

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance & Resources

DATE 17 June 2010

LEAD OFFICER Susan Devlin – Head of Service

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE Graeme Simpson – Children’s Services manager

NAME(S) OF HR ADVISER(S) CONSULTED Marie Smith, Principal HR Adviser; Amanda Wright, HR Adviser

TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE Kinship Care Service

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

The purpose of this Business case is to seek approval for the establishment of the permanent posts as part of a Kinship Care Team. These posts will undertake a statutory function in the assessment, approval and support provided to Kinship Carers.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee approve the following:

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job	Social Worker Family Resource Workers Administrative Assistant	2 2 1.5
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		
Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	
*Redesign of existing job		

BUSINESS CASE

Please do not repeat any information contained in other sections of the report

1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council's Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.

The establishment of a Kinship Team is an integral part of the Social Care and Wellbeing Service's strategy to support children remain within their family and community. It will seek to prevent children from being placed in more expensive care placements. The outcomes for children placed within Kinship arrangements is known to be better. They generally:

- Experience less disruption in their lives
- Do better in education
- Have a stronger sense of identity and clearer understanding of who they are
- Have more meaningful contact with birth parents

In September 2009 the Looked After Children Scotland Regulations 2009 came into effect which regulate the assessment, approval and support of Kinship Carers. These significant and extensive new regulations bring the services to kinship carers in line with that of foster carers. Specifically:

- The assessment and approval of Kinship carers requires to be more comprehensive and robust and considered by an Independent panel.
- Kinship carers in their own right become service users whose needs require to be recognised within an appropriate support plan.
- The registration of Kinship Carers requires to be reviewed on an annual basis. These annual reviews will go through the Kinship Panel which members previously agreed to establish.

At present there are 111 kinship carers caring for 153 children. Kinship carers who are approved will be expected to deliver care that meets the National Care Standards. These include:

- Providing standards of care which promote safety along with the health, emotional, physical, sexual and intellectual development of children.
- Providing the young persons development towards adulthood.
- Working as part of a team – attending meetings and contributing to the planning of children in their care.
- Attending training relating to their own needs and those of the children in their care.
- Promoting contact between the child and family members.
- Each kinship carer will sign an agreement setting out their duties and expectations. It also sets out Aberdeen City Council's duties to kinship carers.

These standards promote the experiences and outcomes for Looked After and Accommodated children. For many this will recognise what they already provide. For others, however it will require them to raise standards of care and expectation.

It is likely that some kinship carers will not want the ongoing involvement and scrutiny of the Social Work Service overseeing the care they are providing to a family member.

It will be for the Kinship Team to make clear to kinship carers the standards expected of them and to identify which carers want to progress with formal approval and access the kinship allowance and which carers want to consider alternative means of financial support available to them.

2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.

The establishment of these posts will ensure kinship carers are assessed in a rigorous and consistent manner in line with the Council's statutory responsibilities. These assessments are complex and challenging and can only be undertaken by qualified social workers who would have the professional training and knowledge to do this task. The criticality of this role was reaffirmed in a recent paper from the Scottish Government which considered the Role of the Social Worker.

The new and extensive regulations also require the needs of Kinship Carers to be recognised. These include that:

- Support and training to be given to Kinship carers
- Review arrangements for the child are in place
- That Kinship carers promote the best interests of the child. (These frequently are in conflict with the Kinship carers own needs).

The proposed skills mix of the team will allow for these needs to be acknowledged with the appointment of 3 family resource workers. While considerable focus and attention has been paid to the payment of allowances it is also acknowledged that such does not take account of the emotional and practical support needs of kinship carers. It is often these needs which determine the sustainability of any placement.

The delivery of this support by the family resources workers will take many forms and will dependant upon the individual needs of the carers. Some of it will be on an individual basis, some may be provided via training others it is hoped will be delivered by supporting the existing Kinship Care support groups which exist in Aberdeen to be build upon and developed to provide self help support.

By ensuring effective support to Kinship placements it is anticipated that fewer children will be required to be accommodated in other care settings which have less positive outcomes for children and are of greater financial outlay for the Local Authority. The Kinship Team will be a key component of the delivery of the Local Authority's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

The administrative posts will have the responsibility for supporting the team as well as functions and remit of the Kinship Panel. This Panel has a statutory function and the production of papers and minutes to and from the Panel have strict legal time scales.

The administrative support will also assume responsibility for co-ordinating the financial payments to kinship carers linked to the Carefirst system, ensuring accurate and timely processes are maintained.

3. A) Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.

Existing resources will be realigned for the funding of the Team Manager (1FTE), 1 QSW (1FTE) and Family Resource Worker (1FTE).

The capacity of the service does not allow for the establishment of all the necessary posts to enable Aberdeen City Council to deliver on these new and additional statutory duties. As part of the restructure of Children's Services, which was agreed by the Social Care and Wellbeing Committee, resources have been allocated to ensure a safe and targeted service delivery. The structure was delivered within the existing budget and took account of the continuing financial pressures within the Local Authority.

The re-structure was unable to provide all the required posts from within existing resources. The Association of Directors of Social Work Report on Kinship Care published in April 2009 recommended an allocation of up to 20 Kinship Carers per worker. At present Aberdeen City Council has 111 Kinship carers. There has been a 42% increase in Kinship Carers between March 2007 – March 2009. Aberdeen City Council has similarly experienced and continues to experience an increase in demand for kinship care placements.

OR B) In the case of the redesign of an existing job, outline details of the new tasks being undertaken.

Not applicable

4. Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?

- The Local Authority will fail to deliver on its statutory requirements.
- There is an increased risk of placements breaking down and children requiring to be moved to other care settings resulting in further disruption and confusion. The more unsettled a child's care experiences are the less positive their outcomes are – poorer educational attainment, increased risk of unemployment, mental health difficulties and criminality - requiring continuing social work involvement into adulthood.
- The move from kinship care to other care settings will result in increased financial outlay for the Local Authority. For example the move to an Independent Foster Agency will cost in the region of £50,000 per placement per year.
- The Service will be subject to future inspections either by the Care Commission or other inspection agency. Failure to have in place services to deliver on our statutory obligations to Kinship carers will result in criticism of the Local Authority.

5. Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?

All aspects of these posts will be subject to risk assessment as per the Council's Health and Safety policies.

6. Financial Implications:

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

These figures are based on an appointment being made by 1 July 2010. Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 28.3% on costs.

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
2 x Social Worker	13	£58,568	£64,389
2 x Family Support Workers	11	£43,098	£49,245
1.5 Clerical Assistants	8	£23,325	£25,465
Total		£124,991	£139,099

Net Cost	£	Net Saving	£
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Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
2 x Social Workers	G13	£75,091	£85,853
2 x Family Support Workers	G11	£57,465	£65,661
1.5 Clerical Assistants	G8	£31,101	£33,953
Total		£163,657	£185,467

*Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 28.3% on costs (ie National Insurance and employer's pension contributions).

Net Cost	£	Net Saving	£
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Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

As part of the Council's budget allocation, £300,000 was identified for Kinship Care Services. There will be a transfer of the existing budget for the posts of Team Manager (1FTE), 1 QSW (1FTE) and Family Resource Worker (1FTE).

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

Amount of external monies available in total:

7. If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?

All posts will be permanent.

8. If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?

Not applicable

9. If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?

Not applicable

10. In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.

Not applicable

11. What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?

Accommodation and equipment will be identified with existing resources.

12. HR Comment(s)

These posts have been through the job evaluation exercise and graded accordingly.

13. Report Author Details

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