

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2006

REPORT ON: CHANGING LIVES: A REPORT BY THE SOCIAL WORK 21st CENTURY REVIEW GROUP

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 182-2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Social Work Committee of the main findings of the Changing Lives Report by the 21st Century Review Group. This review represents the most significant review of social work services for 40 years. The Report also contains details of the subsequent ministerial response and the proposed action plan for improvement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-
- note the contents of this report; and consider its contents and
 - instruct the Director of Social Work to submit further reports on the actions to be taken to address the Report recommendations within the City.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no details of any financial implications at this time.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report meets the Local Agenda 21 principles that local needs are met locally and that resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised. This can be achieved by having a better trained and confident workforce working to meet the needs of the community within the community.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals contained in the report have as their main focus improving the opportunities and quality of life amongst some of the most vulnerable members of society.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Background

The 21st Century Review of Social Work was commissioned by the Minister for Education and Young People in June 2004. The purpose of the Review was to take a fundamental look at all aspects of social work in Scotland to ensure services are fit to respond to the needs of future generations. The Review Group consisted of 14 independent experts from the statutory and voluntary sectors from fields such as social work, education, the police and health.

6.2 The Review

6.2.1 The Review drew heavily on the experience and knowledge of a range of professionals as well as evidence from a Users' and Carers' Panel. This evidence has a strong message at the core that: *"doing more of the same won't work"*. The Report goes on to say that social work must change to meet the needs and expectations of service users by delivering high quality, accessible, personalised services that are equipped to respond to increasingly complex problems in a fragmented and ageing society.

6.2.2 There is a clear message from the Review that social work services alone cannot sort out all of the problems facing society now and in the future. Future solutions will need to involve professionals, services and agencies from across the public, private and voluntary sectors in a concerted and joined-up effort. This approach must make the best use of those universal services, such as health, early years education and police, which touch everyone's lives, and those of social work services which are targeted to provide support in very specific circumstances.

6.2.3 The Review found that social workers' skills are highly valued and increasingly relevant, describing the original function of social work as being to *"enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives and prevent dysfunction"*. Although the Review concluded that this is still valid today the reality appears to be that a culture of blame has developed which is forcing social workers into monitoring behaviour rather than actually helping people to make changes.

6.2.4 Concern is raised in the Review that heavy and inequitable caseloads often prevent social workers from tackling the complexities that lies behind the immediate need and that demand for services exceeds resources, resulting in social workers acting as gatekeepers, processing people through systems rather than working directly with individuals and families. These pressures to deal with crises leaves little time for early intervention or for increasing the capacity of individuals, families and communities to find their own solutions.

6.2.5 The Review describes a new social work governance model, which highlights a stronger role for the chief social work officer. As is the position in Dundee, the report recommends this position should be held by a single person in each local authority, who will be a responsible officer of the authority, reporting directly to the chief executive and the council for the governance of all social work services delivered or commissioned by that local authority.

It is likely that these responsibilities will become more demanding than before therefore employers must make sure that the chief social work officer

has the time and resources to carry out his/her governance and professional leadership responsibilities.

The Review goes on to say that to be effective in this new role, the chief social work officer must be a visible, credible social work professional who is able to provide sound professional leadership. He or she must demonstrate specific competencies and may require to undergo specific training to prepare for the post.

6.3 Aims and Recommendations

Changing Lives, the Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review Group sets out high-level aims. These aims are intended to achieve:

- personalised delivery of services, so that they better meet people's needs and aspirations;
- a public sector wide approach to prevention by helping people before they reach a crisis point in their lives;
- a strengthening of the social work profession so that social workers are better equipped to practise using the best evidence of what works and taking action to keep the best practitioners in practice;
- the development of an organisational approach to risk management and governance which promotes excellence and learning from mistakes; and
- the development of a culture of performance improvement in social work services.

The Report also provides details of 13 recommendations intended to help social work services and their planning and service delivery partners achieve the published aims. A summary of the 13 recommendations from the report can be seen in Appendix 1.

