

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership: 17 May 2006

Subject: Children with Disabilities/Transitions

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the Partnership of a new development in Learning Disability Services.

2. Background

- 2.1** In recent years the number of children with disabilities leaving school and entering adult learning disability services has increased markedly. This year 13 children will require to be allocated a social worker, with a similar figure projected for the year 2007/08.
- 2.2** Children who are moving towards adult services often require substantial care packages. Identifying these packages is a task which needs to be focused and specialised. It needs to encompass creative services and appropriate funding streams. A particular focus needs to be placed on the Independent Living Fund as a main source of funding.
- 2.3** Recently a series of discussions have taken place with Share Scotland, a voluntary organisation providing services for adults with learning disabilities. The aim of these discussions was to identify a future partnership with Share Scotland within West Dunbartonshire Council. Share Scotland currently provide a range of housing support services within the council area, services which are run to a high standard. They are an approved provider and have a local carer on their management board.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The specific area of discussion between Share Scotland and Learning Disability Services was that of children and transition. Historically, this is an area of work which Share Scotland has focused on. The creation of Share Scotland as an organisation resulted largely from their involvement in residential schools for children with disabilities.
- 3.2** Share Scotland propose to work in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council to provide a specialist service which would focus on establishing socially inclusive opportunities for young adults with learning disabilities.

3.3 A significant task in ensuring that creative packages of care available to all is sourcing opportunities and funding. This task is currently carried out by the Transitions Social Worker, who puts an initial care package in place in addition to retaining a care management function. Sustaining and adapting these packages is a time intensive task which creates tensions for workers who are likely to be involved in core social work activities such as crisis intervention and statutory work i.e. child and adult protection.

3.4 Share Scotland would complement the existing care management services by offering a sustainable, person-centred service aimed at encouraging families and adults to be involved in care planning.

In addition, Share Scotland will develop its training agenda aimed at capacity building. The appointment of an area co-ordinator will provide a link and resource to the care manager which will enable continuity between children's services, health and adult services. Share Scotland will be in a position to collate and disseminate information in conjunction with learning disability services which will inform local carers, services users and care managers.

3.5 Discussions with Share Scotland have established that such a service would provide an invaluable link between the transition social worker, adult services social worker and parents and carers. Share Scotland would be in a position to carry out much of the detailed, qualitative work which is required to establish future packages for young adults with disabilities. They would also be able to secure funding streams and to assist greatly with the processing and monitoring of ILF applications.

3.6 The joint scheme fits well within the Learning Disability Partnership in Practice Strategy; and is a creative and positive approach to addressing an issue which is becoming more complex and costly on a year by year basis.

4. Personnel/Provider Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues for West Dunbartonshire Council. Share Scotland will provide a complementary service which will support existing social work staff.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 As stated in the attached report, entitled Share Scotland – Development Proposal for West Dunbartonshire Council (attached as Appendix 1) Share Scotland is prepared to invest time and specialist experience, generate funding and service developments in West Dunbartonshire. They will appoint a dedicated manager for this area to oversee services at no cost to the Council. The investment in partnership with Learning Disability Services will reduce significantly the costs of care packages.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** This development will provide measurable outcomes relating to children and adults with disabilities. Share Scotland will work with a small number of cases (3-6) initially, building incrementally to 10 cases per annum.

Summary:

1. This is an exciting opportunity to develop low cost, high quality partnership services.
2. This proposal will have a positive impact on the existing difficulties experienced by the area-teams.
3. West Dunbartonshire Council should financially support this proposal with a non-recurring payment of £20,000.
4. West Dunbartonshire Council will require to arrange a number of substantial care packages in the next two to five years. Share would be in a strong position to contribute to this.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** The Partnership is asked to note the contents of this report.

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Background Papers:

Development Proposal for West
Dunbartonshire Council