

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RESTRICTED

Title of Report: **Development of a Vulnerable Peoples Strategy**

Paper No: **93/09**

Date: **23 April 2009**

Report of: **Director, Health & Social Services**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to gain agreement from Honourable Members to a phased approach to the development of a Vulnerable Peoples Strategy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Honourable Members are recommended to agree the initial scoping exercise to be carried out by a working group including representation from the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services, PWD, and Finance with a report to Executive Council in 3 months from date of agreement.

3.0 Summary of Financial Implications

- 3.1 There is substantial work needed and time committed to identify the financial implications and these will entail initial investment with on-going rolling programme of financial input.
- 3.2 It will be through the development of the strategy that gaps and solutions will be agreed and the subsequent action plan will realistically prioritise, with timescales and identified finances, the programme of work to be achieved over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 3.3 The aim of the strategy is also to gain community (including the private sector) support so that a number of joint solutions may be identified and achieved.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities highlights what is needed for an inclusive, equitable and respectful system and approach for people with disabilities. The number of people living in the Falkland Islands would suggest that a strategy would be more effectively aimed at vulnerable people rather than a variety of strategies for different groups within the community. At the January meeting of Executive Council, as part of its

consideration of the request for extraordinary funding for Child A (Paper 26/09), Executive Council decided that an agreed strategy on vulnerable people should be formulated within the next 12 months.

4.2 Definition of a Vulnerable Person

“A person who is, or may be, disadvantaged by physical or emotional frailty, old age, intellectual impairment caused by a disabling condition or illness, mental illness (including dementia) or other mental health problems: and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.

The UK’s Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill (section 43, Page 26)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill also supports other existing Legislation that upholds the Rights of individuals and groups and the Falkland Islands Plan seeks

“To protect and improve the quality of life of Falkland Islands people and the community.”

4.3 Context

4.3.1 Here in the Falkland Islands we have people who identify with the above definition and who have limited services and support, if any. Historically when services and/or support have been given it has been in response to a specific crisis or due to a stronger, more vocal advocate or relative and although may be individually tailored, it has not been equitable or necessarily fair. The disparity between the services provided has been marked and there is lack of clarity about the services that can feasibly, financially and competently be delivered, the criteria for assessing them, and what the individual or group can realistically expect. One of the other challenges at present is the gap in information/data collection to inform the true need of the community and the development of the strategy.

4.3.2 In the Every Child Matters Green Paper, UK, the outcomes for children and young people fall under five categories:

- a) Be healthy
- b) Stay Safe
- c) Enjoy and achieve
- d) Make a positive contribution
- e) Achieve economic well-being

These outcomes can be adapted for all the community but especially our vulnerable groups.

4.3.3 Although not exhaustive, the following are some of the groups that may require consideration in the islands:

- 287 people receiving retirement pension with 31 of them residing in Sheltered Accommodation
- People with mental health issues
- 4 children on the Child Protection Register
- Children in need
- 20 people receiving attendance allowance
- 77 students in the primary and secondary schools on the Special Education Needs register
- 7 adults with Public Protection Arrangements

4.3.4 The numbers of people with chronic disease are difficult to collate due to the definition, ethnicity data is not collected at present, and abuse data is currently being reviewed. These groups are not exhaustive and anyone may find themselves vulnerable at sometime during their lifetime.

4.3.5 The development of a Vulnerable Peoples Strategy would be the work of multi-agencies/professionals/departments/organisations and the community and would also contribute to ensuring more up to date, relevant information for current and future planning of services and developments for all the community. The initial steps would involve a small working group scoping the workload and timescales, deciding the membership of the strategy group and terms of reference and providing a report to Executive Council in an agreed time frame.

4.3.6 The areas that the strategy would potentially highlight are:

- Carers, care planning and support
- Facilities, toilets and access to buildings
- Parking/Roads/Pavements
- Transport
- Education
- Equipment
- Choice and Opportunities
- Environment
- Employment
- Financial Independence & Welfare
- Benefits
- Place of Safety
- Attitude
- Equal Rights
- Independent Advocate
- Realistic Expectations
- Housing

Although the strategy may be aspirational it will be essential to ensure it reflects realistic and achievable outcomes based on the availability of skills, knowledge, experience, finances, capacity, competency and the limitations of living in a small remote and rural environment.

4.4 Goals

4.4.1 The benefits of developing a strategy and action plan that is based on short, medium and long term realistic and achievable outcomes, within available finances, are:

- More consistent and equitable approach and decision making.
- Better care and education planning.
- Planned resource provision.
- More cost effective and efficient use of resources.
- Reduced distress following difficult decisions.
- Less crises management.
- Better informed decision making
- Shared goals and commitment by Government and the Community.
- Less ‘one off’ requests for substantial sums of money.

4.4.2 A short term working group lasting no longer than 3 months with membership from the departments of health, social services, education, public works and finance, who would report to the Executive Council, would be valuable in initiating the process. The report would outline the full membership of the strategy group, terms of reference, timescales and associated costs for the strategy group to convene and the work to be undertaken, for agreement by Executive Council.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications are difficult to assess at this stage but will need careful monitoring, input and review from the Treasury throughout the process.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications in relation to this paper, but the Attorney General believes that the development of a Vulnerable Peoples Strategy is very important in providing the appropriate background to enable better decision making in relation to issues affecting particular vulnerable individuals, and is thus relevant both to good governance and to defending those individual decisions.

7 Human Resources Implications

7.1 There will be HR implications and issues to consider especially for manpower, skills, expertise and capacity although at this stage it is not possible to fully quantify.