

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Board members on activity to address issues in relation to substance misuse in the north of East Ayrshire.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The North Initiative Board has submitted an application to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) Better Off Programme to take forward an initiative which will address the gap in service provision in relation to aftercare/rehabilitation for substance users.
- 2.2 To enhance the above initiative, a proposal was submitted for funding to Ayrshire Drug and Alcohol Team (ADAT), from the £220,000 underspend in its budget for the financial year to March 2002, in respect of a Project Worker (Alcohol).
- 2.3 At its meeting of 7 November 2002, the North Board agreed that the balance of £15,000 not utilised as match fund for the NOF bid, be used instead to fund a targeted piece of work in relation to problematic alcohol use.

**3 PROGRESS TO DATE**

**3.1 NOF Bid**

A decision on the NOF bid is expected in February 2003.

**3.2 Bid to ADAT for Funding from Underspend Money**

The application to ADAT was unsuccessful, in the main due to the fact that the proposal was for recurring funding. In addition, early discussion with ADAT highlighted the fact that the underspend was for one year only and therefore, it is probable that this played a part in the bid being unsuccessful.

**3.3 Proposal to Address Problematic Alcohol Use**

- 3.4 An initiative has been proposed by Superintendent Jim Thomson, Strathclyde Police, and is currently being developed in collaboration with Ayrshire Council on Alcohol (ACA), the North Initiative, the Council's Department of Educational and Social Services and the Reporter to the Children's Panel,

which will address issues of problematic alcohol use among young people, particularly between the ages of 13 and 15 years.

- 3.5 Under the above initiative, young people under 16 years of age who come to the attention of the Police for misusing alcohol and for whom, in most cases this is a first offence, will be requested to attend a formal Police warning which will take the form of a discussion during which a senior officer will encourage the young person and her/his relevant guardian to participate in the initiative. Only young people who are considered suitable and who will benefit from participating will be offered this opportunity. Participation will be voluntary.
- 3.6 The young person will be required to attend a 6-week programme, facilitated by ACA, which will include the following sessions, with the emphasis on interactive learning involving small and large group discussion.
- General information/attitudes to alcohol.
  - First Aid input, including effects of alcohol on health.
  - Outing /activity.
  - Alcohol and the law.
  - Video and discussion.
  - Alternatives to alcohol.
- 3.7 Prior to the programme, the young person and her/his guardian, where possible, will attend an initial meeting with ACA at which they will be given information on alcohol and the young person will be assessed on the level of information, counselling and group work required.
- 3.8 It is proposed that the £15,000 remaining from the funds set aside originally to match fund the NOF bid will provide a part-time worker for the pilot stage of this initiative and the materials and resources needed. Should this prove successful further funding bids will be submitted to relevant bodies to extend the programme.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Board:
- i) notes the timescale for the decision on the NOF Better Off Programme;
  - ii) notes that the bid to the ADAT for a Project Worker (Alcohol) was unsuccessful;
  - iii) agrees the use of the £15,000 match fund for 2002/03 for the initiative outlined at section 3 above; and
  - iv) otherwise notes the content of the report.

**Gwen Barker**  
**Manager Social Inclusion**  
**21 January 2003**