

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Personnel and Management Services Committee

REPORT ON: Social Work Department - Review of Social Work Assistants/
Occupational Therapy Assistants

REPORT BY: Director of Personnel and Management Services

REPORT NO: 391-2000

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To examine the present tasks undertaken by Social Work and Occupational Therapy Assistants, their roles in their respective service areas and the qualifications necessary to deliver the support the areas require.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- 2.1 20.5 Social Work Assistant posts, currently graded GS1/2 (£8,652 - £11,685), should be regraded to GS3/AP1 (£11,898 - £13,305) and that there be a qualification "bar" at the top point of GS3 (SCP15, £12,405), progression beyond which would be dependent upon employees having the appropriate SVQ Level 2 qualification.
- 2.2 5 Occupational Therapy Assistant posts (4 full time equivalents), currently graded GS1/2 (£8,652 - £11,685), should be regraded to GS3/AP1 (£11,898 - £13,305) and that there be a qualification "bar" at the top point of GS3 (SCP15, £12,405), progression beyond which would be dependent upon employees having the appropriate SVQ Level 2 qualification.
- 2.3 The Director of Social Work identifies appropriate SVQ's and related training programmes, to enable Social Work Assistants and Occupational Therapy Assistants to progress beyond the qualification bars within the grade.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The additional cost to the Department will be approximately £12,600 (including employer's costs) in the current financial year and £16,800 in a full financial year, with incremental progression thereafter. The additional expenditure will be contained within the Social Work Department's Revenue Budget.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The posts of Social Work Assistant and Occupational Therapy Assistant were established to provide assistance to Social Work teams in carrying out their duties. At their introduction, the posts undertook practical tasks such as transportation of service users and carers, movement of occupational therapy aids, etc.

6.1.2 The Director of Personnel and Management Services was asked to review the range of tasks now performed within the Adult Care, Older People and Children's Sections and ascertain, in conjunction with Social Work management, whether these tasks were required and who should undertake them.

6.1.3 At present, there are 22.5 posts of Social Work Assistant, and 5 posts (4 full time equivalent) of Occupational Therapy Assistant, all posts being graded GS1/2 (£8,652 - £11,685).

6.2 Duties and Grades

6.2.1 The post titles of Social Work Assistant and Occupational Therapy Assistant accurately reflect the roles required by the Department.

6.2.2 2 Social Work Assistants (full time) are currently involved in fostering duties which do not readily compare with the duties undertaken by Social Work Assistants; these posts were excluded from this review.

6.2.3 From the information gathered, it appeared that Social Work Assistant duties had increased from those originally envisaged, with postholders assuming greater levels of responsibility delegated from professional staff, e.g. greater involvement in care plan implementation, handling of money, participating in assessments. There were many areas of similarity in the duties undertaken between specialisms, which has been reflected in the new job descriptions compiled (refer Appendices 1 and 2); a generic description being appropriate for all posts in Community Care.

6.2.4 The duties of Occupational Therapy Assistants had also increased, with postholders undertaking more paperwork, more liaison with service users and taking on greater levels of responsibility. The new job description is shown at Appendix 3.

6.2.5 The aim of the Social Work Department in this exercise is to ensure that staff directly involved with service users and carers should hold nationally recognised qualifications. After consideration, a minimum qualification of SVQ Level 2 for Social Work Assistants and Occupational Therapy Assistants was identified as appropriate. The Director of Social Work will establish appropriate training for these qualifications. This would allow staff to be trained to perform the full range of duties now required of them. Along with this training, the Department also offers a wide range of "in-service" training opportunities for staff.

- 6.2.6 As suitable SVQ's have yet to be specified by the Department, it is not appropriate to set these as a minimum qualification requirement for these posts at this time. However, a requirement to attain this qualification should be reflected by inclusion of a qualification "bar" on the salary scale for the posts.
- 6.2.7 Evaluation of job descriptions indicated that the posts of Social Work Assistant and Occupational Therapy Assistant, currently graded GS1/2 (£8,652 - £11,685), should be regraded GS3/AP1 (£11,898 - £13,305). There should be a qualification "bar" set at the top point of GS3 (SCP15, £12,405), progression beyond which would be dependent upon employees having the appropriate qualification.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services, Director of Finance and the relevant Trade Unions have been consulted on this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

9 SIGNATURE

J.C. Petrie
Director of Personnel and Management Services

Date

JOB DESCRIPTION - SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**IDENTIFICATION**

Post Title:	Social Work Assistant	Post Ref.:
Section:	Children's Services	Grade:
Responsible to:	Senior Social Worker	
Responsible for:	N/A	

JOB PURPOSE

Undertake a range of tasks to support clients who have been assessed as having social care needs or who require frequent contact because of their vulnerability or social circumstances. Provide a prompt and courteous service showing respect for clients' dignity and rights at all times.

PRINCIPAL WORKING CONTACTS

- 1 Senior Social Worker and Service Manager.
- 2 Social Worker.
- 3 Staff of the Department and other departments.
- 4 Outside bodies and members of the public.

