

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 18 SEPTEMBER 2006
REPORT ON: "BOOKS ON PRESCRIPTION" SERVICE
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES
REPORT NO: 512-2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the introduction of a "Books on Prescription" service by Leisure and Communities Department in partnership with NHS Tayside.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the proposal to introduce the "Books on Prescription" project.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Administrative costs arising from the introduction of this project can be contained within the Leisure and Communities Department's revenue budget.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Every opportunity is taken to make Dundee a more family-friendly and barrier-free City. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 In partnership with the Directorate of Public Health, NHS Tayside, the Department has widened access to health information for the public. "Health Information Points" were created initially in five libraries, and following a successful pilot, have been extended to include all fourteen libraries across the City. The Directorate of Public Health, NHS Tayside funds leaflets, posters and publicity for the "Health Information Points".
- 6.2 In order to expand upon the Health Information Points and improve access to health information, the partnership developed the initiative 'Books on Prescription'. This will involve General Practitioners, who will prescribe where appropriate, self help books on mental health issues to patients.
- 6.3 GP's will be provided with information packs which will include an annotated booklist, a leaflet for patients informing them of the service, information about library opening hours and specifically designed prescription pads. These will allow GP's to recommend particular titles as well as suggesting a loan period. The packs will be produced by the partners and funded by the Directorate of Public Health, NHS Tayside.

- 6.4 Two health practices which are in close proximity to Blackness and Arthurstone libraries are participating in a pilot of the "Books on Prescription" service, which will provide self-help books on mental health issues. GPs will "prescribe" a book and the patient will take the prescription to the library and exchange it for the book.
- 6.5 The funding for the project has been secured from partners in the form of £3,000 from the Directorate of Public Health, NHS Tayside, and £8,800 from the Mental Health Strategic Planning Group, from within NHS Tayside. The funding will provide a wide range of self-help books and other resources relating to mental health issues. The Library and Information staff of the Leisure and Communities Department will manage and administer the project and liaise with GPs to ensure the efficient operation of the project.
- 6.6 Library staff are already skilled in meeting information needs, and will be fully trained in the administration of the scheme, as well as in the need to ensure confidentiality and discretion. The process for issuing a book to a customer will be speedy. If a patient is not already a library member, then the prescription itself will be accepted as sufficient identification, and a ticket will be made out there and then.
- 6.7 It is proposed that the "Books on Prescription" service is launched on Tuesday 3 October 2006 at Hawkhill Medical Practice and Mill Practice.
- 6.8 The pilot project will be evaluated by the partners in NHS Tayside, Dundee City Council's Library and Information Service and General Practitioners in the health practices. It is intended to offer the "Books on Prescription" service from a number of health practices and libraries throughout the city.
- 6.9 Additional funding will be required if the "Books on Prescription" initiative is to be successfully expanded to other libraries and health practices.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Chief Executive, and the Depute Chief Executives (Finance and Support Services) who are in agreement with the contents of the report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

Signed: **Stewart Murdoch**
 Director of Leisure and Communities

Date: 11 September 2006