

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 20 August 2001

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE SERVICES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 522 - 2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report seeks approval of the Social Work Department's action plan reviewing Residential Child Care Services in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that The Social Work Committee:-

2.1 Approve the Social Work Department's action plan reviewing Residential Child Care Services taking into consideration the views expressed by the Independent Consultant and the Director of Social Work.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are financial implications arising from this report. Any proposals for service improvement or development will be costed and submitted for approval at a later date or are already included in the Approved Revenue Budget for 2001/02.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct Agenda 21 Implications arising from this report.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There may be equal opportunities implications in changing the employment pattern and conditions of service of residential child care staff. These will be taken into account when developing proposals for change.

6.0 BACKGROUND

The Social Work Department has considered the report from the Independent Consultant and taking cognisance of the views of the Consultant and the Director of Social Work has produced an action plan for implementation (Annex 1).

This action plan will ensure that the Dundee City Council's Residential Child Care Services are developed in accordance with best practice, legislative requirements and take into account the views of the Consultant, staff and young people.

7.0 CONSULTATION

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

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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 the above report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date

14 August 2001

REPORT TO DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE

REPORT ON: THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SERVICES IN DUNDEE CITY

REPORT BY: ANNE BLACK, INDEPENDENT SOCIAL WORK CONSULTANT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report to Committee on the outcome of the work undertaken to review residential childcare services in Dundee City.

To highlight areas of good practice and to make recommendations about training and improvements in residential childcare units in Dundee City.

KEY VALUE FOR RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SERVICES

Residential care must provide high quality care making it the placement of choice for some young people. To provide high quality care the staff must feel valued for the difficult task that they do and not feel that their service is a poor second choice for young people who need to be looked after and accommodated.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

In undertaking this review I have met with a large number of staff (over 140 people) at all levels in the Council particularly from Social Work, Education and Personnel and Management Services. I have met with a number of young people who are resident in the units. I have had meetings with the Reporters to the Children's Hearings and with a group of Children's Panel members. I have also met senior police officers with particular links with child protection and youth crime, drugs and sexual exploitation. I have had discussions with Union officials and members. I have also met with the "Who Cares?" worker and the area manager of "Who Cares?". I have met with staff from three other Councils to discuss the operation of their service and also spoken with other managers by phone. I have received extensive documentation from a number of Councils about their residential childcare services.

In the period before this review was set up, and while I have been working on this report, there have been several developments in the forward planning of the Dundee residential childcare service. There has been money made available for some essential maintenance in the units, some redecoration and some new equipment and furnishings.

The Children's Services Manager and a group of key residential managers have been looking at the shape and location of residential childcare services required for the future. This work is important so that the services provided are ones that will meet the changing needs of young people who are to be accommodated. The fabric of three of the current units will also require be addressed in future planning. The demand for residential placements continues to be high and the complexities of the problems that bring young people into public care are not likely to diminish. This forward planning is also considering how to ensure that there are comprehensive preventive services to reduce the need for young people to be accommodated and a strong foster care service for the many young people who can benefit from family based care.

The scrutiny that the press has given to some of the difficult issues in providing residential care has been frequent and critical.

The Working Group on staffing, rotas, shift patterns and training has been meeting regularly during the period of the review. Staff, unions and managers have grappled with the complexities of agreeing an ideal pattern of staffing, shifts and rotas.

A joint report by the Directors of Education and Social Work has been agreed by the two Committees about the education of pupils who are "looked after" by the local authority.

As with any review over a period of six months, the situation does not stand still and so some of the areas highlighted as needing improvements have already started to be addressed while others remain to be tackled.

The responsibilities of the Council in looking after children are considerable. Children who require to be looked after will all have experienced some trauma in their lives which means that they can no longer be cared for within their family.

The range of provisions for "looked after" children includes foster carers, residential childcare units, residential schools and secure units. Some young people will be placed in residential care units managed by voluntary organisations. This review focuses on the care of young people placed in the units provided by Dundee City Council.

The Council had reviewed its residential childcare provision in early 2000 and many changes were made to provide a better service for the young people who required to be looked after and accommodated.

The principal changes were to reduce the numbers of young people in any one unit so that the units could operate on a more domestic scale. The review also identified the unit at Balgowan Avenue as an emergency and short stay unit. The development of The Elms Close Support and Secure Unit was a further important part of the overall plan. Since the implementation of those changes the Social Work Department has started a Best Value review of residential childcare services and this is all part of a continuous plan for improving services.

In undertaking the review I have had very positive collaboration with a wide range of staff inside and outwith the Council. I have had opportunities to meet with key managers and staff and young people and all have been open and provided their insights into the service provided. Inevitably, in a diverse service, there is a range of opinions about the positive and negative aspects of the service provided. In this report I will aim to reflect the issues that have been drawn to my attention in meetings. I will use the information that I have collected from Dundee City Council staff, from young people, from agencies with whom the Council works closely, and from other Councils who have shared their operational plans for providing residential care for children and young people, to report achievements and to form recommendations. I will identify positives in the care within the units and the areas where I see the need for improvement.

The report will also address the specific issues that the Committee asked that I cover. Some of these have already been referred to in my interim reports to the Sub Committee.

The Council carries a corporate responsibility to provide high quality care for young people who require to be looked after and accommodated. The Children (Scotland) Act of 1995 stresses the responsibilities of the whole council to support children who are being looked after. There are responsibilities on elected members to ensure that there are the resources to enable officers to provide the high quality services that are needed. The Scottish

Commission for the Regulation of Care will come into being in April 2002 and will set National Standards for residential childcare units. Local Authority homes will also be subject to their regulation and inspection. The current inspections of the units in Dundee follow very similar standards to those that are in preparation for the Commission. The standards will encompass the material standards needed as well as the standards for direct work and services with the young people by residential care staff, social workers and from education and health personnel. Standards will stress the need for strong external management so that staff are supported and the quality of the work in the units monitored and developed.

Looking after children and young people places heavy responsibilities on the Council, on staff and on managers at all levels. There is the need for a spectrum of provision with quality residential care as a key part of it. It has been difficult over the years to promote residential care as the placement of choice as greater emphasis has been placed on the positive outcomes of family based care. It is essential that residential care is able to provide high quality care as it will be the preferred choice for some young people and the staff in residential care need to feel valued for the difficult task that they do rather than a poor second choice.

Residential care is now provided mainly for young people over 12 years of age. These young people are in some kind of crisis, have suffered rejections or abuse and may well be challenging or aggressive. For staff who provide care for them, the task is also challenging. Young people often have low self-esteem, have little trust in adults and will test out the limits all the time. Verbal and physical abuse is a regular part of the response of the young people to frustrations and challenges. To try to support staff to do the difficult tasks of care needs a sound structure of support and training.

There is a range of legislation that is relevant to the provision of residential care by a Council. A brief overview of the main legislative provision is set out in *Appendix 1*.

