

1. DEPUTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

(a) Gail Payne outlined the work of Relationship Services including:

- counselling
- mediation
- problem resolution
- adjusting to workplace change

Ms Payne sought advice and guidance from the Committee regarding a role the Council could have with mental health issues in the workplace. She suggested that the Council could be seen as a model in this area of mental health.

The Committee **decided**:

1. To congratulate Gail Payne and Relationship Services for their work in this area.
2. To invite Relationship Services to liaise with Julie Macdonald, Community Adviser, concerning the submission of a proposal for consideration by the Committee.

(b) Marie Venning and Jim Lamb, Beneficiary Advisory Service, accompanied by several supporters, outlined the work of the service. Points covered included:

- Established in 1991 to promote the interests of people on benefits and low incomes, who also run the service.
- Provide individual advocacy for people experiencing problems with the benefit system and low income areas.
- Work to make changes to the processes/systems that affect BAS target group.
- Issues range from simple entitlement questions to complex legal issues. Examples of support for individuals include:
 - Advocate almost all of the cases in Christchurch that go to Benefit Review Committees and Social Security Appeal Authority.
 - Accusations of benefit fraud.
 - Pickup on ancillary matters not being dealt with by anyone else. Often seen as the organisation of “last resort”.
 - Approximately 10,000 client contacts per year. At any one time deeply involved with 60-80 individuals.
 - Referrals from all major agencies and a wide range of non-community sources.
 - Traditional funding sources such as Lottery Commission, Community Trust, COGs etc. Tend to receive the maximum that these sources can provide. Increased workload = increased costs.

Mr Lamb also stated that these were, however, all small scale general services with extensive demands on them, and that the role BAS had did not fit within the framework of the more substantial sources of community funding.

The delegation also pointed out that BAS was a unique service in that it provided a combination of perspective, knowledge and skills in most of the areas they deal in. Its primary impact on the low income community is to provide a watchdog and advocacy role usually with a direct financial outcome for the person involved. The delegation also submitted that in terms of the Council's concerns in/for the low income area, BAS has a unique and significant role to play. This view was shared by the Committee.

The Committee **decided**:

1. To congratulate the Beneficiary Advisory Service for the work it is doing for people.
 2. To invite the service to liaise with Sally Latham and Julie Macdonald (Community Advisers) regarding possible funding assistance that could be allocated to the Beneficiary Advisory Service.
- (c) Ruth Gardner, Jo Wolfreys (researcher), accompanied by several supporters, spoke to the "Employee Volunteering Scoping" Report, a report researched and produced by Jo Wolfreys for the Canterbury Volunteer Centre. The Canterbury Volunteer Centre, with sponsorship from the Council, contracted a scoping exercise to address the feasibility of progressing an employee voluntary programme in Christchurch. The Executive Summary is attached. It covered the following areas - more specifically detailed in the report:
- Objectives of contract
 - Background
 - Current position
 - Findings
 - Options
 - Programme recommendations
 - Next steps

Ruth Gardner signalled that the Board of Trustees, Canterbury Volunteer Centre, had adopted option six in the report, ie:

"To develop a 'package' of employee volunteering as a product that can be sold by the Canterbury Volunteer Centre or onsold to organisations/businesses situated within the 'human capital' industry ie human resources"

and that Jo Wolfreys has been asked to submit a draft development assignment for the production of the 'package'. The Committee will be kept informed as the assignment develops.

The Committee **decided** that the information be received.