

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Social Work & Health Department

Social Work and Health Improvement Committee: 15 October 2008

Subject: Social Work Budgetary Position 2008/09 as at Period 5 to 15 September 2008

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise members of the performance of the Social Work budget for the period to 15 September 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1** Attached as Appendices A, B and C are budgetary control statements for the Social Work Services Department.
- 2.2** It should be noted that this report compares the actual expenditure to 15 September 2008 to the phased budget as at 15 September 2008.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The overall variance for the service to period 5 is £103,005 adverse. The main variances to date are as follows:

- 3.2 Residential Schools** is shown as adverse by £100,523. This is due to two issues:

- Some of the residential schools where we have children placed have applied an above inflation price increase in 2008/09 (some by up to 34%). On average the effect of this has seen an increase in base costs of placements of around 10%. This is in excess of budgetary provision for inflation. The Department, along with others in the West of Scotland has attempted to avoid paying the inflationary uplift, however this has not proved to be possible due to issues around the availability of supply of such placements when they are needed and alternatives not being readily available.
- The number of clients who require to be placed in secure accommodation is currently greater than anticipated in the budget. We normally budget for an average of 1.5 FTE such placements at any time during the year, and we currently have 4 such placements. It is hoped that such placements are not long term, however the movement of such children out of these placements is not totally within the control of the Council, as all such children are there on placement orders, and as such any further placements require to be agreed by the Children's Panel.

As a result of these two factors the current projected overspend on Residential Schools is approximately £250,000. Further updates will be provided in future reports.

4. Personnel Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct personnel implications of the budgetary control report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Other than the financial position noted above there are no financial implications of the budgetary control report.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 The main financial risks to the ongoing financial position relate to unforeseen client needs being identified between now and the end of the financial year which may result in increased costs arising from expensive service provision. The position regarding the cost of Residential Schools provision represents such a risk.

- 6.2 It should be recognised that the Council's newly developed capacity to offer intensive community based support to young people in trouble has reduced demand for Residential Schools placements. Other comparable local authorities have much larger budget variances in this area of expenditure.

- 6.3 This issue is a national issue and ADSW have or are planning to raise it with the Scottish Government as a financial burden.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The main issue identified to date relates to inflationary pressures in residential school placements. The Department is aiming to reduce placements in such provision where appropriate alternative placements in the community or other residential accommodation are available and suitable.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

William W Clark
Executive Director of Social Work & Health Department

Person to Contact: Stephen West, Manager of Resources -Tel. No. 01389 737705

Appendices: Appendix A - Summary Budgetary Control Report
Appendix B - Budgetary Control Report
Appendix C - Report on Budgetary Variances

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All