The numbers of young people for whom Dundee City Council provides accommodation is higher than the average across Scotland. Dundee has 13.2 per 1000 of the 0-17 population accommodated as compared with the national average of 10 per 1000. The other large urban authorities also have numbers above the average with Glasgow with 19 per 1000, Aberdeen City with 13.6 per 1000 and Edinburgh with 12 per 1000.

THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE

Providing residential care for troubled young people presents many challenges. Across Scotland, Councils are all working to find the most appropriate way of delivering their residential childcare services.

Urban authorities are facing problems with accommodating some young people who are involved in violence, drug and alcohol misuse, sexual exploitation and serious offending.

Young people come into the care of the Councils for diverse reasons but all will have suffered some abuse or trauma which prevents them living with their family or in another resource in the community. Many young people will never have had a close relationship with their parents and many will have experienced parental drug misuse, psychiatric illness and family disruption. The young people come into units with a lot of anger and sadness and frequently have low self-esteem that often creates challenging and aggressive behaviour. Many will have had disrupted educational experiences and some will already have a history of exclusion and non-achievement in education. The task of trying to help the young people begin to get their lives into order and to move towards taking more responsibility for their

actions needs a high level of staff time and skill. It needs the collaboration of other staff across the Council and from Health colleagues to make progress to help young people towards more stable lifestyles. The anger that many young people feel towards all adults can become directed at the staff who are closest to them providing day to day care.

To help young people to approach issues and daily living in a more measured way they need continuity of adult responses over a sustained period.

The numbers of staff needed in a residential childcare unit will depend on a number of factors, and comparisons across different Councils of staffing levels and of unit costs are very hard to make. Most Councils are trying to develop residential care services where the unit is of a domestic size. This also means that it is likely to be in an area with other family houses in close proximity with the attendant problems that can bring. This should not deter Dundee City Council from continuing to provide care in local settings with sound preparation and dialogue with neighbours.

From the Councils who responded to my request for information, the size of units range from over fifteen beds to two or three beds as the maximum. These smaller units are staff intensive but can provide very positive help for those young people who need a high level of supervision and direct work in a small family type environment.

The current provision in the units in Dundee has allowed the numbers of young people in each unit to be reduced and this is a positive development. There are three units whose remit is to care for young people who are likely to be looked after for longer periods: Strathcarron Place, Duncan Place and Fairbairn Street. Balgowan Avenue provides emergency and short stay care and The Elms Close Support and Secure Unit provides more specialist care for short periods and where the young person needs secure care for a short period.

In Balgowan Avenue, which currently receives young people in emergencies, having five young people all in crisis has made management of the group very challenging. The developing proposals to create an emergency and short stay unit that incorporates intensive community support and linked family carers to try to prevent the need for the young person to have to be looked after away from home is positive. This will enable the residential facility to be one part of a range of services with different staff skills and approaches. Staffing levels will need to reflect the intensity of the work that will be necessary.

In discussion with other Councils with whom I have had contact, they identified occasions when a specific resource needs to be created for a young person who requires care but who cannot be placed in any of the existing units. A small specialist unit set up by the Dundee City Council Social Work Department was in response to such a situation when a young person with particularly challenging behaviour needed to receive individual care. Such provision has been identified by all Councils as difficult to staff and costly to provide. Attracting staff with the skills to work with such challenging young people is never going to be easy. The benefits to the young person can be high and a specially created resource could be a positive model for the very occasional situations that will arise with a young person who cannot be cared for within a group setting.

The forward planning work of senior children's services managers is continuing to focus on care being provided in small units with a staff to young person ratio that can give the level of care required by young people whose lives are often chaotic. The longer term placements of young people need to be based on a full assessment of their needs and that is a shared task with Care and Assessment Team staff and residential staff who are caring for the young person in a short stay unit. It is essential that this assessment is completed so that the

longer term placement of the young person after the short term unit can meet the needs of the young person.

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There are some dilemmas about young people moving on in fairly short timescales from an emergency or admission unit as assessments may be hard to complete while the young person is still in crisis.

The close support facility at The Elms has faced these dilemmas as a stay of three months in a few cases may not be long enough for the young person and the staff to address what may be the result of many years of disruption and unhappiness experienced by that young person. A degree of flexibility of timescales for the stay is needed but intensive work still needs to be done in the early days of the placement.

The costs of residential care lie largely in the staff costs. To attract good quality staff the salaries need to reflect the difficult job that they undertake. Dundee social care workers are paid at salary levels that are commensurate with many other Councils. The available unit costs for residential childcare provision vary across the country. When the care provided is of a specialist or secure nature then the costs of the provision rise considerably. These costs are considerable and there are few savings that can be made if the care is to provide the young people with the quality of interaction with staff that they need, in buildings that are fit for the purpose and with care at a level that will meet the requirements of inspection and in the future registration.

The need for an assessment of the realistic costs of providing a high quality residential child care service is a Scotland-wide issue. It would be important for all Councils to be encouraged to share their assessments of costs and for this to be debated with the Scottish Executive. A recent piece of work for ADSW highlighted the continued underfunding of children's services and the high percentage of spend above GAE allocations for all the cities.

Some cost comparisons are included in *Appendix 2* but all figures need to be treated with caution as they are made up in different ways. The weekly charges that some Councils have provided include external management costs and capital depreciation while others identify the budget required to provide direct care only.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dundee City Council Social Work Department has an impressive set of procedures covering many aspects of work with children and young people. Staff in planning and management have maintained these procedures and updated them as changing legislation has required. Guidance for staff is available for many topics although, in a busy unit, the opportunities for staff to study these are limited.

Procedures must advise practice and familiarisation for staff of the procedures is essential. There needs to be training in units about new policies and procedures and supervision must ensure that all staff understand and follow the policies and procedures.

The recently completed Supervision Policy is a positive development setting out a standard for supervision and underlining the responsibilities of both parties in the process. It is important to stress that supervision has a supportive function but that it is also the mechanism for managers to review the quality of the work being done so that the service given to users is of a high quality.

Work is continuing on a Sanctions Policy that will be discussed with young people and staff in the units to seek consistency of approach to difficulties that may arise in whichever unit

they may living. The aim is to reduce any meaningless sanctions and to help to reach consensus about the consequences of behaviour and the redress that is required.

Council-wide policies are followed by departmental implementation strategies and staff consultation on the implementation is important if the policies are to be effective in the workplace.

Achievements

- 1 Dundee has a range of policies and procedures that are clear and comprehensive.
- 2 They have been maintained and updated on a regular basis and new policies have been developed as the need for them has been identified.

Recommendations

- 1 The Social Work Department should continue to develop policies and procedures for the guidance of staff and the direction of services.
- 2 The Department should ensure that the development of policies and procedures are advised by the work of staff at unit and team level and that there are opportunities for staff to reflect on new documents as teams and to develop their practice in line with the procedures.
- 3 All Council-wide policies and procedures need to be accompanied by clear implementation plans and processes for monitoring their effectiveness. Regular monitoring the adherence to the procedures are also needed.

SOME BACKGROUND OBSERVATIONS

In undertaking this review, a variety of views about the current state of residential childcare services have been presented to me. Some people have been very keen to share the positives of the service. Some have felt that they have not been well supported, listened to or valued for the work that they do. Some staff in the units refer back to a climate of suspicion and blame that they felt was prevalent some years ago when there were different senior managers in post. Some staff are reluctant to acknowledge the changes that have taken place and feel that their concerns are not listened to. Some staff feel that the service is driven by the wishes of young people with staff having little power to effect change.

There appears to be some divergence of views about what it is feasible for staff to achieve with some young people in residential care. Unrealistic expectations about effecting change in a young person's behaviour during a period in a unit can lead to dissatisfaction from others in the work being done and residential staff feel criticised for this.

As young people in units are almost all teenagers, experimentation with alcohol, drugs and sexual relationships will be a feature of their lives like many of their contemporaries in the community. Being involved in risky behaviour creates stress for staff who want to protect the young people but who have limited powers to intervene to stop their involvement.

The recent public airing of the difficulties staff face in looking after some very difficult young people has had a serious effect on morale in the units. The intrusion of privacy felt by some young people through press reporting has been a major concern. Young people whom I met were angry at the implication that they were all involved in sexual exploitation or violent behaviour.

I will expand on these issues later in the report.

THE EVENTS OF SUMMER 2000

The constellation of events during last summer, which culminated in press coverage of the difficulties, have been outlined in my earlier reports. Discussions with staff and managers throughout the department have informed my understanding of the events of last year .

At an early point in the financial year 2000 – 2001, the Director of Social work identified that there was great pressure on the budgets for children and young people. The commitments already in place for young people who were placed in secure placements or residential education were in excess of the available finance. This was reported to the Chief Executive and to tackle the serious underfunding in the budget for secure and external placements savings elsewhere in the service needed to be made. The corporate budget was insufficient. To meet the commitments, and to try to ensure that the young people most in need of an external placement were placed, Education, Social Work and Finance managers set up two groups to monitor access to placements and to review the current placements. The group reviewed all the existing placements in residential schools and secure units to see if some young people could return to the city. At the same time as these reviews, there was continuing relentless pressure for secure placements yet none were available across Scotland at this critical time. Other Councils were also experiencing high demands for placements which could not be met.

There were, at some points last summer, up to eight young people on requirements that made them liable to be placed in secure accommodation but who had to be placed in units in Dundee where there was little power to restrict the freedom of the young people. This was a very unsatisfactory situation to manage and staff were very anxious about the level of risk at which some of these young people were putting themselves and also the way that they were able to involve some of the other vulnerable young people in offending or sexual exploitation. From the meetings where Service Managers looked at priority allocations for placements, information was passed to the Children's Services Manager and Director to alert them to the growing level of risks.

The delays in The Elms opening also had an impact on the possibility of placements in secure accommodation for some young people. The corporate review group had intended that some of the young people placed externally to Dundee would be able to return to the city during the summer. This would have reduced the financial burden on the corporate budget and brought the young people nearer their families and community. I met staff from Care and Assessment Teams and from the Review Team who had been very concerned about the plans as their assessment was that several of the young people being discussed remained well placed in the external placement and that an early return would not be in their best interests. These staff felt that the decisions were financially driven rather than based on a full assessment of the situation. The requirements to reduce considerably the overspending in the external budgets was not known to staff at this point and this made it hard for them to feel that their senior managers had the young person's needs at the centre of their decision making.

The Children's Hearings members whom I met during the review recalled their anxiety and frustration about the lack of placements made in external secure accommodation during this period, despite the supervision requirements including an authorisation from the Hearing for the young person to be liable to be placed in secure accommodation. The Director convened two meetings with the Children's Panel members to advise them of the serious placement issues and the financial position that the Council was facing in relation to the corporate budget for external placements. The efforts to increase local placements in foster care and in The Elms were also discussed. The discussions were confirmed in a letter from the Director.

The panel members with whom I met recognised that their responsibility was to concentrate on the needs of the individual young person, while the Director had to take the broader perspective. The Director's decisions had to address how the very scarce resources were best used and which young people were most in need of the resource. The Convenor also reassured the panel members that the needs of the young people should not be secondary to financial considerations. Panel members and Reporters to the Children's Hearings felt that even earlier communication of the serious financial situation would have been more helpful to them and could have increased their understanding of the issues.

Young people who were being sexually exploited and thus at high risk were among the young people for whom placements were being sought and were not available. The recognition of the high levels of risk, and lack of safety or protection the Council could provide for these young people, or for others who were involved in serious offending, led to an agreement from the Chief Executive that additional funds should be released into the Corporate budget to allow some of these young people to be placed in secure units outside Dundee as soon as places became available. The responsibility for the care and education of these young people was a corporate responsibility rather than solely one for the Director of Social Work and this was not always appreciated by staff in the Social Work Department from the conversations that I had during the review. The difficult decisions that needed to be made, the competing priorities for finance, and the need for the decisions to be made at Chief Executive level because of the size of the overspend, made it hard for staff in social work to understand the interwoven issues that were present at that time. The more that could be shared with staff the greater would have been their ability to help young people and their families to understand what was happening. It was clear that some staff felt angry on behalf of young people with whom they were working when placements were not being made outside Dundee.

When placements became available in secure accommodation and some young people were placed in external secure units, it was understandable that some staff assumed it was the adverse publicity about sexual exploitation that led to funds being found for the young people rather than their priority for placement having been assessed alongside all the other young people waiting for placements.

Service Managers were having to try to mediate with staff about the very difficult situations they were facing and the decisions that the Director was having to take. Service Managers were not fully involved in the difficult decisions that had to be made about budget overspends and they felt that better and earlier information would have helped them to make more sense of the very difficult decisions that the Director and the Children's Service Manager were having to make. It would have helped if they had felt better informed so that they could have been supportive to staff in units trying to hold on to very challenging and at risk young people and to social workers who were feeling that their assessments were not being taken fully into account.

The difficult summer period of 2000 occurred shortly after the recently completed review of residential childcare with major changes in staff teams, in the groups of young people and in the functions of the residential units. Some unit teams were taking on some different functions, there were new staff in units who were not known to the new groups of young people and the new staff groupings were still trying to form identities as teams. All these events converged to make this period a very stressful one for young people and staff.

The material conditions in the units were poor and needed investment to improve the fabric and furnishings.

The Care and Assessment Teams were experiencing serious staff shortages as they had to bear the brunt of financial restrictions to enable staff to be maintained in the direct care services. Workloads were experienced as impossible and, coupled with peak holiday times, the availability of staff for the detailed work required with young people in care was poor.

All of these pressures were playing a part in the problems that faced all managers and staff in delivering a consistent and high quality service.

Achievements

- 1 The review of residential childcare carried out in the Spring of 2000 was implemented.
- 2 The numbers of residents in the units was reduced.
- 3 Balgowan Avenue took responsibility for emergency admissions.
- 4 Monitoring and Review Groups for external placements were set up with senior managers from Education, Finance and Social Work.

Recommendations

- 1 The level of communication to key managers needs to be kept consistently high. The difficult decisions that the Director and Children Services Manager had to make during the summer period, and will continue to have to make, need to be shared with Service Managers at the earliest possible opportunity.

Service Managers are key in helping front-line staff make sense of decisions that may be necessary because of other external factors.

- 2 Openness about the dilemmas faced by managers can help to create a shared effort to make the best use of what is available. It is then more possible to explain to external agencies, particularly the Children's Hearings, the nature of the constraints on the Social Work Department and the Council.

THE FABRIC AND FURNISHINGS OF THE UNITS

The young people's units were in a poor state of repair when I started the review. One of the comments made in all the existing units was the difficulty and delays in getting essential repairs carried out. The programmes for redecoration did not take account of the need for rapid repainting when damage had been done in the unit. The furnishings were poor and the units had a general appearance of neglect. This gave a message to young people and to staff that there was little value placed on their living and working conditions.

The speedy agreement to a full survey of the units highlighted the deficits and staff were able to put their points of concern across. The subsequent programme of painting and replacement of furniture has made a great difference to the units and, on subsequent visits, the staff and young people have shown me the improvements with enthusiasm.

Achievements

- 1 A comprehensive survey of the fabric and furnishings of the units was completed and staff had a key role in identifying the needs of their unit.
- 2 A considerable amount of painting and re-furbishing took place in the units which improved the quality of the environment in the units considerably.

Recommendations

- 1 A continuing programme of repairs and improvements to the units needs to be maintained until longer term decisions are made about the shape of residential care provision for young people.
- 2 Responses to repairs in the units should be given a high priority.
- 3 The level of cleaning staff time for the units is being addressed and the assessment of need for extra cleaning hours in the units should be implemented as soon as possible.

CARE PLANNING

The Sub Committee asked that I look at care planning arrangements and liaison with children's care and assessment team social workers.

Planning for the care of any young person who is looked after and accommodated is a shared responsibility of the Care and Assessment Team and the residential unit staff. There needs to be very reliable passing on of information from the social worker for the young person and his/her family to the direct carers. Being accommodated still happens too often as an emergency and the planning of the admission is fraught with last minute issues.

The use of the one unit for emergency admissions has eased the pressure on young people and staff in the longer term units. The emergency provision at Balgowan Avenue has several drawbacks, particularly the location and nature of the building. The young people are usually distressed and angry or fearful of the unknown. The plans to replace this unit in time is positive and the linking of other resources into the facility offers lots of exciting possibilities to prevent more admissions to care by providing increased support at home.

To offer appropriate care to any young people there needs to be an assessment of the young person's needs and their strengths and difficulties. Care Plans are required within a very short timescale after the start of a period in care. From reading the files, which are extensive for some of the young people currently accommodated, I was concerned that some had no Care Plans and that there were several where the unit waited some weeks to receive a plan. While much is discussed on visits or on the phone, it is unlikely that a unit will have all the essential information needed to provide focused care to a young person without the Care Plan.

The Looked After Children materials developed by the Scottish Executive with Local Authorities have drawn together the information that needs to be collected. They are extensive in their volume, take a considerable time to complete and still do not invariably include a full assessment of the young person's needs and strengths. Residential staff find it difficult to play their essential part in working with young people if they do not have the information about the young people that they need. It is important that the sharing of key information is improved.

The case reviews and the weekly planning meetings held in The Elms and at Balgowan Avenue in particular, were well recorded and enabled all the people involved in a young person's care to see how the Care Plan is progressing and sets out clearly the responsibilities of all the players. Allocating time to these planning meetings needs to be given a high priority by social workers. Their workloads need to take account of the intensity of the task of planning and working with some of the very distressed young people in the care of the Council.

The allocation of tasks between residential care staff and social workers from Care and Assessment Teams could usefully be further explored. Where the young person is placed longer term in a residential unit the residential care staff could have an increased role in areas of direct work with the young person.

Records in the units were mixed with substantial recording about daily contacts but, in both their files and those of social workers, the detail of the individual work with the young person was not well recorded. Time on shift to do direct work with young people on an individual basis and then to record it was highlighted to me as always short.

Where collaboration is good there is impressive work done. The confidence of residential staff is growing in relation to making demands on social workers' time for the young people for whom they care. This will lead to better outcomes for young people as more attention is given to planning for their future care.

The involvement of staff from community resource teams in the work with young people in care is a positive feature. The continuity that they can offer, where they have played a significant role while the young person was in the community, should not be lost.

In my meetings with Care and Assessment Team staff they raised concerns about the lack of time that they had to work directly with young people in care placements and with their carers. The staffing position in the teams was acute in the summer months and seniors were coping with caseloads, as well as supervising staff and monitoring the quality of work being done. Seniors expressed their concerns that they were unable to fulfil their supervisory role adequately in the time available and that planning for individual young people sometimes slipped in priority.

The recent tragic death of a child in London raised the question of the size of caseloads for child and family workers. Several commentators said that a caseload of 18, where many children were at high risk, was too many. Most Scottish authorities would feel a sense of achievement if the size of their workers' caseloads was as low as 18.

Current caseloads and some comparisons with other urban authorities are attached as *Appendix 3*.

Workloads are not easily converted into figures that are comparable across the country. Different Councils have organised their services in ways that suit their demands making exact comparisons impossible but the caseloads carried in the summer and currently are at the top end of the caseloads that I have been able to ascertain.

The budgetary settlement for the year 2001–2002 will allow recruitment to the vacant posts in the Care and Assessment Teams and should reduce the pressure on staff.

Management are giving attention to the retention of qualified staff in front line services and imaginative opportunities for support and training are being prepared.

There is a national issue about the numbers of students coming forward to become social workers and social work organisations across the UK are looking at the need to present social work in a more positive light. This needs the co-operation of elected members, the media and staff themselves.

It is important that the staff recruited are retained and plans for further opportunities for in-house training in particular areas of assessment and other topics will enhance the services that they provide and give them the challenges as well as support that is required in child and family work.

Councils across Scotland are finding that there is a shortage of experienced childcare workers and that retaining staff in children and family assessment work is problematic. It is hoped that Dundee will be able to continue to attract a high calibre of staff to fill their vacancies. The balance of experienced staff to inexperienced needs to change so that there are more experienced staff in post than newly qualified ones.

