

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 3 APRIL 2001 SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2001

CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICE FUND – A CONSULTATION ON PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND MECHANISMS FOR ALLOCATION OF FUNDING

Report by Director of Educational & Social Services Department

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from members of the Committee for the draft response to a consultation paper "Changing Children's Service Fund – A Consultation on Priority Objectives and Mechanisms for Allocation of Funding".

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The First Minister announced the intention to establish a Children's Change Fund, now called "Changing Children's Service Fund", at the launch of the first Social Justice Annual Report in November 2000. The First Minister indicated that he had asked Ministers to pool resources in a New Change Fund as part of the Scottish Executive strategy to tackle child poverty and deprivation. It is intended to support integrated services and other new approaches for the most vulnerable children and young people, improving their life chances and preventing them from falling prey to exclusion.

3. CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICE FUND

- 3.1 The Fund is envisaged as a short-term measure to stimulate better services and better outcomes through improved integrated planning and delivery.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that the Fund will deliver better outcomes for children and young people through:
- the expansion of good practice in delivery of well integrated services;
 - modernisation or reshaping of existing services to achieve better integrated support;
 - new and innovative approaches to integrated service delivery.
- 3.3 It is expected that all activities supported by the Fund will have the backing of local authorities, the health service and interested voluntary organisations, including small locally based organisations.
- 3.4 Funding will be available in the first instance from 2002/2004 with the exception of the part of the Fund which has been earmarked to support children and families affected by drug abuse where resources are available from 2001.
- 3.5 The overall budget available nationally in 2002/2003 is £33 million and in 2003/2004 is £44.5 million.

3.6 The proposed priority objectives are:

- expansion of integrated early years service for vulnerable young children in deprived communities;
- advice and support for parents of vulnerable children in deprived communities, including home/school links;
- support packages for children with disabilities or special, physical, emotional or educational needs;
- developing targeted education, prevention and rehabilitation services for children and young people involved in, or affected by drug misuse;
- support packages for vulnerable children and young people at key transition points, including access to psychological and psychiatric services.

4. EAST AYRSHIRE'S RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

4.1 The consultation document is available in the Members Lounge and East Ayrshire's draft response is set out as an appendix to this report.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Nil at the present time.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The need to develop improved integrated services to support the most vulnerable children, young people and their families is consistent with the objectives which will be contained in the forthcoming Children's Service Plan.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members of Committee are asked to:

- (i) approve the draft response to the "Changing Children's Service Fund" set out in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services Department

KG/SB
14 March 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Changing Children's Services Fund: Consultation and Priority Objectives and Mechanism for Allocation of Funding – Draft Response by East Ayrshire Council

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

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APPENDIX 1

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CHANGING CHILDREN'S SERVICES FUND

The Council welcomes the proposals set out in the consultation document for a Children's Services Change Fund, particularly if it brings together the range of current funding mechanisms to support integrated service delivery. The undernoted sets out specific comments in relation to the consultation document.

PARAGRAPHS 12/14 THE ROLE OF THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL AGENCIES

The Council welcomes the work proposed at national level to simplify the planning frameworks for children's services and particularly welcomes the view which will commence in relation to addressing the constraints to joint funding activity between health and local government.

Joined up planning requires to take place at national level as well as local authority level.

The production of an action plan identifying principles, guidelines and examples of good practice will be particularly helpful and will allow services to develop based on best practice rather than prescription from the centre.

PARAGRAPHS 15/18 PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

Clearly the proposals contained within the consultation document are focusing on prevention. This is absolutely required, however, resources should not deplete the necessary staffing requirements for statutory work, and in particular child protection.

The need to expand integrated early years services for vulnerable young children is endorsed, although it is important to ensure that monies from the Changing Children's Services Fund complements the money available through Sure Start.

The reference to home/school links is particularly welcome. However, the role for community learning could usefully be teased out.

The need to develop support packages for children with disabilities or special physical, emotional or educational needs is endorsed. There are a number of children now being provided with services within the community and through school who routinely require a high level of medical care. This poses enormous challenges for social workers, teachers and other support staff. Pooled budgets which therefore recognise both the social and clinical needs of children and young people will be particularly beneficial.

The priority objective of developing services to support children and young people involved and affected by drug misuse should be developed further to include alcohol misuse.

The priority objective of support packages for vulnerable children and young people at the key transition points, including access to psychological and psychiatric services is endorsed.

The foundations for many of the proposed priority objectives are already in place through key joint strategic planning documents between the local authority, health service and its other partners. The one further area which should be included as a priority is support to young carers.

It is surprising that the models of integrated working being developed through New Community Schools are not reflected in the document.

PARAGRAPH 19 VOLUNTARY SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

East Ayrshire Council already has a partnership approach to working with local community and voluntary organisations and would therefore support the proposals that the voluntary sector should be a key partner in developing proposals and delivering services through the Change Fund.

PARAGRAPHS 20/23 DISTRIBUTION OF THE FUND

Local authorities have the lead role in developing Children's Service Plans and therefore East Ayrshire Council would propose that funding should be directed through local authorities as the lead agency for developing, implementing and monitoring Children's Service Plans. However, this is dependent on the findings of the working group looking at barriers to joint or pooled funding.

SUMMARY

East Ayrshire Council welcomes the establishment of the Changing Children's Services Fund and would hope that it brings with it a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the planning and delivery of services for the most vulnerable children and young people living within our communities. The Council endorses the priority objectives. In order to meet these objectives, however, there is no one solution and therefore a diversity of approaches is required which focuses on improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The basis of the planning for integrated children's services requires to be through Children's Service Plans, which should be informed by the views of children and young people as well as other stakeholders living in the community or providing services.

AGENDA