

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

23 April 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 280/96

ADULT GUIDANCE IN SCOTLAND - SOEID CONSULTATION PAPER

ABSTRACT

This report contains a draft response to the consultation paper issued by the Scottish Office on strategic proposals for Adult Guidance. The report seeks the approval of the Education Committee to submit this response on behalf of Angus Council to the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Committee approve this report as the Council's response to the consultative paper on the strategic proposals for adult guidance within the context of life long learning.

2 INTRODUCTION

On 22 February 1996, the Scottish Office issued a consultative paper on Adult Guidance, entitled "Adult Guidance in Scotland : Strategy Proposals."

The consultative paper outlines the elements of national policy in adult guidance across the formal and informal education sector including the field of vocational training, illustrates current developments and proposes a National Helpline on Guidance.

The need for an adult guidance service has been acknowledged by providers and researchers over the past ten years. Many adults who wish to engage in learning are confused by the options on offer. Others have limited access to provision or lack confidence to make initial contacts without the support of trained staff. Given the range of needs from accessing course information to personal goal setting, a comprehensive service built on partnerships is seen as a positive way forward.

3 CONTEXT

The document provides a summary account of the extent of adult guidance within the main education and training sections. These include School Education, with the proposed Higher Still Development Programme, FE Colleges, Higher Education, the Careers Service, the Community Education Service and the various agencies involved in training for employment.

Specific reference is made to the AEGIS initiative which was funded by SOEID until March 1996 to provide developments in adult guidance across Scotland. It is proposed that funding will be extended for a further year until March 97.

4 PROPOSALS

The proposals in the consultative paper include :-

- i) A national Adult Guidance Helpline, which would operate on a contractual basis and report to a cross-sectoral management committee.
- ii) The national helpline being linked to a national database.
- iii) Support for a local Guidance Network.
- iv) Setting up a cross-sectoral adult guidance team linked to the national helpline and reporting to a management committee. This group would also link with existing national agencies including the Scottish Community Education Council and SFEU.

5 PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE

The consultative paper sought responses to five questions.

- 1 How valuable would the proposed National Adult Guidance be to the guidance providers and their clients?

Proposed Response

Promotion of adult guidance at a national level would raise the profile of Angus Council and local networks across Scotland. Collaboration between the national facility and the local network in Angus would provide an effective facility for all clients, but there would need to be a clarification of roles. While the national facility would be an additional service of information, experience suggests that clients would still expect access to information locally.

- 2 What would be the key characteristics of such a facility and how might it be managed?

Proposed Response

- It should be independent, easily accessible and compatible with local networks. This would present difficulties, as local networks are not currently compatible.
- The service should be free to clients, and to providers at the point of contact.
- Managers would require to be drawn from a wide range of agencies, including representatives from local networks.
- The use of local trainers nationally, or on secondment would have implications for the Authority.

3 How might local guidance networks link with this national facility?

Proposed Response

- There would require to be direct 'on line' access for local providers to the national database and the marketing strategies of providers would require to be less aggressive in order to reflect the value of each provider's contribution and expertise.
- There would require to be formal policies on adult guidance in place to support the case for resources.

4. What are the key priorities for staff development in adult guidance and how might these be served?

Proposed Response

- Training will be required in basic guidance skills for the range of staff; the establishment of cross sectoral networks; community based adult guidance.

5 What would be the most effective methods of securing the interests and involvement of education and training providers?

Proposed Response

- There will clearly be a requirement for funding not only in the area of staff development but also for the release of staff, either on secondments or working parties.
- It will be necessary to promote the advantages of a national adult guidance facility and convince the providers that participation will be labour and cost saving in the long term.
- There will be a need to convince providers that non participation will reduce options for clients.

CONCLUSIONS

- The proposals as outlined can be recommended for support in principle by Angus Council.

In order to secure the involvement of education and training providers, there requires to be a clarification of roles of the respective partners, and the underlying financial commitment involved in order to implement the database and helpline

JIM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government(Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

JAA/RHB

