

**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Social Work Committee - 15 March 2004  
**REPORT ON:** Social Work Inspectorate Annual Report 2003  
**REPORT BY:** Director of Social Work  
**REPORT NO:** 217 - 2004

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

1.1 to inform the elected members of the content of the report prepared by the Chief Inspector of Social Work and to inform the Committee of action being taken in light of the Chief Inspector's recommendations.

**2 RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 That the Social Work Committee note the contents of this report and supports the Director of Social Work in meeting the recommendations of the Chief Inspector.

**3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

**4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications arising from this report.

**5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no equal opportunity implications.

**6 MAIN TEXT**

**6.1 Background**

*Progress With Complexity* is the third annual report prepared by the Chief Inspector of Social Work. This report makes comment on the national position and the individual performance of each local authority social work department. The Scottish Ministers laid it before the Scottish Parliament in January 2004.

## 6.2 **The National Overview**

In his report the Chief Inspector states that challenges facing authorities in providing modern and effective social work services are wide-ranging, in the face of:

- demographic change, most significantly growth in the numbers of older people;
- pockets of serious and persistent poverty, unemployment and deprivation in a number of urban areas and, though in fewer numbers, rural areas;
- increasing problems - often associated with deprivation - which individuals, families and whole communities face as a result of drug and alcohol misuse;
- rising expectations of the reach and quality of support services and significant questions over the sustainability of some policy directions, notably how far the emphasis on increasingly providing care at home as opposed to residential settings can be taken.

The report goes on to state that all authorities have to confront some or all of these challenges to different degrees, depending on local conditions such as size, resources and the mix of urban and rural areas. Expenditure on social work services has doubled over the last 10 years. Whilst there are significant resource challenges ahead, the main priorities now are not additional financial resources but the best deployment, development and stewardship of human resources - the people - who provide social work services whether working directly for local authorities or in the voluntary or private sectors.

## 6.3 **Report Findings for Dundee**

Dundee has made significant progress in many areas of its services. The Council has to provide services to tackle the consequences of relatively high rates of unemployment and poverty. These demands have been increased by the effects of drug and alcohol misuse which have had a serious effect, particularly on families with children.

The inspection team noted a range of achievements which include:

- increased services for people with learning difficulties;
- increasing numbers of people receiving services for drug and alcohol misuse;
- in partnership with the NHS, a relatively quick development of a range of services for drug misusers;
- an innovative pilot project of video recording of interviews of children in child protection enquiries;
- significant reductions in offending by young people who have been involved in the CHOICE project programme;
- high rates of children placed with foster carers and with friends or relatives, in the face of significant demands; and
- successfully introducing Free Personal Care.

The inspection team noted areas for improvement which include:

- improving the educational attainment of children and young people who are looked after;
- continuing to develop services to deal with drug misuse and prepare protocols for dealing with families which have drug problems;
- taking extra measures to reduce staff vacancies in children's services;
- developing and maintaining accurate throughcare and aftercare information on young people who were looked after;
- concentrating efforts to replace the ageing workforce by recruiting staff to both fieldwork and management posts and promoting forward planning.

The Chief Inspector noted in his report that Dundee City Council increased early supported discharge from hospital and rapid response services in 2002 by 100 hours, dealing with twice as many people. He said that services are becoming mainstream to respond to waiting time and discharge pressures and that crisis care is available to all groups.

Comment was made in the report that the number of children and young people who are looked after has reduced from 410 in 2000 to 359 in 2002. The report stated that this is due to:

- the strong emphasis on preventative work, with fieldwork services working together with other resources, such as the Choice project, the community support team and family centres;
- an increase in options available to the Children's Reporter, so there is less need for compulsory measures such as the Compass Scheme and SACRO's Mediation and Reparation Scheme.

Within the report it was recognised that Dundee City Council had a range of initiatives designed to improve the educational attainment of looked after children. These initiatives include:

- schools monitoring the performance of children and young people looked after and an identified teacher in every school linking with social work;
- education mentors helping young people in residential care;
- the home school support service including social workers who support the attendance of children.

Contained in the Chief Inspector's national and local overview is recognition that substance misuse is causing serious social problems to communities. The report noted that under the chairmanship of the Director of Social Work, Dundee Drug and Alcohol Team has identified the imbalance between the services provided and what is needed. A new consultant psychiatrist has been appointed and there is commitment to joint working, including developing Single Shared Assessment. Extra funding is going to rehabilitation services and support services to keep people in the community. STRADA or the drug and alcohol team provide training to an appropriate level.

## 7.0 **The Way Forward**

The areas noted for improvement are included as main performance indicators or key projects in Dundee City Council Social Work Department Service Plan 2003-3007. Tasks have been allocated to key staff and arrangements made by the Director of Social Work to facilitate and monitor progress. This progress will be reported annually to the Social Work Committee.

## 8.0 **CONSULTATION**

8.1 This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Depute Chief Executive (Finance). The Assistant Chief Executive (Management) and the Depute Chief Executive (Finance) have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 9 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 Progress with Complexity: The 2003 Local Reports - Short Reviews of Social Work Services in Scottish Local Authorities. Published January 2004.

## 9.0 **SIGNATURE**

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date: 5 March 2004