Plans to help staff to continue to develop their skills and specialist areas of interest are being formulated and this would have a positive impact on the Care and Assessment Teams. It is essential that Senior Managers support these training initiatives and ensure that staff can be released from their direct work for them.

The lack of administrative staff to support the work of the social workers meant that they were spending time arranging meetings, taking minutes and filing, sometimes at the expense of the young people that they should be visiting.

The greater use of e-mail has many positives and I saw this used by staff and young people for regular communication. There is the danger of overload as more and more circulation lists are created and staff face masses of e-mails each day that they have to sift through to extract those that demand a response and those that are for information only.

There is the need to continue to review the volume of paperwork that is required to support looked after and accommodated children and to have regular opportunities for front line staff in the teams and the units to share experiences of using the forms and the improvements that they would like to see in place.

Achievements

- 1 The Looked After Children paperwork has been introduced across the city and is being used.
- 2 The agreement to recruit to vacant posts in Care and Assessment Teams will enable some pressure to be removed from existing staff and seniors and release time for more work with accommodated young people.
- 3 The establishment of Balgowan Avenue for emergency admissions has relieved the pressure on groups of young people and staff in the other units.
- 4 The model of weekly planning meetings in short stay units provides a good mechanism for ensuring that Care Plans are progressed.

Recommendations

- 1 The developments being discussed for short stay and emergency resources for young people who are to be admitted to care are positive and point the way to improved services for young people at the point of crisis.
- 2 The linking of other resources into the emergency provision which can help to keep young people safely at home with support is a positive direction.
- 3 The recruitment to vacant posts in the Care and Assessment Teams for Children's Services is also positive. The workloads of the social workers need to be kept under review.
- 4 The volume of paperwork required when "looking after and accommodating" children is being considered. Some resolution needs to be found to reduce the time needed to complete the extensive sets of forms currently required.

5 There is the need to conclude an assessment framework that can be used across the department which will give the units and the teams the opportunity to develop care plans which are firmly based on a comprehensive assessment of need.

INTER DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES

The dilemmas of offering services focused on early intervention, which can be influential in reducing later difficulties and providing intensive help to the young people in care, will always be a difficult balance to reach. The opportunities that specific Scottish Executive funding to Councils presents need to be continually assessed and the variety of services that the Council can provide need to be looked at in an holistic way. One example that has been brought to my attention is the possibility of the Home School Support Team taking responsibility for some of the supervision requirements for children who remain at home and whose problems are manifested in school as well.

In looking at the issues in delivering services to young people who are accommodated, it is important to consider the balance of preventive work that the Council would like to see maintained. Resources for early intervention are allocated from the Scottish Executive to a range of Council departments. It is important that they are used to ensure that the work with young people in units is not diluted when other staff could be tackling some of the perhaps "lower tariff" work.

The Children's Service Plan should provide the platform for these inter-departmental priorities for the use of the resources of the Council to be debated so that the young people of Dundee get the best possible service.

Recommendation

1 The planning processes at Council level should continue, and strategies developed that recognise the competing demands on resources, with the recognition of the particular responsibilities that the Council holds for young people accommodated by the Council.

THE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED

Another area which I was asked to examine by the Sub-Committee was the arrangement for the education of "looked after" young people.

We know from research that the educational achievements of young people brought up in care have been very poor. The emphasis in Dundee from senior managers within the Education Department is for a positive educational experience for all children.

The recent joint report on "The Education of Looked After Children and Young People" sets out the mechanisms for co-ordinated action when a young person is looked after. This is a positive report that sets out the expectations on all relevant staff to try to redress the known disadvantages for young people who are looked after and accommodated.

The recommendations from this report need to be well grounded at individual school level so that there are no opportunities for individual variations from the procedures that aim to improve the educational achievements of looked after children.

The Behavioural Support Service is closely involved with all young people in care in the units and regular checks are made about attendance and any specific problems which are arising.

There is a commitment from staff in the off-site units to retain young people, even when their behaviour is extreme. The success of young people attending off-site units is high and regular attendance is maintained.

The curriculum is geared to help the young person to attain and to achieve the goals set. The staff stress the importance of shaping a curriculum which is relevant and also works on preparation for occupation.

(In some of the files that I read in the residential childcare units the weekly reports from the off-site units showed the support that their staff were giving to the young person in his/her educational achievements.)

The attendance of the Behaviour Support staff at reviews secures educational attention to a package for the young person's education.

Decisions about the placement of young people in resources outside the city are shared between Education and Social Work Departments with the additional involvement of Finance Department staff. There is a corporate budget for these placements that is currently insufficient for the demand.

There is a joint process for planning the return of young people to Dundee from out of authority schools or placements. The goal of the Education Service is to return the young person to mainstream education with support whenever possible. Social work staff expressed some concerns about this seeing that, even with substantial packages of support, the young person would struggle with the size of class and school after a sheltered existence in a small residential school.

Options to have increased provision in off-site units needs ongoing dialogue. The inclusion agenda has been given high priority by the Scottish Executive and the development of increased in-school support seeks to achieve this goal. The struggle that some looked after young people will have, even with this support, may reduce their confidence and motivation. Achieving in an off-site unit may boost their self-esteem and their sense of achievement. Continuing debate about these different perspectives is essential as the Council has a responsibility to ensure that looked after young people receive the educational services that will allow them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Mainstream high schools are working with the educational needs of a very large population of pupils but the special responsibilities that have been set out in the Corporate Parenting Policy confirm the Council's commitment to give looked after young people specific extra support where needed to help them to achieve a sound educational foundation.

The resources of the Home School Support Services were mentioned to me by several people. Their focus on early intervention when problems begin to emerge in school was highlighted as positive. Managers of scarce resources always face some tensions in making decisions about how much of any resource is targeted on those young people who are beginning to show signs of difficulty to try to prevent later serious problems and how much on the young people with quite severe existing problems to try to retain them in the mainstream systems. Senior managers in Education and Social Work need to continue to discuss this tension and keep under review what level of resources can be available in schools to meet the special needs of young people who are the corporate responsibility of the Council.

Getting young people to school from units was seen as a difficult area. Should it be the residential worker who took the young person there? or the social worker? or the Education Welfare Officer? The limits of the powers of residential staff to physically “remove” young people from their bed in the morning was cited as a problem in some units. Staff from other settings can feel that there is not enough effort in this area but the limitations of the powers of the staff are not always appreciated.

One Council with whom I had contact had developed a specific agreement and authorised staff in residential units to take certain steps to get a young person out of bed and ready for school. The agreement of the young people had been sought to the actions. Staff saw this as underlining the seriousness with which they take the educational career of the young people with the first step of that being attending school regularly.

The numbers of young people who are looked after and accommodated, and who are excluded from school, is still a cause for concern. This is acknowledged in the report on “The Education of Looked After Children”. The policy of the Education Department about exclusions from school details the range of issues for consideration in relation to exclusions. For “looked after and accommodated” young people the processes are the same as for any other pupil. Exclusion for any pupil is a serious situation but for a young person and his/her carers where s/he is accommodated it is a further disruption to an already fragile care situation.

