

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2003**

**REPORT ON: STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 154-2003**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Social Work Committee of the work undertaken by Scott-Gardner Consulting on behalf of the Director of Social Work (Social Work Committee Report 622 – 2002 refers). To seek approval to carry forward a number of recommendations that will progress the Department's ability to recruit and retain staff and improve services to the public.
- 1.2 In taking forward the Consultant's recommendations, the Director of Social Work is committed to this work benefiting staff throughout the department, building on strategies already developed including Support to Staff Committee Report 460 / 2002 and the work of Young People's Units Working Group.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Instruct the Director of Social Work to commission Scott-Gardner Consultants to undertake specific areas of work identified in their report.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The cost of commissioning this work will be £20,950 and will be met from additional Training Specific Grant allocated by the Scottish Executive.

## **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The actions recommended by Scott -Gardner Consultants will assist the Social Work Department to recruit, retain and develop quality staff.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The consultants have made recommendations regarding career pathways, flexible working, communication and management development that will have a positive impact on the quality of service delivery.

## **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

### **6.1 Background**

6.1.1 In April 2002 the Minister for Children and Education launched a 12 point Action Plan for the Social Services Workforce. In the introduction to the social services briefing paper published in June 2002 it was noted that the workforce faced increased challenges and an expectation that service delivery should be of a high quality. These challenges and expectations come at a time when social services nationally are facing significant recruitment and retention difficulties.

6.1.2 On 19th August 2002, the Director of Social Work was granted approval by the Social Work Committee to commission an external consultant to research a number of key staffing issues.

6.1.3 Scott-Gardner Consulting was commissioned to undertake this research against a limited number of specific project objectives:

- To gather information from a sample of social workers, management and others from within the main operational areas of the social work department.
- To consider the options that may exist to enhance staff recruitment, deployment and retention.
- To test those which appear to be the most positive on selected members of the staff involved.
- To specify a development programme to contribute to organisational change that will lead towards the achievement of the social work department's aspirations.
- To provide verbal and written reports and recommendations to Dundee City Council Social Work Department.

6.2.1 Scott-Gardner have now reported their findings and made a number of recommendations for improvement initiatives. They have detailed the resultant costs. The recommendations and costs are as follows:

#### **6.2.2 Management team change workshops.**

A single workshop involving all members of the extended management team or a series of workshops across management levels. The programme would include:

- Pre-workshop survey to establish existing and desired cultures.
- Pre-workshop interviews to establish strategic information.
- Analysis of current state.
- Revisit management vision and amend or adapt as necessary.
- Translate vision into a set of values to promote cross team working and challenge sub-optimism.
- Identify how we get there and translate this into competencies.
- Identify a series of action steps and priorities.

Two places will be allocated on these workshops to staff members from Personnel and Management Services.

**Cost £6,250**

**6.2.3 Communications meetings.**

- Meeting all staff to discuss the need for change in an inclusive and participatory style.
- These meetings to be presented to as large a group and cross section as possible to achieve a greater sense of inclusion and positive change.

This approach would have attracted costs of £1,750 if undertaken by the consultants.

The Director of Social Work has achieved the delivery of presentations to over 1000 staff over a period of two weeks. This has been undertaken at negligible cost.

**6.2.4 Management style/ skills development.**

- Design and run development centres for existing managers.
- Development centres to develop management competencies.
- Development centres to simulate real life management activities to identify managers' development needs.

This is an effective method of developing management skills that has an immediate impact on the workplace subject to further discussion with the Director of Personnel and Management Services.

**Cost £8, 000.**

**6.2.5 Set up and evaluate pilots into flexible working practices.**

The consultants will facilitate the setting up of workshops for pilot projects in flexible working. These will consist of:

*Retention Pilot 1, flexible working based on home working.*

- Investigate the use of lap top computers, mobile phones and call forwarding.
- Remove the requirement to be in the office at fixed times but will instead confirm total working hours.
- Agree the performance measures with the team and identify baseline measures for evaluation.

*Retention Pilot 2, flexible working based on greater hours flexibility.*

- More suitable for residential or office based staff.
- Agree the performance measures with the team and identify baseline measures for evaluation.

*Retention Pilot 3 – process improvement and work balance.*

- Identify areas where social workers are doing a large proportion of non-social work activities.
- Agree with the teams processes for work improvements and identify performance and baseline measures for evaluation.

6.2.6 The above pilots have a potential positive impact on our ability to attract and retain staff and the European Directive on Flexible Working.

**Cost £6,700.**

**6.2.7 Research and set up Senior Practitioner Grade.**

- Research and identify the competencies necessary to establish an effective Senior Practitioner Grade for social work.
- Design and run assessment centres for appointments to new grade.

This area of work was costed at £2,000 but the work will be undertaken internally through the auspices of the Social Work Department Human Resource Group chaired by the Director of Social Work and involving representation from the Personnel and Management Services.

**6.2.8 Review and redesign recruitment and induction process.**

This recommendation will be progressed by the Human Resource Group. A recent recruitment event aimed at student social workers was well attended and positively received. This is a more active approach than in the past.

6.2.9 The Director of Social Work proposes that Scott-Gardner Consulting be commissioned to take forward proposals 6.2.2, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 at a total cost of £20,950.

**7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services, the Director of Finance and the Director of Personnel and Management Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report to the Director of Social Work by Scott-Gardiner Consulting, January, 2003.

**9.0 SIGNATURE**

A G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date 7 February 2003