

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Children Services Committee: 11 October 2006

Subject: Raising the Educational Attainment of Looked After Children

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform members of the Committee of the success of a recent bid for Scottish Executive funding for a pilot proposal to raise the educational attainment of Looked After Children.

2. Background

- 2.1** Earlier this year the Scottish Executive invited Local Authorities to bid for funding in the form of pilot proposals for programmes of educational attainment support for Looked After Children.
- 2.2** The Executive were trying to encourage a range of support services, and approaches, which would then be evaluated for their success.
- 2.3** In total 18 Local Authorities were successful in applying for the funding.

3. West Dunbartonshire Council Pilot

- 3.1** The overall aim of our proposal is to add to existing provision within the authority, allowing us to target in a more comprehensive way those young people who require more intensive supports.

The young people who will be targeted will be, initially, those in S3 and S4 in secondary school who are either Looked After at home or are accommodated by the Council.

The project will aim to add to existing supports enabling a 7 day a week support structure which will combine educational, social and recreational opportunities.

Outcome Measures

- 3.2** The programmes of work developed by the project will aim to achieve the following:
- Avoid admissions to alternative to mainstream education
 - Improve attendance

- Reduce exclusions
- Enhance learning opportunities (both in school and in the home)
- Support parents by encouraging a positive attitude towards education and their child's progress
- Increase access to educational resources (e.g. reading material, computer programmes, etc)
- Raise educational attainment

Pilot Resources

- 3.3** As mentioned the pilot will add to existing resources e.g. L A A C teachers, pupil and family supports within schools.

The funding will allow us to create the following extra resources over the next 2 years that the funding is available: 1 teaching post; 2 groupwork/family support workers; and an enhanced budget which will allow us to build individual support packages around young people. This can include individual tutoring, incentive schemes and the use of outdoor, arts and craft facilities, as well as running summer schools.

Funding has been agreed with the Scottish Executive for up to £92,000 year 2006/07 and £112,000 year 2007/08.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** For the duration of the pilot there will be the need to create the following posts: 1 teaching post, 2 groupwork and family support posts. It is envisaged that these posts can be filled through secondments from existing staff.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The above posts and programme costs can be met in total by the funding from the Scottish Executive.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** Raising the educational attainment of Looked After Children has been the focus of ongoing discussions between the Scottish Executive and Local Authorities for some time. The agreement to these proposals allow us to offer a more targeted, intensive support structure to some of the most vulnerable children and families in this Authority.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** The Committee is asked to approve the contents of this report and the creation of the outlined posts.

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Wards Affected: This proposal will affect young people and families in all council wards.