In one external agency who responded to my request for information on practice, there is an agreement that, prior to the exclusion of any “looked after” young person, there is the opportunity for the staff of the residential unit to remove the young person temporarily to try to resolve the situation in collaboration with the school before the formal process of exclusion is started.

The significance of education has become increasingly prominent in the last few years and the support of residential staff for a young person’s education is vital. Arrangements for homework, as well as the involvement of staff in the school life of the child, has gained credibility and staff need the time to make this a reality.

The recent report from the Scottish Executive called “Learning with Care” has the same findings about the lack of attainments for young people who are looked after and accommodated. It highlights the place of education in Care Plans; the need for all looked after young people to have full-time education, apart from in exceptional circumstances; improved relationships between schools and carers; and joint training opportunities for staff from units, teams and schools.

Achievements

- 1 The policy on Education and Looked After Children has been agreed.
- 2 Educational needs of young people looked after and accommodated have been highlighted in a number of recent documents and help to raise awareness of the key importance of education for these young people.
- 3 Off-site units have been able to retain young people in regular attendance and to raise their self esteem and achievements.
- 4 The success of young people in offsite units should be noted.

Recommendations

- 1 Exclusion policies must ensure that there are very early discussions where a “looked after and accommodated” young person is on the brink of exclusion.

2 Residential childcare staff and social workers for children and young people should give the educational needs of looked after young people greater prominence in planning their care and then supporting young people to achieve their educational goals. This may include acting as an appropriate advocate for the young person in educational issues in the absence of a parent fulfilling this role.

3 In line with the joint policy on the education of young people looked after by the Council, all school management teams and social work staff need to acknowledge the special needs of young people who are looked after for support in their educational placement and for programmes which meet their needs.

4 The issues raised in the recent Scottish Executive report "Learning with Care" should be studied and the collaboration that is recommended in this report compared with the current practices in Dundee and any shortfall addressed.

5 Joint training for education, residential care staff and social workers in specific areas relating to the curriculum and attainments, reasons for young people being looked after and the respective powers and duties of the key Council departments should be considered.

6 The Council needs to ensure that there is extensive collaboration and understanding of the corporate responsibilities of the Council for looked after and accommodated young people and through this collaboration enhance the educational attainments of young people with whom the Council has a special relationship.

THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PLACE THEMSELVES AT SIGNIFICANT RISK

I was asked specifically to consider the issues that arise from the young people who place themselves at significant risk while accommodated by the Council.

This is a theme that arises across the whole of Scotland and causes concern for staff at all levels. The intensity of the problems vary but the risks are the same. I would identify three particular areas of risk.

The first area concerns those young people who are involved in prostitution and are being sexually exploited. Sexual exploitation of young people who are vulnerable for a range of reasons is a problem across the UK. In Dundee, this activity did not start as a result of young people being accommodated. It is important to stress that the majority of young people who are looked after and accommodated in Dundee are not involved with sexual exploitation. There are some young people who have been involved and it is important to try to understand why this behaviour occurs so that we can help young people to avoid such activity. The increased awareness that young people are involved in sexual exploitation in Dundee has led to the key agencies taking collaborative and concerted action to try to protect the young people who are involved.

There is the need for early intervention in the lives of these young people to try to divert them from this exploitation and dangerous lifestyle. It is a hard task understanding what drives these young people to put themselves at such high risk and residential staff need the chance to discuss the issues with those who have more experience with working with young people who are putting themselves at risk.

A number of young people have spoken to me about this issue. They have explained to me that if they have had to leave their families they can feel unloved, receive little affection and have low self-esteem. Seeking out "affection" of a damaging kind can be better than an existence where they feel that no one really cares about them. Some young people see it as being valued to be treated as an adult and not as a child. Being sexually exploited can provide the young person with additional money that offers opportunities to buy clothes and other items that are unobtainable without additional sums of money.

Police, social work, education and health are now working together in a positive way. The acknowledgement that young people drawn into sexual exploitation are victims rather than offenders has been an essential part of a shared plan for work with young people. This has enabled services to be provided to the young people within the child protection framework. Dealing with the perpetrators has been tackled at the same time.

Dundee Committee for Child Protection has formed a sub group to address the inter agency work that is required on sexual exploitation. This sub group, involving Police, Health, Education and Social Work has been active in placing the issues in a context that stresses the abuse that young people face in sexual exploitation. This is a very positive acknowledgement of the problem. The chair of the sub group is a service manager in Social Work and the work that the group is doing will help a range of workers to provide sensitive support and help to young people.

The training initiatives that the group has set up have also been valued and more work is planned to enable more workers to be given the opportunity to look at the issues of sexual exploitation and assist young people to withdraw from this activity and prevent others entering.

The work with young people needs to be well co-ordinated so that there can be a concerted early approach to preventing the young person getting drawn into more risky behaviour. This is an area of work where it is important to have staff resources to respond quickly to help these young people and someone with the mandate to secure resources and direction of response would help to make the services effective.

The consultation available from the Nurse Therapist from Child Health has been identified to me as very supportive and enables complex situations to be advised by specialist knowledge and skills.

The development of activities, and discussion opportunities for the young people to be able to substitute other activities for the risky ones, is planned. The Big Sister Project will be a positive development for young people at risk. It will use the experiences of young people who have been involved in sexual exploitation in a groupwork setting with other young people who are at risk of being involved with sexual exploitation. The issues of sexual exploitation are not specific to young people in residential care and greater acknowledgement of the presence of sexual exploitation in the city can help to let other young people caught in this abuse come forward for help and advice.

The workers from the Rowans, who have been closely involved in the work, provide a source of expertise that needs to be well used to support residential staff to help them to work with the young people from their units who are involved with sexual exploitation.

The second area of high risk identified is the misuse of drugs. Some of the young people in the units have a history of drug misuse. Staff have recently been seeking the advice and support of the police with expert knowledge and experience in this field to help them to

recognise danger signs and to know what kind of help may be available to the young person with their addiction.

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The risks that young people pose to themselves of overdosing is a further worry for staff in the units and again good information and training is essential to help them to feel more confident about how to deal with the young person.

The potential of new services being developed with the financial investments being made in Drug Action Teams should be fully explored for the group of young people with whom the Council has specific parenting responsibilities. New funding has enabled a specialist worker from the Drug and Alcohol Team to be part of the Choice Project and offer services to young people.

For both of these areas of risk the question of how to prevent young people leaving a unit and putting themselves at more risk is a tricky one. It is impossible to try to prevent someone from leaving if they are aggressively determined to go. Residential staff do need to continue to try to counsel the young person not to leave the unit for their own safety. Their expression of care is important even if it does not produce the desired response. If the young person has already taken drugs then it may be necessary to enlist the help of the police if the young person leaves and there is a high likelihood that they will damage themselves or others while out of control.

