

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 22 MARCH 2010

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF OUT OF HOURS SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 166-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Out of Hours Social Work Service covers the geographical area of Tayside providing access to essential social work services outwith normal working hours, including evenings, night-time, public holidays and weekends.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on the review of the Out of Hours Service, advises of changes to geographical area covered by the service from 1 April 2010 and the implications of these in terms of the pattern of service delivery.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:
 - notes the withdrawal of Perth and Kinross Council from the current, Tayside-wide, Out of Hours arrangements from 1 April 2010;
 - notes the range of options which have been considered in relation to a redesign of the Out of Hours Service;
 - endorses the proposal to modify the current level of service in line with identified service needs and the Working Time Regulations;
 - notes the establishment of an Implementation Group and requires the Director of Social Work to ensure that the Group addresses the proposals outlined in section 4 of this report.
 - seeks a further report from the Director of Social Work following conclusion of the Implementation Group's work.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The full financial implications of the withdrawal of Perth and Kinross Council and the application of the Working Time Regulations are currently being determined and will be submitted as part of the further report to be prepared by the Director of Social Work.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

The Out of Hours team was established in 1985 (Committee Report No 107/85), prior to local government reorganisation. At reorganisation, the team continued to cover the geographical area of Tayside, with Dundee City Council retaining responsibility for the management of the service. There are Service Level Agreements in place with both Angus Council and Perth and Kinross Council in relation to the agreed level of provision and funding of the service. The respective financial contributions to the budgeted cost of the service were agreed at reorganisation and are as follows: Dundee City Council - 65%, Angus Council - 17.5% and Perth and Kinross Council 17.5%.

- 4.1.1 The team is based in Dundee and staffed by qualified social workers who are employed by Dundee City Council, fielding calls by members of the public and other agencies with referrals covering a diverse range of business from requests for Mental Health Officer visits or a response to immediate childcare and protection concerns to general enquiries about council services and benefit entitlements.

4.2 Review of Service

In 2007, a review of the Out of Hours Service was initiated covering all aspects of the team's operation, including the model of service delivery. Delivery of the service currently involves three staff (one co-ordinator and two social workers) on shift from 4.30pm until 9.30am the following day, with a proportion of this designated as "sleep in" time where staff are required to respond to incoming calls throughout the night.

- 4.2.1 The three main models of delivery considered by the review group were to:

- continue the current level and model of service delivery;
- base staff in the office until a cut off point, and thereafter working "on call" from home;
- base staff in the office until a cut off point, and thereafter one co-ordinator providing waking night cover.

- 4.2.2 There is a need to revise the current working pattern of the Out of Hours team to take into account the requirements of the Working Time Regulations. To this end, a revised rota is under development. This decision effectively ruled out the first two options above as neither of these would be compliant with the Working Time Regulations.

- 4.2.3 In the latter stages of the review process, Perth and Kinross Council confirmed their intention to withdraw from the current arrangement and develop "in house" out of hours arrangements. This leaves the Out of Hours Service covering the areas of Dundee City and Angus only from 1 April 2010.

- 4.2.4 To establish the level of cover required for an Out of Hours Service operating across the reduced area of Angus and Dundee City, a detailed analysis of the levels of demand for the Out of Hours Service was conducted. Whilst the level of staffing required during the earlier part of the shift cannot be reduced further at this time, the analysis highlighted a significant drop in the volume of business after 1am.

4.3 Proposals

The review therefore concluded that given the projected reduction in the volume of business, and geographical operating area, the Out of Hours Service should reduce the staff cover after 1am, to one co-ordinator on waking night shift, with the capacity to access other staffing resources as necessary in emergency situations.

4.3.1 The review highlighted that the Out of Hours Service covers more than three times the number of hours of operation than equivalent day time services. It is recognised that the team can only offer a limited response from within the team's resources and it is the following is proposed:

- greater integration to promote consistency of care and efficiency;
- clear mechanisms are developed and agreed to ensure access to mainstream resources outwith normal working hours;
- that the current pattern of working is revised.

4.3.2 To this end, an Implementation Group, including representatives from across the social work departments in Angus and Dundee City Council as well as colleagues from Tayside Police, has been established to take forward the necessary developments.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), and Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Relevant officers in Angus Council have been part of the review process and will continue to be part of the implementation process. Trade Union engagement and consultation will occur at the appropriate stages.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Alan Baird, Director of Social Work

DATE: 4 March 2010