

REPORT TO: THE MORAY COUNCIL ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2009

**SUBJECT: INVITATION TO 'CONTEXT AND EVALUATION' CONFERENCE
IN NOVEMBER 2009**

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the Council to fund the Performance & Strategy Manager of the Community Services Department to present at the American Evaluation Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme related to exercising of the functions of the Council under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and in terms of Paragraph 4.14 of the Council's Financial Regulations relating to travel outwith the United Kingdom on Council business.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Council approves:-**
- (i) the participation of the Performance & Strategy Manager as a presenter at the 'Context and Evaluation' conference in Orlando, Florida in November 2009.**
 - (ii) the expenditure as detailed in this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Community Services Department has developed in conjunction with the State University of New York at Buffalo an approach to casework evaluation called Realtime Evaluation. The method involves the use of outcome measures with clients and professionals as part of the casework process.
- 3.2 It has been used in youth justice, housing, area services and with our voluntary partners. The measures assist in the management of individual cases, supervision processes and through aggregating data to assess the effectiveness of services. It is currently generating outcome data for child protection as part of the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 3.3 Members of the Community Services Department spoke at a symposium in Buffalo in 2007 and the Performance and Strategy Manager at an evaluation conference in Glasgow in September 2008. The department has also received a grant from the Social Work 'Changing Lives' programme of the Scottish Government to develop Realtime and is planning a conference in Moray in March 2010 as part of the funding agreement.
- 3.4 The benefits of attendance in Orlando are the promotion of an evaluative technique pioneered in Moray on an international stage, exposure to other evaluation methodologies (including self-evaluation) and promotion of the Moray Conference for which abstracts for conference papers will be sought

over the next few weeks. It is expected that the Moray conference will have international participation.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The proposal in this report relates to Service Priority 4.2 of the 2009/10 Community Services Department's Service Improvement Plan in 'ensuring children are safe and their needs met'. The Realtime approach is currently generating data in child protection for National Outcome 8 of the Single Outcome Agreement in 'improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk'.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no Policy & Legal implications.

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

The State University of New York at Buffalo (our partners in Realtime Evaluation) will cover the transportation cost and conference fees for the participation of the Performance & Strategy Manager. The subsistence costs are estimated at £420 (11-15 November 2009) and can be contained within the Children & Families budget.

(d) Consultations

The Chair of the Children & Young People's Committee of the Moray Council and Professor Mansoor Kazi of the State University of New York at Buffalo have been consulted in the preparation of this report and agree its contents.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The opportunity to speak at the American Evaluation Association Annual Conference allows evaluation techniques developed in Moray to be considered on the international basis, learning brought back on other evaluation methodologies and the Moray conference next year to be promoted at the American signature event.

ITEM:

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Background Papers: with author
Ref: HB660672