

The Highland Council
Education Children and Adult Services Committee
17 March 2016

Agenda Item	14.
Report No	ECAS 26/16

Brokerage service for children and young people

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report sets out options for taking forward the establishment of a brokerage service for children and young people who are in receipt of an Individual Budget through Self-Directed Support.

1. Background

- 1.1 A report was submitted to the Committee meeting on 20 January making a number of recommendations about the re-configuration of services around Self-Directed Support. One of the recommendations was the creation of Highland-wide brokerage service through a procurement exercise. The decision of the Committee was to defer consideration of the proposed brokerage service and that a report in that regard be presented to the Committee on 17 March 2016.
- 1.2 There are a number of different models of brokerage which may range from practical support to manage a budget and keep related records, through to providing advice on recruitment and employment law, setting up pensions for Personal Assistants/support workers, and also providing the Personal Assistant/ support worker for a family.
- 1.3 As more families opt to take more control of their support package, there is a growing demand for this kind of support, reducing the complexity and administration of managing a budget whilst still enabling them to direct how the funding is spent.
- 1.4 There is a Self-Directed Support team, based in NHS Highland, who set up the payments to families of children and young people based on information supplied by the Practitioner in the Highland Council Children's services, and who also support the family to develop a Support Plan. The team also has responsibility for checking that the evidence of expenditure (monthly return of receipts) sent to them by families matched to the intended expenditure.
- 1.5 Other staff, working within the Health and Disability Family Team in Children's Services, are also spending considerable time assisting families with setting up bank accounts and keeping records of expenditure. This team only covers the South area.

2. Other Agencies

2.1 The other agencies available to support families are:

- **Scottish Personal Assistants Employment Network (SPAEN)** – Scotland wide service operating with 3 levels of support: (1) information and advice, (2) payroll services and (3) fully managed account service, where the person can still direct their support, but does not manage the budget. A bank account can be open and managed on their behalf.
- **SUDS** – Highland service based in Mid-Ross, an off-shoot of SOAR, afterschool and holiday provision for children with additional support needs. SUDS provide a fully managed payroll, Direct Payment support, employee finder, and Direct Service, with registration to provide the latter.
- **Highland Broker** – This is an independent person operating a service from Inverness, including payroll services, all aspects of employment, including advertising and employee finder and financial monitoring.
- **Highland SDS consortium/Cantraybridge** – supported and funded by Scottish Government to develop a user led organisation and peer advisor support service. They provide information, advice and support to people to plan, direct and manage their S-DS budget, including Direct Payment support for adults and children for adults and children, Highland wide.
- **Voluntary Action Lochaber** – have set up a brokerage service/support to families in local area. All information, advice and support for Payroll, HMRC, insurance, employment.

2.2 All of the above support services have plans to further develop and expand/increase capacity to provide support. Chip+ are also interested in developing a Brokerage Network. Some of the agencies offer the more comprehensive service called an Individual Service Fund, where the Personal Assistant/support worker is also provided through a separate agreement, others are working towards offering this service. There is a wide variation in the range of fees charged.

2.3 In Control Scotland are also promoting information about the Community Brokerage Network (CBN) which is a Scottish Government funded initiative, offering free support to families. This is not yet available in Highland but In Control are hosting a workshop here in March.

3. Options for future direction

3.1 Further to the committee discussion, Officers have been exploring four options as follows:

1. In-house service building on the Self-Directed Support Team – this would offer support on the administration of a Direct Payment only, and could not offer to secure support workers from other agencies. It would be a

centralised service and would not offer any local community capacity building capability. Staff are not able to offer advice on employment law.

2. Expansion of existing brokerage services – there are already some services on offer in specific locations and there are some signs that other agencies may offer this service in the near future. This option relies on the natural development of the market and does not offer a consistent service Highland-wide.
3. A Highland-wide contracted service would offer consistency and potentially overall the best value for money. It does not support local community capacity building capability.
4. There could be a mix and match option, combining options 1 and 2.

3.2 NHS Highland and Highland Council are currently considering closer collaboration around disability services for young people and this would include discussion about the overall approach to brokerage. For this reason, it is recommended that a further period of consideration is required to determine the best option and this would include further consultation with service users on all the options, however the continuing growth of services would suggest that option 4 may offer the choice to service users and support local development of services.

4. Implications

4.1 There are no **Resources, Legal, Equalities, Risk, Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Gaelic or Rural** implications arising as a result of this report.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to consider the options outlined and to agree to a further period of consultation and options appraisal, with a report being brought to Committee in August.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Author: Sandra Campbell, Head of Children's Services

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