Several people with whom I have met have praised the work that is done at The Corner. It offers a range of services in a relatively anonymous setting and for some young people this allows them to seek advice about issues that they would find hard to speak about to people who they know well.

The third area of risky behaviour is where young people are involved with taking and driving away cars, often at considerable speed. This poses a risk to the young person but also to the public at large and again the involvement of the police is likely to be necessary. Good local links by the units with the community police officers is being achieved and this is a positive step forward.

For some of the young people who place themselves at these high levels of risk, a period of external controls in a secure setting may be required. The type of work and controls placed on young people during this period is crucial if there is to be a change of behaviour on release. The need for continuity of work when community resources have been involved before admission is strongly supported as these links can be the bridge back out to the community at a later date. Secure care has to be actively addressing the issues that have led to the placement and this is where the weekly planning meetings that have been set up at The Elms can address the past, present and future issues for the young person.

Some young people who are involved in risky behaviour may also harm themselves. Recent findings of studies across Scotland indicate high levels of mental health problems in the teenage population. There is the need to address this for young people in residential care who may well have depressive illnesses. Increased awareness of the nature of mental health problems in young people is important for residential care staff.

In one Council in the West of Scotland a special team of psychologists, a psychiatrist and social workers has been formed to work specifically with staff in their children's homes, and with the young people directly, to try to improve the mental health of the looked after teenagers.

This level of professional support and consultation for staff is proving to be very important in tackling some of the serious problems in caring for distressed and challenging young people
See Appendix 4.

For all these areas of risk a sound risk assessment is required and then a plan to manage that risk. Risk can never be removed but it can be identified and plans put in place for dealing with the events that pose the greatest risk.

The Residential Resource Managers have been working on a risk assessment format which is a positive step and starts to break down risk into different components and then looks at how to address those risks.

Young people need to be engaged in the process of assessing risk and of the plans to manage that risk. This control and management of risk is part of the caring role that staff must play.

Achievements

- 1 Collaboration in approaching the issues of sexual exploitation has been positive. The creation of a sub group of the Dundee Child Protection Committee to address the range of issues is positive.
- 2 Risk assessments are being developed in most units.
- 3 Services are being developed to try to prevent young people continuing or starting involvement in sexual exploitation.

Recommendations

- 1 Early intervention when young people are identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation and making services available to respond to their needs should continue to be a priority for the Council and partner agencies.

Resources need to be made available to make their intervention effective.

- 2 Co-ordination of responses at a city-wide level would maximise the value of all the services and ensure that the services developed were relevant to the needs of all the young people involved. This co-ordination should continue to be closely linked with Child Protection Services.

The Sub Committee needs to continue to assess the need for resources and to seek funding sources for the services required at different points in the young person's involvement in sexual exploitation.

The ability to co-ordinate responses and services for young people caught in sexual exploitation should be explored. An assessment of the benefits of re-instating a specific post with a lead role in developing and co-ordinating the whole range of Child Protection Services could be undertaken. The impact of using money for this post needs to be debated in the light of other reductions that would be necessary to appoint to the post.

Protocols are being developed for responding to young people who are being sexually exploited and these need to be finalised and a reliable information sharing system put in place.

- 3 There needs to be continued attention to the safety of young people by the police and police activity to deter the perpetrators of the abuse of young people through sexual exploitation.
- 4 The work of the specialist workers with individual young people who are being sexually exploited needs to be supported and their ability to offer the young people continuity of support, even if placed at a distance from Dundee, needs to be fully considered.

5 Training for staff in residential units to help them to gain a greater understanding of the issues for young people involved in sexual exploitation should be increased. The involvement of young people who have experienced sexual exploitation could enhance the value of the training.

6 Multi-agency work in relation to drug misuse and offending behaviour is established and should be kept under review as new issues emerge in patterns of drug misuse and in youth crime.

The successful projects need to be resourced to enable them to reach more young people and to be able to share their skills with residential staff to improve the work done with young people in units.

7 Close collaboration from the Choice Project with residential staff could help to inform the units of the different approaches that are likely to be appropriate for persistent offenders. Joint work could also be explored in relation to drug misuse and already the work with the police has been of value to the units.

8 Mental health problems faced by young people need the collective resources of Health and Social Work.

The possible development of a Mental Health Team with psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric community nurses and social workers should be explored within the Tayside Child Mental Health Strategy structure. This model has been found to be very beneficial to both young people and staff in one of the Councils I visited.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

There will always be a level of violent behaviour in residential childcare units because of the problems that young people face in controlling their anger and distress. It will not be possible to prevent all violent incidents and staff need to be supported to continue to work with young people despite their angry and aggressive outbursts.

A part of the recruitment process for residential care staff has to be considering the ability of the applicant to cope with verbal abuse and occasional physical abuse.

Risk management is part of the overall Health and Safety agenda and needs to be a continuous process in units as young people's behaviour and attitudes may change rapidly. There must be continuing acknowledgement at all levels in the Council of the unacceptability of any abuse or violence against staff or young people, as well as accepting the reality of it occurring when caring for a group of distressed young people.

Specific risk assessment formats are in place for the units and they need to be used consistently by all staff and their effectiveness monitored by the Residential Resource Managers.

A draft policy on sanctions in units is in preparation by the Residential Resource Managers and this will help to state the ethos of collaboration with young people in deciding on any sanctions needed.

The stress is on creating an atmosphere of safety and stability within a caring environment. Creating an atmosphere where sanctions are not made at the time of the incident helps to underline the need for reflection on behaviour and the young person's role in working out the type of sanction that is appropriate. The policy makes it absolutely clear that there are

specific circumstances where the young person loses the right to share the decision on sanctions eg confiscation of certain items like drugs, stolen goods or cigarette lighters or matches.

I attended the recently set up Health and Safety Forum for Residential Care Services where the very real safety issues for residential childcare workers are being debated and the group is working together to reach joint resolutions of the problems that the service faces. This is a positive forum for resolving some of the difficult areas of work and for working out procedures for helping to reduce risk and aggression.

Closer liaison with Criminal Justice staff to learn about some of the cognitive techniques and behaviour modification programmes that they are using with young people who are challenging authority could be developed further. The specialist resources provided by the workers from Choice, the Rowans Resource Team and the Community Support Team are important services to continue to be available to young people if they become looked after and accommodated.

There are good examples of the staff from these resources working with residential unit staff and helping young people to resolve some of the difficulties that have brought them into public care. The specific skills of these workers are relevant to residential care services and joint work with the staff in units has been happening. The potential of working with a group of young people in a unit over difficult shared issues could be promoted.

