local authority expectations;
- Information about attendance at Children's Hearings;
- Information about the law;
- Information about health topics and resources;
- Information about local leisure and recreational facilities.

3.2 The anticipated benefits of the information diary are that looked after and accommodated children and young people will:

- Gain a clear understanding of what being looked after and being accommodated means;
- Receive induction information about where they will live whilst away from home;
- Be provided with clear, easily understood explanations about the law which affects their lives;
- Have information provided in simple, everyday language;
- Have access to their own record of their period of being looked after and accommodated;
- Be encouraged in the development of self-esteem and in the achievement of positive behaviour.

3.3 The diary format provides for variations in content depending on whether the individual young person is accommodated in a Children's Home, a Residential School or is looked after by Children's Carers.

3.4 A copy of the format to be issued to young people in Children's Home placements has been issued to elected members with the papers for the meeting.

3.5 Copies of the formats for young people accommodated in Residential Schools or with a Children's Carer are available in the Members' Lounge.

4. VIDEO

- 4.1 A complementary video was completed by young people currently cared for, or previously accommodated by the Council. This reinforces the information in the information diary, whilst addressing the particular needs of young people with literacy difficulties.

5. YOUNG PERSON'S PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE

- 5.1 A group of young people involved in the completion of the diary and its complementary video will attend Committee to make a short presentation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 NIL

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that elected members
- a) endorse the Looked After and Accommodated Young Person's Diary and Video for dissemination and use, and
 - b) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services
23 July 2001

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1) **East Ayrshire Council's Child and Young Person's Charter of Rights**
- 2) **'Inspiring Young People', East Ayrshire Council's Children Service Plan 2001 – 2004**
- 3) **'Our Children', East Ayrshire Council's Children's Service Plan 1998 – 2001**
- 4) **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

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AGENDA