

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 30 JANUARY 2003

FUNDING FOR YOUTH CRIME INVESTMENT 2002-2003

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Elected Members of additional funding being made available to local authorities to increase the use of Information Technology in the completion of assessments of young people who offend, and to seek approval for its proposed use.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In a letter to local authorities, dated 19th December, 2002, the Scottish Executive announced the allocation of an additional £3M to local authorities of which East Ayrshire will receive £77,752. The funding is to be used by local authorities to increase the use of information technology in the completion of Panel reports of young people who offend.
- 2.2 The Scottish executive expects this investment to local authorities to achieve the following:
- All young people referred to a Children's Hearing will have a comprehensive, structured assessment completed upon them;
 - Initial assessments are completed on all young people referred to the Children's Reporter by the police on offence grounds;
 - All social work staff involved in youth justice assessments will have access to structured assessment tools together with associated training and Information Technology support;
 - Where appropriate assist other youth justice partners, for example the voluntary sector, in the use of assessment tools, associated training and Information Technology support.
- 2.3 The Scottish Executive will seek, as part of their annual reporting arrangement, a report on how this particular grant award has been spent.

3. PROPOSED AREAS OF SPEND

3.1 At this stage in the process the proposed area of spend requires to be broad rather than detailed. With this in mind the following areas have been identified as best meeting the needs of the service, and the expectations of the Scottish Executive:

- Hardware – to assist those social workers engaged in the preparation of reports for Children’s Hearing on young people referred on offence grounds, and to achieve a one-to-one ratio of computers, additional computers with accompanying software requires to be purchased;
- Infrastructure – to meet the capacity demands which additional computers will generate there will be a need to upgrade network access and possibly server size;
- Training – further investment in training appropriate staff in the assessment model which is the structured tool adopted by East Ayrshire and in which some youth justice staff are already trained;
- Youth Justice Module – to improve the quality of information, in both management and practice terms, a youth justice module integrated with the department’s management information system requires to be developed.

3.2 The intention in seeking to create a ratio of one computer to each worker is to promote the use of Information Technology as being integral to good social work practice.

4 FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial nor personnel implications for the Council. The additional grant of £77,752 for this financial year is being distributed under Sec.68 of the Regulation of Care Act 2001, and is provided for the specific purpose indicated elsewhere in the report.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This will assist in compliance with National Standards and Criminal Justice statutory requirements.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Scottish Executive has made available to the Council an additional sum of money (£77,752) in this current financial year for the specific purpose of increasing the use of information technology in the completion of assessments of young people referred to Children’s Reporters by the police on offence grounds.

6.2 In broad terms the proposed spend focuses on increasing the availability of computers for relevant staff, accompanying upgrade of infrastructure and software capacity, and training.

7 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is recommended that Elected members:

- i) approve the proposed direction of spend;
- ii) advise the Director of Finance to amend the Social Work budget to reflect the additional income: and
- iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services
Enc (0)
13 January 2003

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

For further information please contact Donal Flannery, Service Unit Manager Criminal Justice, Council Offices, Civic Centre, Kilmarnock, Tel: 01563 576907.

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