

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE25th February 1997

DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to request committee's approval for this service development using the council's identified funding for the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in order to establish a more comprehensive service for children with disabilities.

This project will be developed in consultation with service users, Angus NHS Trust and the Education Department, based on a Resource Centre model in existing Social Work premises.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Social Work Committee:

- i.) Notes the contents of this report, and approves the service development as described.
- ii) Refers this report and the issue of the implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to the Policy & Resources Committee for further consideration.
- iii) Refers this report to the Education Committee for information.
- iv) Refers this report to Tayside Health Board and Angus NHS Trust for information.
- v) Instructs that a further report on the staffing for this development be presented to the Social Work and Personnel & Property Services Committee.

2.) BACKGROUND

There are approximately 600 children with disabilities living in Angus with 100 of them having 'severe' disabilities.

Services to Children with Disabilities have been established as a priority for development within Angus and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 also places a new duty on local authorities to provide services for children with disabilities. Children with and affected by disabilities are defined as "children in need" under the new legislation and services must be developed to minimise the effect of disability on a child and to give these children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible. It is also a requirement that respite services be specified by the local Authority in its Children's Service Plans, the first of which Angus Council is required to publish in April 1998.

3.) DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE

Currently services for children with disabilities within the Social Work department are provided by a Special Needs resource team (Senior Social Worker and Resource Worker) based at Strathmore Avenue Resource Centre, Forfar. This is a former children's home which has been refurbished to a high standard and it is proposed to develop this further as a resource centre for children with disabilities, offering information and support to parents and carers, some medical services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and residential respite care. Developing services in partnership with other agencies is a key theme underpinning this area of work. This involves the Social Work and Education Departments, Angus NHS Health Care Trust, as well as parents and voluntary organisations. This principle is also embodied in the Parents in Partnership initiative a consultation forum involving parents and representatives from key agencies which contributes to the Councils joint planning structure for Childrens services.

4.) RESPITE CARE

Respite Care is the service most commonly requested by parents and carers of children with disabilities. The Social Work and Education Departments of Angus Council are committed to the development of increased respite care and this is included within departmental action plans as well as in the Parents in Partnership Action Plan which was endorsed at the Conference held at Forfar Academy in October 1995. The Joint Community Care Action plan also identifies how objectives relating to the development of respite care will be taken forward.

Family based respite care is currently provided through Angus Respite Care Helpers (ARCH) a local voluntary organisation which is supported by the Social Work Department. There are however, children whose respite needs cannot be met within a family setting and who require occasional care within a residential setting, and whose needs will be addressed through this development.

5.) INFORMATION SERVICE

The provision of a comprehensive and co-ordinated information service for parents is an essential component in the development of this service. A member of staff at the resource centre will have specific responsibility for developing a resource directory and provision of information to parents on council services and Health Service provision for their children and liaising with relevant council departments on inquiries made.

This type of service has been identified as of primary importance to parents via consultation undertaken with them and is contained in the Joint Community Care Action Plan for Angus.

The Social Work and Education departments will work collaboratively to develop and manage this provision in liaison with health colleagues.

6.) PROPOSALS

Through the appointment of Social Care Officers a residential respite facility will be established within Strathmore Avenue. This will enable weekend and holiday respite for children with disabilities to be provided primarily on a planned basis. In addition some emergency respite care can be provided. These services will be available on the basis of an assessment of need which will enable the service to be tailored to individual requirements embodied in an individual care plan.

The staffing model will allow for some development of a range of additional support services. These will include an extension of domiciliary support services for children and their families, an extension of the range of home care support, and day respite services.

In addition the staffing model will include a post which will enable a comprehensive information service and domiciliary support to be provided for parents and carers in Angus.

7.) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for this development is contained within the Social Work revenue budget from the allocation for implementation of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

8.) CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance, the Director of Education and the Director of Personnel have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

9.) CONCLUSION

This report details plans for the development of the resource centre model incorporating residential respite care and information services for children with disabilities and their families at Strathmore Avenue, Forfar. This will significantly extend the range of provision currently available and will develop services in line with the requirements of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

W B Robertson
Director of Social Work

Note: 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 this report.

