1. **Cabinet Member For Social Services**

2. **Date of Meeting – 28.4.04**

3. **Specialist Fostering Remand/Crisis Scheme**

4. **Originating Officer:-**
   - Gill Black, Service Manager, extension 4047
   - Janice Beech, extension 3944

5. **Issue**

   Members will recall the previous remand and Crisis Foster Carer Scheme to meet the needs of young people on remand and children and young people in crisis at home. This Scheme needs to be revised and re-launched in line with the specialist Fostering Scheme.

6. **Summary**

   The Authority had developed a small number of remand carers and also a small number of crisis carers. These carers are no longer operating in this capacity and therefore the Authority is currently not able to meet the needs of young people in these circumstances. It was intended that alongside the longer-term specialist placements we would recruit a small number of remand/crisis carers. The outline of this scheme was developed but now requires updating making reference to the aims and objectives and remuneration already agreed for the specialist scheme.

7. **Clearance/Consultation**

   The Rotherham Fostering Service operates in accordance with the Fostering Service Regulation 2002 which is linked to the Fostering National Minimum Standards. The Minimum Standards recommended that all fostering services should come under the remit of mainstream fostering services. Previously the Remand and Crisis Schemes and respective carers had been supported by workers in the Youth Offending and Crisis Response Teams. The Service Review of the Children's Residential Services recommended the development of a specialist fostering scheme.

8. **Timing**

   This Scheme is being re-launched at the same time as the Specialist Fostering Scheme in order that the advertising and recruitment can target both types of potential carers.
9. **Background**

Funding is available within the Fostering budget to establish three remand crisis carers. Carers recruited would provide one/two placements and require intensive training and support plus fee based remuneration. They would operate on a self-employed basis, providing a range of supportive services including day care, outreach and respite.

Members will be aware of the current pressures on the Children's Looked After System. The remit of the Crisis Carers remains one of working to prevent family breakdown and thus reduce admission to care. The purpose of the scheme would also be to divert young people from offending behaviour by providing support via placements in the community. The establishment of family based placements would allow young people and families time out to address issues associated with offending behaviour and parental rejection. Carers would be expected to provide placements at short notice and to work alongside the Youth Offending and Family Crisis Response with a view to returning the child/young person home.

10. **Argument**

The three remand/crisis carers would be ring fenced to the scheme itself and offer up to two placements only. Consideration would be given to the particular needs of the children/young people in placement and in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to have only one in placement.

Carers would be recruited who had significant experience of caring for children, including those with challenging behaviour. They would also need to make themselves available to offer day care or outreach work when no other children were in placement.

The carers would receive basic fostering training plus additional training targeted on issues related to the group of children they are offering care to. It would be an expectation that such carers are highly motivated to undertake training and offer informal support to others. Single people or couples could apply but one of them would be expected to be home based and available to take placement at short notice, or undertake any other duties specific to the role.

A service and person specification has been drafted in respect of these carers.

Advertising to the longer-term specialist scheme has already commenced. This advertising has also referred to the need for remand/crisis carers.

11. **Risks and Uncertainties**

Members recently heard that changes in the way remands are made may increase the need for community based foster placements.
12. **Finance**

   The overall budget set aside within the Youth Offending Service is £31,383. This allows for the funding of three crisis/remand carers who would receive a fee of £200 per week plus maintenance allowances. Carers would receive the fee during times when there were no children/young people in placement. It would be expected that during such times carer would be involved in day care, outreach to support children at home or in other foster placements.

13. **Sustainability**

   Family placements are known to improve the life chances of children and young people and as such improve the likelihood of them taking a full and active role in the community as an adult.

14. **Wards Affected**

   All wards are affected.

15. **References**

   See attached Remand/Crisis Scheme.

16. **Presentation**

   Remanding young people to foster care is in accordance with the principles of the Children Act 1989 and the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (1989) which promote the welfare of the child/young person as being paramount and, as such, is a welcome alternative to custodial and residential provision.

17. **Recommendations**

   Members are invited to receive this report and approve the establishment of a Remand/Crisis Scheme.