MAIN DUTIES

- 1 Assist Social Workers/Care Managers in the implementation of care plans to clients through direct work with parents and children;
- 2 Offer support, assistance and advice to clients and their families/carers in relation to specific aspects of care plans;
- 3 Provide practical advice on budgeting, household management and personal care issues. Provide assistance as necessary e.g. with Child Care, Housing issues, form filling, debt counselling;
- 4 As directed assist in the supervision of contact between children and families;
- 5 Undertake transport and act as escort to clients as necessary;

(See next page)

- 6 Assist in the monitoring of client care plans and report any areas of concern to senior members of staff;
- 7 As appropriate, assist senior staff with assessments;
- 8 Attend Court, Children's Hearings and reviews, as required. Assist in the implementation of agreed decisions;
- 9 Be competent in the implementation of child protection procedures and Operational Instructions;
- 10 Liaise with other departments of the Council, outside bodies and charities in relation to client care plans;
- 11 Maintain accurate (up to date) case records in accordance with Departmental policy. Ensure all appropriate documentation is efficiently filed or transferred to the relevant sections of Social Work, e.g. Welfare Rights;
- 12 Attend Team and case related meetings, as required;
- 13 Undertake administration of client payments, e.g. Independent Living, where the Department has agreed this. Ensure that financial procedures are adhered to at all times;
- 14 Participate fully in the work of the Section and contribute to ongoing service development. Keep up to date with legislation and developments in the area of Children's Services.

OTHER DUTIES

This job description is a broad picture of the post at the date of preparation. It is not an exhaustive list of all possible duties and it is recognised that jobs change and evolve over time. Consequently, this is not a contractual document and the postholder will be required to carry out any other duties to the equivalent level that are necessary to fulfil the purpose of the job.

Date prepared: 31/3/99

Authorised:

JOB DESCRIPTION - SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**IDENTIFICATION**

Post Title:	Social Work Assistant	Post Ref.:
Section:	Community Care	Grade:
Responsible to:	Snr. Care Manager/Snr. Social Worker	
Responsible for:	N/A	

JOB PURPOSE

Undertake a range of tasks to support clients who have social care needs or who require frequent contact because of their vulnerability or social circumstances.

Provide a prompt and courteous service showing respect for clients' dignity and rights at all times.

PRINCIPAL WORKING CONTACTS

- 1 Senior Care Manager/Senior Social Worker and Service Manager.
- 2 Care Managers/Social Workers.
- 3 Staff of the Department and other departments.
- 4 Community Mental Health staff.
- 5 Outside bodies and members of the public.

MAIN DUTIES

- 1 Assist Social Workers/Care Managers in the implementation of care plans to clients;
- 2 Offer support, assistance and advice to clients and their families/carers in relation to specific aspects of care plans;
- 3 Provide practical advice on budgeting, household management and personal care issues. Provide assistance as necessary, e.g. with Housing issues, form filling;
- 4 Undertake transport and act as escort to clients, as necessary;

(See next page)

- 5 Assist in the monitoring of client care plans and report any areas of concern to senior members of staff;
- 6 Undertake non-complex assessments under the supervision of senior staff;
- 7 Liaise with other departments of the Council, outside bodies and charities in relation to client needs care plans;
- 8 Maintain accurate (up to date) case records in accordance with Departmental policy. Ensure all appropriate documentation is efficiently filed or transferred to the relevant sections of Social Work, e.g. Welfare Rights;
- 9 Attend Team and case related meetings, as required;
- 10 Undertake short term administration of client payments, e.g. pensions, bills, where the Department has agreed this. Ensure that financial procedures are adhered to at all times;
- 11 Participate fully in the work of the Section and contribute to ongoing service development. Keep up to date with legislation and developments relating to the area in which the postholder operates.

OTHER DUTIES

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Date prepared: 15/6/99

Authorised:

JOB DESCRIPTION - SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**IDENTIFICATION**

Post Title:	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Post Ref.:
Section:	Community Care - Occupational Therapy	Grade:
Responsible to:	Senior Occupational Therapist	
Responsible for:	N/A	

JOB PURPOSE

Under the guidance of the Senior Occupational Therapist provide a range of services to clients with special needs to ensure that their participation within the community is restored/maintained. Provide a prompt and courteous service showing respect for clients' dignity and rights at all times.

PRINCIPAL WORKING CONTACTS

- 1 Senior Occupational Therapists.
- 2 Occupational Therapists.
- 3 Staff of the Department and other departments.
- 3 Outside bodies and members of the public

MAIN DUTIES

- 1 Visit clients as directed by the Senior Occupational Therapist to identify their needs and complete appropriate paperwork;
- 2 Complete a welfare benefit check and thereafter advise clients of the range of statutory, voluntary and welfare rights services available. Outline the charging policy to clients. Maintain a current working knowledge of the aforementioned services;
- 3 Delivery, installation and instruction in the use of equipment, as well as recommending minor adaptations as identified from initial assessment. As required, liaise with contractors on minor adaptations required;
- 4 Uplift of equipment when no longer needed by clients;

(See next page)

- 5 Maintain accurate written records of work carried out. Process equipment/ adaptations orders issued for jobs and ensure accounts are accurate prior to payment;
- 6 Undertake follow - up visits to clients to ensure that equipment is being properly used and that adaptations have been correctly completed to both client and Department's satisfaction;
- 7 Be aware of the other services of the Department and advise clients of these as appropriate to assist them in maintaining their participation in the community;
- 8 Reinforce the rehabilitation programmes of clients in activities of daily living and provide practical help;
- 9 Hold, maintain and monitor a generic caseload under the supervision of the Senior Occupational Therapist. Have a working knowledge of current client database systems within the Department;
- 10 Attend team meetings;
- 11 Liaise with other departments of the Council, outside agencies and professional bodies, as appropriate;
- 12 Participate fully in the work of the Section and contribute to ongoing service development. Keep up to date with legislation and developments in the field of Occupational Therapy.

OTHER DUTIES

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Date prepared: 31/3/99

Authorised: