

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 20TH AUGUST 2012

REPORT ON: FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE REVIEW

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 296 - 2012

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the review of Family Support Services in Dundee as indicated in Committee Report 163-2011. Further work has been undertaken to review current provision and this report outlines proposals to amalgamate the functions of Family Support Services with those in locality social work teams to create integrated, locally based teams providing a wide range of social work services throughout the city.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

- 2.1 Note progress made in reviewing the Family Support Service
- 2.2 Agree the proposal to integrate locality based social work teams and Family Support Services
- 2.3 Agree the proposed requirement for Team Managers in the new integrated teams to be registered social workers.
- 2.4 Instruct the Director of Social Work to implement the review including any changes to the staffing structure as identified.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This proposal will result in a more efficient use of resources and it is proposed that any efficiencies are reinvested in the Children's Services Budget to meet increasing pressures due to increasing demand.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

This report follows Committee Reports 163-2011 (Initial Review of Family Support Services) and 495-2011 (Children's Services Pressures) which emphasised the need to target children's services social work resources effectively and highlighted the long-term trend towards increased targeting of Family Support Services to support the needs of those children experiencing the greatest risk and need. Committee Report 495-2011 specifically noted capacity issues at children's services locality team level and noted the need for qualified social workers to focus on tasks requiring their specific skill set.

- 4.2 The recent creation of the joint Dundee Early Intervention Team delivered by four major voluntary sector providers has enhanced Dundee's capacity for preventative work, enabling social work to focus on delivering services to families where the risks to children are greatest. Increasing clarity about the respective roles of service providers is promoted by Dundee's Integrated Children's Services emphasising the role of universal services and the third sector. More broadly, there is a growing emphasis on the need to reduce duplication

of services within and between agencies; reducing the number of workers involved in a child's life and reducing the number of meetings and interfaces.

- 4.3 It is of note that the majority of referrals to the social work department's family support services are internal referrals made by locality-based social work teams who also retain involvement with the family. Given this trend, there was a need to revisit arrangements for the provision of our locality social work service alongside the review of family support services to reduce duplication and ensure services to families are coherent, consistent and it is easy for families to understand who is responsible for making decisions.
- 4.4 The review of family support services concluded that there is duplication in the management oversight of shared cases and related decision making. This is because each locality and family support team manager provides governance of their own team's element of intervention with a family, rather than a single manager having overall responsibility and lead for the family's services as a whole.
- 4.5 There are differences between the systems operated in family support teams and locality teams with separate files, systems and processes. The social workers and support workers for a family are often based in separate offices; social workers are generally not based in the communities they serve. Taken together, these issues make coordination of support to families more onerous than it could be.
- 4.6 A pooling of all the qualified social worker and paraprofessional resource in a locality area would allow for better, targeted use of the whole staffing resource available to support families' individual needs and circumstances, with additional support being allocated on the basis of risk and needs assessments in accordance with the Scottish Social Services Council guidance on the Role of the Registered Social Worker. Historically, the structure of services encourages limited flexibility in the deployment of staffing resources and there are emerging recommendations from the workforce and capacity planning group promoting further diversity of the skills-mix within teams and need to streamline decision making structures.
- 4.7 In line with emerging thinking from the Lochee Total Place Pathfinder, taking steps to realign our structures and accountability structures will place mainstream children's services well to respond to opportunities for further integration should this be indicated.
- 4.8 It is proposed that existing locality social work teams and family support teams are realigned to create fully integrated teams in each area of Dundee. The configuration of city-wide services such as the Care and Protection Service and New Beginnings Service will be unaffected. Specific family support services such as parenting programmes and contact sessions will continue to be prioritised and will form an integral aspect of the work of the newly configured teams.
- 4.9 Team managers would have direct oversight of the whole resource available in their area to address a wide range of risks and needs, enabling resources to be apportioned to meet the needs of lower risk families as well as the building of packages of support round higher risk families, responding flexibly to fluctuations individual families' needs.
- 4.10 This approach would enable qualified social workers to focus on areas of work requiring their specific skill set, in line with the guidance on the Role of the Registered Social Worker.
- 4.11 Each team would retain a strong community presence by continuing to work from existing buildings. There would be no closure of family support centres as a result of the proposed changes.
- 4.12 Every team would require to be managed by a team manager who is a registered social worker with the Scottish Social Services Council. This ensures appropriate accountability for service provision in a mixed-skills team.
- 4.13 The proposed restructure would require three less full-time equivalent team manager posts. It is planned that this reduction in the management establishment would be achieved

through the progression of previously deferred applications under the Early Retirement Scheme.

- 4.14 The detail of the geographic spread of the new teams would be determined during the implementation phase and would ensure that the availability of resources reflects the needs of local communities across Dundee. It is envisaged that control over prioritisation of resources further improve the ability of local teams to speedily respond to new referrals from the Care and Protection and New Beginnings Services and improve the experience of transition for families who require longer-term support.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic, Legal Services and Trade Unions have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Committee Report 163-2011 (Initial Review of Family Support Services)
- Committee Report 495-2011 (Children's Services Pressures)
- Scottish Government (2009) The Role of the Registered Social Worker in Statutory Interventions - Guidance for Local Authorities [available online]
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/05091627/2>

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

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