

introduction:

SHARE Scotland was founded in 1984 by the parents of young people with complex learning and physical disabilities. The aim of the families was to address the long-term housing and support needs of their own children, and others facing an uncertain future or the prospect of life in an institution. As well as a home for their children as they became adults, parents also wanted them to have a positive and fulfilling life, playing an active role in their community.

Over the years, SHARE has developed a considerable understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people it supports and their families, and has helped them to successfully demonstrate that when given the chance, people with significant support needs can make their own decisions about how they want to lead the rest of their lives. The support that SHARE provides is as non-interventional as possible; provided in a manner that isn't disempowering. Practice should promote inclusion yet independence, and not lead to segregated dependency.

Since those early days SHARE has developed a network of services across Edinburgh, Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire. The original ethos remains, however, and those original families have been joined by additional family members on The Committee of SHARE, ensuring the services stay responsive to the changing needs of service users, their families and others facing a similarly uncertain future.

SHARE's Management Committee is equally committed to its workforce, never forgetting that it is their own children who are being supported. In recognition of its positive employment practices and commitment to the on-going development of its workforce, SHARE has held the 'Investor in People' award since 2001.

services:

Now a widely respected organization, SHARE has been providing highly individualised support for people since 1991, when the first house for 5 young adults opened in Edinburgh. Since then further services have been developed across Lothian and Glasgow. Whilst SHARE's initial services provided support to a small group of individuals sharing a home, support is also provided to many people who have chosen to live alone, or perhaps with one or two others. Living alone does not, however, mean a solitary existence. A team member is still on hand 24 hours a day for those people who prefer their own space, to help them enjoy mixing with family and friends when it suits them, and to lead a full home and social life of their choosing.

In 2001 SHARE returned to its roots in Stanmore House, meeting with parents who faced a similar degree of uncertainty about their children's future. Those early meetings provided a springboard for SHARE and led to the commissioning of the first of its services in West Dunbartonshire. Since then, SHARE has formed a close partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, working hand in hand with other families and providing further, highly individualised services. Parents involved in these services have since joined the Management Committee of SHARE, to play a more active role in the future of the Organization.

development:

SHARE has always remained clear about the importance of planned growth to encourage innovation, but balanced with sustainability. Likewise, the development and improvement of existing services plays no less an important role than expanding services to others who need them.

SHARE currently has 2 management streams, each under the line management of The Chief Executive. An Area Coordinator in Edinburgh ensures that services and personnel in the East are given the management support that they require, on the ground, as well as dealing with various other commitments, such as quality assurance, staff training, or liaising with families, the Care Commission or other stakeholders. Each service and team is managed by its own service manager. A similar management model exists in Glasgow. Such a structure ensures that the entire management team has a complete understanding of how the Organization and individual services operate, and that real leadership and accountability exist at all levels.

In West Dunbartonshire, services are currently guided by the Glasgow Area Coordinator. At a recent business planning meeting conducted by SHARE, it was concluded that these services could be enhanced by establishing a third, distinct management stream in West Dunbartonshire, to mirror those in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The recruitment of a third Area Coordinator would benefit SHARE's existing services by freeing up Area management time to expand the development and delivery of SHARE's in-house training programme across all services in the West. It would also provide the management capacity that would allow SHARE to consider further growth in line with its commitment to improvement through sustainable development. Such an approach dovetails with SHARE's commitment to the development of its workforce, offering real opportunities for career advancement within the Organization.

transitions:

The move from education to adult services can be a very uncertain and anxious time for many young people and their families. A lack of planned, suitable resources often see families struggling to cope at home during this transition period, and in many cases family breakdown can occur. Crisis intervention is often required, removing any element of personal choice and putting a further strain on already stretched local authorities. Current tendering procedures can also militate against individualised, future planning, early enough to prevent this from happening. This can be a frustrating time for commissioning agencies and families alike, who can see in advance the services they would like to develop, but find themselves hindered by dwindling resources and restrictive bureaucracy.

Established by families in this very position, SHARE has a track record in recent years of successfully working alongside families in a sensitive, knowledgeable and constructive way, to achieve sustainable, person-centred solutions, when people are ready to move on from the school system.

Often young people and their families can be unsure what choices are available to them and what community living really entails; often they are torn between the risks of the unknown and the security of the tried and tested institutional approach. SHARE is governed by parents who have been in that very position. Whilst they cannot make people's decisions for them, they can share a little of their own experience and the positive achievements that are possible.

proposal:

SHARE Scotland is proposing that an Area Coordinator is enlisted to provide line management to the 3 services currently operating in the Alexandria and work closely with The Chief Executive to expand SHARE's work in the area. This will also free up existing management capacity to expand SHARE's in-house training programme and enhance quality throughout its existing services.

To ensure the sustainability of such an appointment SHARE is seeking a commitment from West Dunbartonshire Council to support our development programme, in a modest way, over the next 3 years.

SHARE believes that with the experience it has developed over the past 20 years, in working with families and young people, it could work in close partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council to develop much needed services in West Dumbarton, to meet future demand.

As well as expertise in establishing and running care services, SHARE has considerable experience and expertise in ensuring that other fundamental issues such as the availability of suitable housing, on-going significant health care needs and benefit maximization are also addressed and put in place.

To reiterate a point made earlier, SHARE takes its role as an employer no less seriously than its role as support agency, and is hoping to create real and long-term career opportunities, with a committed employer for the people of West Dunbartonshire; offering real support and development and playing an active and positive role in the wider community.

J. Whyte (joe.whyte@sharescotland.org.uk)

27th March 06

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
for
WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

SHARE Scotland

8a Silk Street, Paisley PA1 1HG tel. 0141 848 5068 www.sharescotland.org.uk

