

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the pilot exercise for the Aspirational Learning Programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting of 23 May 2002, the Board agreed to fund a pilot exercise for the Aspirational Learning Programme.
- 2.2 It was also proposed that the opportunity to participate in the programme be offered to the community representatives on the North Board and that work be done with initiatives in the north where staff had been trained to deliver the appropriate programmes.
- 2.3 Funding of £2,500 was allocated to resource the pilot activity.

3. ROLL OUT OF THE ASPIRATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME IN THE NORTH

3.1 Employment

- 3.1.1 Eight service users have benefited from the STEPS programme through 'East Ayrshire Works'. Following the programme, one of the participants accessed a placement with an employer and proved to be such an asset that he has now being considered for a permanent position.
- 3.1.2 Across East Ayrshire, the programme has been successful in working with individuals who are unemployed and has been incorporated into the core activity of the programmes delivered by East Ayrshire Employment Initiative.

3.2 Addiction

- 3.2.1 Sixteen volunteers with the Bridge Project have now participated in the STEPS programme. Participation in the programme has made a significant contribution to the participants' personal development and indirectly benefits those with whom they interact on a volunteer basis within the addiction setting on a daily basis.

3.2.2 Four recovering substance users have benefited from the programme as an element of their rehabilitation.

3.2.3 Across East Ayrshire, the programme has been particularly successful in assisting individuals recovering from substance use to move on. Delivery of this programme to both service users and volunteers has been built in to the core activity of the Bridge Project.

3.3 Community Representatives

3.3.1 Five community representatives from the Board and two members of the Support Team participated in a two-day STEPS programme at Rugby Park, Kilmarnock. The programme was well received and participants felt that other members of the community could benefit from the programme.

3.4 Young People

3.4.1 In general, it has proven difficult to involve children and young people in the programme due to the fact that it is delivered over a significant period of time and takes them away from the social activities which have attracted them to attend the youth organisation or club. In addition, the programme for children is designed to be delivered over time as part of the curriculum.

3.4.2 Experience shows that the best results with children and young people come from the material being delivered systematically through schools. It is proposed, therefore, that links be made to the Council's Department of Educational and Social Services to explore the possibility of building on pilot activity which has already been undertaken by the Alternatives to Addiction Project and the Careers Service.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- i) remits the Manager Social Inclusion to explore the possibilities for delivering the Aspirational Learning Programme within schools; and
- ii) otherwise notes the content of the report.

Gwen Barker
Manager Social Inclusion
15 May 2003