

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Social Work & Health Department

Social Work and Health Improvement Committee: 16 September 2009

Subject: Social Work Budgetary Position 2009/10 as at Period 3 – year to 15 July 2009

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise members of the performance of the Social Work and Health budget for the period to 15 July 2009.

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 July 2009 to the phased budget as at 15 July 2009.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The overall variance for the service to period 3 is £124,064 adverse. The main variances to date are as follows:

- 3.2 Operations and Servicing** is adverse by £38,856. The main contributory factor is:

- Employee costs are currently shown as £29,875 adverse. A number of posts are assumed in the budget to remain vacant throughout the year and this in addition to the budgetary expectation on turnover savings is proving difficult to achieve.

- 3.3 Residential Schools** is shown as adverse by £81,806. This is at present due to:

- The number of children 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 such placements at any time during the year, and we have recently been carrying as many as 6 such placements.

Should this situation continue throughout the year the current projected overspend on Residential Schools is approximately £300,000. Further updates will be provided in future reports.

3.4 Residential Accommodation for Older People is shown as adverse by £52,108. This variance is due to two factors:

- Employee costs are shown as adverse by £20,832. This service has relied heavily on agency staff to cover both vacancies and absence. Urgent steps to address the improvement of recruitment and retention of staff have been taken. Progress will be scrutinised.
- Property costs are shown as adverse by £35,891 which is being caused by the increased cost electricity and gas. Budgets for these items appear to be insufficient due to recent and sustained price increases. At present costs this variance will exceed £100,000 by the end of the financial year.

3.5 Home Help Services are shown as favourable by £53,815. Two significant variances are the main contributors to this position :

- Employee costs are shown as £20,811 favourable. This is due to effective management of workforce levels around identified assessed care needs.
- Payments to other bodies are shown as favourable by £20,825 as we are continuing to manage levels of demand in the most cost-effective way.

4. Personnel Issues

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 continues to represent such a risk. The position regarding the cost of Electricity and Gas has been raised with Finance as it is assumed to be a council wide issue.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The main issues identified to date relate to cost pressures in the cost of children's care services. The Department is continuing to make every attempt to minimise placement of children in residential schools 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.

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

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All