6.4 Response by the Minister

In his response to the findings of the Report the Minister for Education and Young people stated that:

- local authorities have played a key role in the delivery of social work over much of the last 40 years and they should continue to be central to future delivery but with an ever increasing array of partners in other parts of the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- meeting the modern day needs in our society cannot fall to social workers alone, but their special skills are needed as part of complex care arrangements which increasingly need to engage users and carers in the design and delivery of their services;
- social workers help protect and care for our most vulnerable people and change the unacceptable behaviour of a minority in our communities. They cannot do this unless we radically reform the social work system they work under;

- social workers have the right to know what is expected of them but also the right to be supported when they carry out their responsibilities; and
- the Scottish Executive has a responsibility to provide a clear lead in response to the findings of the Review and the announcements.

6.5 **Proposed National Action Plan**

The Minister has announced an immediate action plan for improvement, which will:

- set national priorities for social work;
- develop and improve standards through a strong framework for continuous professional development;
- invest in leadership;
- strengthen the role of the Chief Social Work Officer in providing professional leadership and in maintaining the highest standards of professional practice;
- devolve more responsibility to front line social workers;
- create para-professionals to work under the direction of social workers;
- allow experienced social workers to progress their career while remaining at the front-line;
- involve users and carers more in decisions about their own care and the design and delivery of services;
- review education and training programmes, ensuring that social workers are well equipped to fulfil their responsibilities; and
- legislate to provide the framework for national priorities and continuous improvement.

6.6 The Scottish Executive gave an early response to the Changing Lives report. In their response the Executive has given early commitment to engaging stakeholders in shaping the detail of that change. There is a clear message being delivered from the Scottish Executive that local authorities should now start to work on the priorities expressed in the Report rather than wait for new legislation or regulations which will follow at a later date.

6.7 Over the coming months, there will be extensive dialogue with all interested parties on the detailed implications of the Review's findings. This will inform a full implementation plan, which will in effect form the second stage of the Executive's response, to be published later in the year. The plan will include detailed funding proposals, outcome measures and performance monitoring arrangements.

6.8 **Our Local Response**

6.8.1 The Director of Social Work welcomes this report as Dundee City Council Social Work Department are in a strong position to meet the challenges that are presented in the Report.

6.8.2 The Social Work Department has already introduced changes that will help us to meet the above aims. These include the introduction of a senior

practitioner grade to allow experienced social workers to remain in practice and by introducing support workers to free up social worker's time. There has been significant investment in leadership and people evidenced by us achieving the Investor in People Award and the Scottish health at Work Award.

6.8.3 As an organisation the Social Work Department is committed to developing all of its key activities through the EFQM framework and by managing its performance more effectively. These are both components that are identified as important in the Report.

6.8.4 Arrangements have been made for the Social Work Services Policy Division to meet with a range of managers, staff and elected members from Dundee City Council on the 29th March 2006. These meetings will be used to discuss proposals for a full implementation plan. In addition discussions, consultations and planning of the implementation will take place with our service delivery partners.

The Director of Social Work will provide detailed action plans and proposals to meet the requirements of this review to elected members.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

Date: 10 March 2006

APPENDIX 1

Summary of recommendations

1. Social work services must be designed and delivered around the needs of people who use services, their carers and communities.

This requires:

- standards for access to social work services led by those who use services and their carers;
- participative and empowering assessment;
- recognition of unpaid carers as partners and providers of care alongside professionals;
- seamless transitions between different parts of the service for people who use services and their carers;
- services provided from premises that are fit for purpose; and
- that we further our understanding of the implications of developing personalised social work services.

2. Social work services must build individual, family and community capacity to meet their own needs.

This requires:

- the development of community capacity;
- an increased role for social work services in building the social economy;
- effective use of tested approaches to increasing the capacity of individuals, families, groups and communities;
- an expansion of volunteering, peer support and self help groups; and
- more widespread application of group work.

3. Social work services must play a full and active part in a public sector wide approach to prevention and earlier intervention.

