

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE2 JUNE 1998
EDUCATION COMMITTEE9 JUNE 1998

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN ANGUS
THE ANGUS CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report advises Members of the completion of the final draft of the Angus Children's Services Plan, 'Working with Children and Families in Angus. A plan for children's services in Angus 1998-2001'. A copy of the final draft plan is appended for comment.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Social Work and Education Committees:-

- (i) note the content of the final draft plan and make any comments before presentation of the plan to the Policy & Resources Committee.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 introduced a new legal framework requiring Local Authorities to prepare and publish a plan for the provision of relevant services for or in respect of children in their area.

3 WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN ANGUS

Although the preparation of a plan for children's services is a legislative requirement it also provides an opportunity to set out the proposals for future of service developments for children and families in Angus.

The final draft plan which accompanies this report is the result of much joint work and planning between Angus Council, Tayside Health Board, Tayside Police, Angus NHS Trust, the Authority Reporters and the Children's Panel. It is produced in a way which describes the planning context and the framework for the provision of services for children and families in Angus. Many services are accessible by all children. These core services are central to the provision for children in Angus. Other

services are targeted at those children and families who need additional support or care.

The final draft plan is in five parts.

Part I discusses the key principles and aims of children's services in Angus and considers issues of equal opportunities, children's rights, access to services and information and quality issues.

Part II considers how agencies work together and work with children and families to promote a safe and caring environment in Angus in which to raise our children.

Part III refers to a number of services provided in Angus based on the range of "needs" of children in Angus. Each area of need includes a definition, the main aims in providing services and areas for development.

Part IV looks at the changing needs of children and young people who become looked after by Angus Council.

Part V details the financial arrangements relating to the provision of services.

The aim of the plan is to provide the most appropriate services to meet the needs of children and families in Angus and to provide services to those in the greatest need.

4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Children Scotland Act (1995) requires local authorities to ensure that consultation is a significant part of the preparation and development of children services plans. The Act requires local authorities to consult with service users, potential services and with "such voluntary agencies as appear to the authority to represent the interests of persons who use or are likely to use relevant services".

The consultation process undertaken in Angus on the draft plan produced in January 1998 drew significant comment on the planning process, on individual services, and on community priorities for service development in Angus. A number of meetings were arranged to seek the views on the draft plan of individuals and groups of service users and service providers. 800 copies of the draft plan and 4000 of a summary leaflet were circulated. These drew 47 completed questions, 19 tear off slips from the summary leaflet, 22 detailed individual responses and 333 questionnaires completed by children and young people of which 19 were completed by young people in local authority accommodation.

Key issues from the consultation noted:

- the draft plan appeared to be well set out and very easily read;
- in general there was surprise expressed at the comprehensive level of service available in Angus;
- there was a general acceptance of the definition of “children in need” and that services were being targeted appropriately;
- there was general comment that some services appeared to overlap between departments and agencies and they did not appear well co-ordinated;
- there was scope for improved efficiency in the use of resources;
- the plan needed to set out in more detail strategies as to how services would be developed;
- services should be preventative rather than reactive;
- there is a need for easily accessible information on the services detailed in the plan;
- there appears to be a lack of recreational activities for young people;
- services should be locally based and if not transport services should be improved;
- recreational facilities for children with disabilities are limited.

These views have resulted in:

- this plan taking a different form to the draft produced for consultation;
- the production of a resource directory to complement the plan;
- the planning partners working more closely together to identify areas for integration of services;
- the identification of priorities for development in year 1 (1998 - 1999).

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5 CONSULTATION

The Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance, the Director of Housing, the Director of Education and the Director of Social Work have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6 CONCLUSION

The final draft plan is the result of a considerable amount of work by many individuals, groups and organisations. The plan has been prepared in consultation with the voluntary, private and statutory sectors and takes into account the views of services users and their representatives.

It is a requirement that Children's Services Plan are reviewed on an annual basis and work will start immediately to formally review the plan.

Members are asked to comment the contents of the plan and in particular the proposals for the future development of children's services in Angus which are outlined in the plan.

25 May 1998

A B Watson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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.