

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**20 NOVEMBER 2003**

**WORLD AIDS DAY (1 DECEMBER)**

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH LIAISON**

**ABSTRACT**

This report informs the Social Work and Health Committee of the background history to the World AIDS Day Campaign and gives details on HIV/AIDS from a global, national and local perspective. The report also outlines the proposed AIDS/HIV awareness raising exercise that will be undertaken throughout Angus to coincide with World AIDS Day on 1 December.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

- i) notes the content of this report;
- ii) notes the details of the AIDS/HIV awareness raising exercise;
- iii) notes the content of the awareness raising packs.

**2 BACKGROUND**

The first World AIDS Day was originally declared by the World Health Organization in 1988. Since then, it has grown into one of the most successful international days – if not the most successful.

Each year it draws massive worldwide attention to AIDS issues. In the weeks leading up to 1<sup>st</sup> December, there is an upsurge in media coverage of HIV/AIDS issues with many reports outlining the growing problem of HIV/AIDS across the World.

Awareness-raising activities take place in almost all countries around the world often with mass participation. There is broad, non-restrictive participation.

World AIDS Day has achieved such a level of recognition worldwide that it is set to remain a primary vehicle for reinforcing AIDS awareness at the international level.

**3 HIV INFECTION AND AIDS IN THE WORLD TODAY**

The AIDS epidemic claimed more than three million lives in 2002, and an estimated five million people acquired HIV in 2002 – bringing to 42 million the number of people globally living with HIV. One third of the people living with HIV/AIDS are young people aged between 15-24 years. The new infections included an estimated 800,000 children – over 90% of them infected through mother-to-child transmission (MTCT). About 90% of these infections through MTCT occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, but the number of such infections is increasing in other regions.

Within Great Britain the current estimates of people living with HIV/AIDS are as follows:

- Adults (15-49) 34,000
- Children (0-15) 550

#### **4 HIV INFECTION AND AIDS IN TAYSIDE**

As of 31 December 2002 there were 238 people in Tayside with HIV of whom 22 were recorded as having AIDS. Of the 238, 25 live in Angus. There is no one under the age of 16 recorded as having HIV in Angus.

Current services for individuals with or affected by HIV in Angus include:-

- An Assessment and Care Management service provided by the Dundee HIV/AIDS Team on behalf of Angus Council Social Work;
- NHS Community Nursing Team (HIV);
- HIV prevention service provided by the Harm Reduction Centre (NHS Tayside);
- A self help support service commissioned by Angus Council Social Work from Body Positive.

In addition support can be spot purchased from the Barnardos Riverside Project for children or young people affected by HIV/AIDS.

It should also be noted that Angus Council Social Work has in place well developed operational instructions and staff guidance relating to HIV/AIDS.

Elected members are referred to the draft Angus Joint Community Care Plan that sets out the aims and objectives for the development of services for those affected by HIV/AIDS in Angus.

#### **5 WORLD AIDS DAY CAMPAIGN 2003**

The World AIDS Day Campaign 2003 continues to focus on stigma and discrimination under the slogan "Live and let live".

HIV and AIDS can touch raw nerves in all our communities. The stigma of HIV and AIDS relates to deep taboos within society. For many the disease has a strong association with prolonged illness, death, sex and drug use. There continues to exist a high degree of ignorance, denial, fear and intolerance about the disease itself. This can lead to people with HIV or AIDS experiencing stigma and discrimination which in turn can lead to depression, lack of self-worth and despair.

Negative attitudes about HIV can create a climate in which people become more afraid of the stigma and discrimination associated with the disease than of the disease itself. When fear and discrimination prevail people may choose to ignore the possibility that they may be HIV positive even if they know they have taken risks. They may decide not to take measures to protect themselves in fear that in doing so they could be associating themselves with HIV. All of this helps to create an environment in which the disease can more easily spread.

#### **6 WORLD AIDS DAY IN ANGUS**

As indicated in the global figures for the spread of HIV/AIDS one-third of the people living with HIV/AIDS are young people between 15-24 years. In order to reinforce the message that, wherever you live, whoever you are, the threat of HIV should be taken seriously information packs will be distributed to all secondary schools in Angus. The packs will also go out to all social work outlets and voluntary organisations that work

with young people. The packs which include pens, pencils, leaflets and posters offer information and advice in a user friendly way. "Be smart ... be safe" is the message given.

In addition ribbons, cards and flyers with the "Do you have time?" message of World AIDS Day will also be distributed.

Copies of the World AIDS Day publicity material will be available for members at the Committee meeting.

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The small financial implications arising out of this report will be contained within the social work department's revenue budget.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The awareness raising exercise will contribute productively to tackling stigma and discrimination, and to enhancing rights under Article 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **9 CONSULTATION**

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

## **10 CONCLUSION**

World AIDS Day 2003 highlights the "Live and let live" theme that focuses on eliminating stigma and discrimination, the major obstacles to effective HIV/AIDS prevention. By raising awareness and providing factual information about HIV/AIDS, what it is, how you become infected and how you cannot get infected, a clear message is being given to young people, in Angus, about staying safe. In addition it gives the opportunity to help change the attitudes which can cause discrimination and stigma.

R Peat  
Director of Social Work and Health Liaison

**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 the above report.