

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Social Work Committee - 21 March 2005

REPORT ON: A Strategic Framework For The Development Of The Social Work Department As A Health Promoting Organisation

REPORT BY: Director of Social Work

REPORT NO: 148 - 2005

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report informs members of the contents of the Strategic Framework for the development of the Social Work Department as a health promoting organisation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the contents of the Report
- 2.2 Approve the contents of the Framework and Action Plan

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Health is protected and promoted by creating safe, clean, pleasant environments and services which emphasise prevention of illness as well as care for the sick. This framework considers promoting and improving health for both service users and staff members in the areas of diet and nutrition, physical activity, sexual health, mental health and well being, smoking and drug and alcohol misuse.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In promoting the health of Social Work service users we will improve services which reach groups or individuals who are particularly likely to be vulnerable to ill health, such as older people, children and families in need, people who have a disability and those who misuse substances.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Within Dundee City Council Social Work Department Service Plan 2003 – 2007 there is a commitment to developing the department as a health promoting organisation. This required the development of a Health Improvement Strategy.

6.2 In July 2004 an audit form was sent out to all social work services to gather information on current practice in promoting the health of service users. The audit focussed on the five key health areas identified within the Service Plan: smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, diet and nutrition, physical activity and sexual health. Mental health and well being had not been specified within the Service Plan but this important core health element is also addressed within the health improvement action plan.

6.3 From the consultation responses it is clear there is considerable work going on in the Social Work Department that promotes and improves the health of service users and their families/carers in Dundee, although this work is not always recognised as such. Through Scottish Health At Work (SHAW) there is also a positive focus on the health and well being of staff members. However, there were also many gaps that require consideration and which will be addressed within the proposed action plan.

6.3.1 The information from the audit was used to formulate an action plan on which consultation was undertaken across the services. This plan proposed a review of health promotion within current service provision in Children's Services, Criminal Justice and Community Care Services considering the six health areas, the development of information on health improvement for all current and new staff members, the development of topic focused training for relevant staff and health programmes focused on children and young people. On the 18th November 2004 the Social Work Directorate approved the action plan and review structure.

6.4 It is clear that improving the health of individuals and groups within Dundee is not just the responsibility of NHS Tayside staff. Six health areas have been prioritised for action within the Strategic Framework: smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, diet and nutrition, physical activity, sexual health and mental health and well-being. These have been chosen to reflect the priorities within the local Joint Health Improvement Plan (JHIP), the Tayside Inequalities Strategy, the Tayside Sexual Health Strategy and the Tayside Obesity Strategy.

Giving up smoking, not misusing drugs or alcohol, taking regular exercise and healthy eating are all important parts of good physical health which can be influenced and encouraged by Social Work staff as they go about their everyday duties. There are many possible ways this can be done:

- Where we provide snacks and meals we can seek to offer more healthy options
- Our residential staff members and foster carers can model or teach healthy cooking skills
- Staff members can offer 'buddy' support or group encouragement for those wishing to stop smoking
- Workers can give information and advice on alcohol and safe levels of drinking
- We can help service users to access locally available exercise such as bowls, line dancing or walking clubs, or develop exercise opportunities in our residential units or day care centres across all age groups

In terms of sexual health our service users are looking for clear information and advice on contraception and the prevention on sexually transmitted diseases, but also advice on developing positive relationships, looking at issues of sexuality and making confident choices. Sexual health is important throughout life and is an issue for all adults and older people as well as for young people.

Mental health and well-being work includes building up the resilience of service users by focussing on the factors which promote good mental health and well-being: the provision of supportive, caring, positive environments, the promotion of self-esteem, and enabling service users to develop positive skills which will help them manage the stresses in their lives. All of these factors can be promoted within a social work setting.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Depute Chief Executive (Finance) were consulted in the preparation of this report. Consultation took place across all Social Work services on the current health promoting activities, the draft plan and the final action plan.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

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Date: 11 March 2005