This requires:

- increased long term investment in prevention and early intervention;
- joined up approaches to prevention and intervention;
- prevention to be part of everyone's job; and
- the development of anticipatory services to improve outcomes for people with predictable needs.

4. Social work services must become an integral part of a whole public sector approach to supporting vulnerable people and promoting social well-being.

This requires:

- effective community and corporate planning incorporating social work services;
- harmonisation of local service boundaries wherever possible;

- services to be commissioned and developed at the most appropriate level to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and best value;
- an integrated policy framework which rationalises information, planning and funding streams; and
- simplification of governance and funding arrangements across the public sector to promote integrated working.

5. Social work services must recognise and effectively manage the mixed economy of care in the delivery of services.

This requires:

- new commissioning models based on partnership and delivery of personalised services;
- more effective partnership working between commissioners and providers; and
- effective joint working to address the needs of people who use services.

6. Social work services must develop a new organisational approach to managing risk, which ensures the delivery of safe, effective and innovative practice.

This requires:

- clear accountability frameworks which make explicit the accountabilities of the social worker;
- social workers to exercise professional autonomy within a clear framework of professional accountability;
- a new approach to social work governance;
- a strengthening of the governance and leadership roles of the chief social work officer;
- structured approaches to manage untoward incidents that enable learning from mistakes;
- a research and development strategy for social work; and
- evidence based risk assessment and management tools.

7. Employers must make sure that social workers are enabled and supported to practise accountably and exercise their professional autonomy.

This requires:

- the reserved functions of social workers to be set out in regulations;
- practitioners to be equipped to exercise professional autonomy and accountability;
- the implications of personalisation to be considered and reflected in social worker education programmes;
- new career pathways in practice and professional leadership linked to an agreed competence framework; and

- the continued development of a national recognition and reward framework for social workers, reflecting career pathways and competence.

8. Social work services must develop a learning culture that commits all individuals and organisations to lifelong learning and development.

This requires:

- full implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005-2010;
- further investment in lifelong learning across the social service workforce;
- social service workers to maintain a personal portfolio as an up to date record of their skills and competence;
- social service workers to have access to regular, quality professional support, challenge and consultation;
- newly qualified professionals to have a period of more intensive initial support; and
- stronger links between employers and higher education institutions.

9. Social work services should be delivered by effective teams designed to incorporate the appropriate mix of skills and expertise and operating with delegated authority and responsibilities.

This requires:

- employers to invest in building and sustaining effective teamwork;
- a team based approach to performance improvement;
- budgetary and decision making authority to be delegated as near to the front line as possible;
- the development of a new para professional role;
- teams to have the right mix of skills to operate efficiently and effectively;
- social service workers to be treated as a mobile workforce;
- investment in increasing the capacity of teams to respond to growing need; and
- an integrated approach to workforce planning and development.

10. Social work services must develop enabling leadership and effective management at all levels and across the system.

This requires:

- a national framework for developing leadership and management;
- a leadership style that gives staff, users and managers the power to develop creative solutions;
- strengthening of strategic professional leadership;
- development of academic leadership; and

- development of effective citizen leadership.

11. Social work services must be monitored and evaluated on the delivery of improved outcomes for people who use services, their carers and communities.

This requires:

- a performance improvement framework for all social work services, based on outcomes;
- elimination of unnecessary information gathering;
- development of tools to share learning and support practitioners to improve and evaluate outcomes;
- an annual performance improvement report, peer assessed and published by chief social work officers; and
- inspectorates to use performance improvement frameworks as a means of reducing the regulatory burden on services.

12. Social work services should develop the capacity and capability for transformational change by focusing on re-designing services and organisational development.

This requires:

- new capacity for service redesign and organisational development;
- organisational development capacity in social work services;
- evidence based models of service redesign to support performance improvement;
- proactive use of technology to transform the delivery of services; and
- national and local fora to support the development of social work.

13. The Scottish Executive should consolidate in legislation the new direction of Scottish social work services.