

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Interim Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Social Work and Health Improvement Committee: 19 May 2010

Subject: Church of Scotland, Threshold Leven Services, Alexandria

1. Purpose:

- 1.1** To provide Committee with information on the progress towards service re-design of the services currently provided by the Church of Scotland care service (Crossreach) following that organisation's decision to withdraw from the provision of this service.

2. Background

- 2.1** In January 2010 the Crossreach confirmed its decision to withdraw from the Threshold Leven service located in Alexandria. Crossreach are also withdrawing from the provision from other service areas across Scotland. This decision presented a considerable challenge to the Learning Disability Service given the time scales involved.
- 2.2** Following extensive discussions, Crossreach agreed to continue to provide a service beyond its original planned withdrawal date of April 2010. At the present time, it is anticipated that Crossreach will withdraw from the Alexandria service on 30 June 2010.
- 2.3** The service at Alexandria is provided to 16 adults with a learning disability who are the responsibility of West Dunbartonshire Council and one other adult who is the responsibility of Argyll & Bute Council. Discussions between the two council areas have confirmed that West Dunbartonshire will co-ordinate the re-provisioning of services to include the adult from Argyll & Bute.

In addition to the Housing Support Service, Crossreach provided a respite service to five adults. This service was part of an already planned re-provisioning and the service will move to a new purpose built facility in Dunn Street, Duntocher in May 2010.

- 2.4** The priority for both the Council and Crossreach has been to ensure local people receive the best care and support and that the service provision was reviewed and re-assessed. A steering group has been initiated to achieve a smooth transition for all service users and carers. This group has representatives from service users, Learning Disability Services, Crossreach and Independent Advocacy. In addition both carers and the Care Commission have been kept involved and informed through regular liaison.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Following the decision by Crossreach to withdraw from the Alexandria service, a detailed programme of activity has been undertaken. This has included a Comprehensive assessment process. The Scottish Government's Joint

Improvement Team's Self Assessment document has been used to ascertain the views of both service users and carers. This process was lead by the Independent Advocacy Service. In addition, a Single Shared Assessment process lead by a senior social worker and care managers of Learning Disability Services has been completed for all service users.

- 3.2** In order to manage the transitions process, housing support workers from Learning Disability Services have been identified to work closely with both Crossreach staff and those in receipt of services. These staff have liaised with all involved to collate the assessment information and develop person centred plans for all service users. In addition, the Learning Disability Welfare Rights service has ensured that all service users' benefits have been maximised and that, where appropriate, the use of the Independent Living Fund has been considered.
- 3.3** Following the Crossreach decision, meetings have taken place with Dunbritton Housing Association who is the landlord of the building. These meetings have focused on ensuring that the current rental income to Dunbritton remains in place and on refurbishing the main Threshold Leven building. These discussions are currently ongoing, however, it is anticipated that detailed plans aimed at creating a more individualised model of support will be available soon. The plans will include overall redecoration of the building; the creation of three separate entrances which will further enhance the individualised nature of the service; and the refurbishment of the part of the building which was previously used for respite services.
- 3.4** At present, Crossreach supports 8 individuals in the main building on Bank Street, Alexandria and a further 9 individuals in a variety of shared and single tenancies in the Alexandria area. Following the assessment process it is clear that there is little desire on behalf of the service users or the carers for a significant change to take place with regards to the current living arrangements for the individuals concerned. It's also the case that each service user has a tenancy agreement with Dunbritton Housing Association.
- 3.5** Following extensive discussions with Dunbritton Housing Association, Crossreach, Legal Services and provider agencies, it is planned that the model of services to those living in shared or single tenancies should remain unchanged. With regards to the main Threshold building, it is anticipated that while service users will retain their individual flats within the building, a service re-design will result in a discreet separation of the three main areas within the building. This will include the redevelopment of the area of the building previously used as a respite facility. This part of the building will be converted into a four-place service, which will be staffed and managed as part of West Dunbartonshire Council's Learning Disability Housing Support Services.
- 3.6** With regard to the alternative provision of support, preliminary discussions have confirmed that existing learning disability providers with the specialist knowledge required who currently operate in the Alexandria area would be in a position to absorb the current level of provision. This would have the benefit of providing a smooth transition and building on existing management and staff infrastructures, whilst offering value for money within the best value framework.

- 3.7** As previously stated, Learning Disability Services Housing Support will provide direct services to four individuals living in the newly refurbished part of the building which was previously operated as a respite service. This will be achieved as part of the overall re-design of the Housing Support Service within Learning Disability Services.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** The restructuring of housing support services and the maximisation of the Independent Living Fund will result in the re-provision of approximately 200 hours per week, which will be utilised to provide a service within the Threshold Leven site. These hours will be supported within the existing management framework.
- 4.2** The staff employed by Crossreach have been issued with statutory 90-day notices. At the current time, it would appear that some staff have already gained alternative employment or are still negotiating with their employer and are awaiting the outcome of the process to identify alternative providers. Crossreach are committed to providing the service until 30 June. West Dunbartonshire Council have been supportive of the difficulties which are being experienced and have committed additional resources to ensuring that services continue to be provided.
- 4.3** The re-design of Learning Disability Housing Support Services will ensure that sufficient staff are available after 30 June to provide a service to 4 individuals on the Threshold Leven site. Consultation has taken place with all staff involved. Further consultation will take place with trade unions.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Following the extensive review of services, we are confident that the planned model offers best value whilst maintaining and creating high quality services.
- 5.2** The planned re-design will be funded from existing resources.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Failure to continue to provide the service to our service users would present a considerable risk to all involved. The planned provision outlined above will therefore continue to provide the support to the service users based on their assessed needs.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on this report. It is expected that the effect of the changes to which this report relates will be positive, however ongoing monitoring and review during the planned changeover and thereafter will be required. Attached as an appendix is the summary of the Impact Assessment.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1** The decision by Crossreach to withdraw from this service placed a considerable burden on West Dunbartonshire Council to re-provide services in a very short space of time. Extensive work has been undertaken to establish both the needs of individuals and the sustainable model which benefits all concerned.
- 8.2** Preliminary discussions have established that existing learning disability providers have both the expertise and infrastructure required and are in a position to absorb large parts of the service. In addition, the re-design of Learning Disability Housing Support Services will enable us to create further capacity for 4 individuals at the Threshold Leven site.
- 8.3** The future planned model of service provision will see those provided with support in individual/ group tenancies in the community continue with the current arrangements, albeit with a different support provider. Within the main Threshold Leven site, the model will see a partnership approach including West Dunbartonshire Council which will ensure that the service is further individualised and is specific to individual need.
- 8.4** Committee is asked to:
- (i) note the work done by officers following the notification by Crossreach of their planned withdrawal;
 - (ii) note the actions taken by officers to ensure continuity of care for service users; and
 - (iii) note the planned future provision of support for service users as detailed in the report.

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| Appendix: | None |
| Background Papers: | Impact Assessment |
| Wards Affected: | All |