

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 9 APRIL 2008**

**SUBJECT: PILOT DEVELOPMENT OF NCH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the operation of the NCH 'satellite unit' that was established as a pilot project, and to seek approval to continue the operation of the NCH 'satellite unit'
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D 27 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the exercising of functions under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree an increase in NCH residential provision in Moray through the continuation of the 'satellite unit' linked operationally to Forres Children's Home.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A report providing full background information to the establishment of the pilot project was tabled at Education and Social Service Committee on 22 August 2007 (para 43 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 The Committee approved an increase in NCH residential provision until 31 March 2008 through the establishment of the 'satellite unit' linked operationally to Forres Children's Home and that a progress report would be submitted to Education & Social Services Committee in early 2008.
- 3.3 The August report indicated that the pilot would be monitored and evaluated against three key success criteria:-
- (i) the cost of the arrangements against out of area equivalents;
  - (ii) how far stated objectives at the outset of placements are achieved; and
  - (iii) the impact of the project on the use of short-term out of area placements.
- 3.4 A summary evaluation report can be found at **APPENDIX 1**. The alternative to each of the placements made at the satellite unit would have been an out of area placement.
- 3.5 In the period 1 April 2007 to 31 December 2007 the number of out of area placements made by Moray Council to residential establishments (excluding parental requests in education) has reduced from 12 to 10. In that period 5

short-term placements have been made (this would have increased to at least 8 without the satellite unit).

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Service Improvement Plan 2007/8**

There is a clear coherence between the proposal in this report and Service Priority 4.1 of the Community Services Department's Service Development and Improvement Plan in reducing out of area placements.

##### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There is a relationship between the proposal and the duty placed on local authorities in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 'to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need.'

##### **(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

The financial implications are referred to in Section 4(d) of this report.

The key risk issues relate to the:-

- (i) responsibility placed on the Council to accommodate vulnerable and challenging children and young people whose needs dictate that they should be looked-after away from home; and
- (ii) to reduce the additional impact on area social work teams of managing distant out of area placements and local Additional Resource Packages (without the necessary support infrastructure).

There are no direct staffing or property implications for the Council.

##### **(d) Financial**

The use of Additional Resource Packages (ARP's) are a 'spend to save' initiative designed to reduce expenditure on out of area placements. The cost has been met from the out of area budget.

The addition of a residential component to the ARP infrastructure will add additional costs to some such arrangements. However, this is designed to offset the use of distant placements and the time spent residentially will be minimised within the ARP's themselves.

The comparative data through the NCH Satellite pilot is that the direct placement cost per month per child has been £12,300 against an average equivalent of £14,400 for the out of area alternatives.

The existence of local temporary alternatives reduces the risk of out of area placement being made by Children's Hearings due to that being the only option available to them. Such placements made by Hearings

may be made on a temporary basis initially but often develop into long-term arrangements.

Based on the pilot it is estimated that the maximum cost of utilising the satellite unit for a year would be £148k.

The project will be governed by a Service Level Agreement between the Council and NCH (Scotland).

**(e) Consultations**

Consultations have taken place with Katrina McGillivray, Senior Personnel Adviser; Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant; Karen Wiles, Principal Solicitor; and Eric Scarbrough, Head of Educational Support Services.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The proposal contained in this report builds on the experience gained in managing vulnerable and challenging young people in Moray as an alternative to out of area placements. The satellite project will form part of a series of systemic changes to children's services designed to meet our key aim of 'protecting and promoting the welfare of children and young people in need in Moray in partnership with children, their families, communities and others providing services'.**

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Background Papers:	With author
Ref:	Pilot Development of NCH Residential Provision

## APPENDIX 1