To achieve changes in the behaviour of young people, the initial assessment from the Care and Assessment Team worker is also crucial. Their assessment needs to give as much information as possible about past behaviour, the known triggers to any violent or risky behaviour and the ways that some modifications have been achieved. There needs to be a focus on trying to understand the feelings and experiences of the young person so that the young person can be respected as a person even if his/her behaviour is not acceptable and needs to be changed.

Dealing effectively with the level of risks that I have outlined in this section requires adequate levels of staffing and staff with the experience and skills to undertake complex work with very troubled young people. The acknowledgement by Senior Managers that staffing levels are problematic for the units, and the action to try to enhance these levels, will have a positive impact on staff's ability to work with these young people.

Training is a further factor in increasing the confidence of staff. The CALM training and refresher sequences can help staff to defuse difficult situations but with the knowledge that they have skills to restrain a young person where this is assessed as the only way of reducing a serious risk.

Achievements

- 1 Procedures for assessing risk are being developed.
- 2 The policy on sanctions will be used with young people to help them to think through their behaviour and its consequences.
- 3 The Health and Safety Forum for residential childcare provides an opportunity for staff, managers and unions to debate the important issues of safety in units.

Recommendations

- 1 The risk assessment process created by Residential Resource Managers should continue to be developed so the process is understood and assessments carried out in each unit in a consistent way.

2 The involvement of the young person in this assessment can further stress the responsibilities of the young person and the staff to try to identify and manage the risky behaviour.

3 The developing policy on sanctions within units should be completed and available for discussion in the units with staff and young people.

4 The work of the Health and Safety Forum for residential childcare should be supported and wider representation from staff in the units pursued.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AND THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAFF

This is an area that was specifically identified by the Committee for review and recommendation. There are continuing debates about the rights and responsibilities of young people and those of staff in residential care in all Councils across Scotland.

Young people are more aware of their rights than in the past and this is positive and needs to be linked with the responsibilities that having rights bring. The work of the "Who Cares?" worker and the Children's Rights Officer is of key importance in this area. They have the opportunity to work with the young people from a different viewpoint and offer the young person an independent ear and voice when they are feeling that they are not being fairly treated. Their task requires great maturity so that they can listen, mediate and represent. They have, in discussion with me, shown their keen awareness of the issues of responsibilities, as well as rights for young people. Continuing a dialogue between these postholders and the providers and managers of residential care services can contribute to a greater understanding of the issues and an effort to reduce any "us and them" in the life of the units.

In staff groups across the city, staff are addressing the need for flexibility in approaches to young people and the need to reduce the areas of unnecessary confrontation.

Staff vary in their willingness to tolerate differing sorts of behaviour and some still see young people "getting away" with unacceptable behaviour if they are not challenged. Some staff have expressed the view that young people seem to have all the power and that this makes their task impossible. Staff are being encouraged by their managers to consider the realities of this view and to see that group living requires compromises.

Managing challenging behaviour has to start from an understanding of the issues, anger and hurt that young people bring into care. This links with the need for a full assessment of the needs and strengths of young people and the involvement of residential staff in shaping that assessment and then in the work programme for and with that young person.

Managing challenging behaviour is going to continue to be a feature of caring for young people whatever facilities are provided. Care needs to include control so that young people do not feel that they have the potential to do what they please without consideration of the needs of others.

Early discussion with the young person about his/her points of anger and aggression can help to acknowledge that staff understand the anger of young people and then they can try to engage the young person in seeking ways to reduce that angry behaviour. Clear messages and written agreements about the way that challenging behaviour will be managed can assist in setting out expectations and the help that will be available to the young person to find alternative ways of responding to anger and frustration.

Despite good planning and risk assessment there will continue to be challenges for staff to deal with. Staff need to respond consistently to the young person's behaviour and seek to understand what is behind that behaviour rather than merely seeing the current outburst. This is a hard perspective to maintain in the face of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour. Less experienced staff need to have models from more experienced staff of ways of lessening confrontation. It is important for staff to feel confident enough to avoid confrontation when this is more likely to calm a situation.

Because of the different levels of tolerance of challenging behaviour, managers have to be able to discuss with staff openly the ethos that they want to create in the care provided by the staff team. Managers need to work with the staff who feel that young people have too much power. The staff who see a more punitive approach to challenging behaviour as appropriate need to be helped to reconsider their approaches.

The involvement of the police also varies from unit to unit when challenging behaviour and threatened violence or actual violence occurs. In discussion with the police they did not express concern about the level of involvement that they have been asked to have with the units. In some situations it will be appropriate to seek to have a young person charged with an offence in relation to a violent incident. The accumulation of charges for a young person is a negative factor long after they leave care and this needs to be discussed with young people as part of exploring their aggression.

Discussions have started with the police to help to advise the actions of staff in units in relation to involvement of the police in incidents in units involving young people and staff.

From looking at the Violent Incident Records, and the collated incidents across the units, there are several occurrences of the police being asked to intervene when verbal abuse is threatened or carried out. While recognising that verbal abuse can be experienced as very intimidating, teams need to review the level of police involvement with managers and look at any patterns that emerge and whether there are additional factors in the requests for police assistance which need to be considered. Are there less experienced staff on duty; are the majority of incidents at particular times? This information can be used in planning team responses to the young people who are resident in the unit at that time.

The emotional stress for staff who are the subject of an allegation or complaint from a young person is a serious worry. The personal verbal assault or threat on staff can bring fear, particularly if the threats are against not just the staff member but also the rest of the staff member's family. Sensitive responses to the staff member are crucial and even if the threat is unlikely to be carried through Residential Resource Managers and Service Managers need to hear what this threat of abuse means for the member of staff and provide appropriate support.

Residential care is providing care to some very distressed and angry young people. The increased misuse of solvents, drugs and alcohol by some young people can add a further dimension to the challenging behaviour. Loss of control can be more pronounced when the young person has misused drugs or alcohol. Staff need knowledge about the effects of substance misuse and need to have had access to specialist training and advice when faced with a young person who has lost control through the misuse of substances. Work with Drug Action Teams, with health colleagues and with the police is essential and residential staff need access to detailed information which can increase their confidence and understanding in dealing with these problems.

The recent publicity that has labelled young people in care as "bad" has been very hurtful to the young people who are being looked after. The stigma that they already feel at not living

at home is increased when school and community accept the veracity of the press without the real facts.

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The staffing levels available affect the ability of staff to have individual time with young people to work through their difficulties. They also affect the possibility of staff and young people being engaged in activities outside the unit. The young people who are not in full time education or work have space in the day to fill. These factors can all be contributors to boredom and consequential challenging behaviour.

The proposals being discussed as part of the continuous improvement process for residential child care services present an opportunity to try to provide staffing levels that can address the lack of time that staff currently have for direct work with young people. For those staff who feel that their current positions in residential care units are very stressful and unsatisfying, the review should allow consideration of other work opportunities for them. There is a need to see a change of direction as a positive step and not as a failure. There are a few staff who still express the fear that the Council will blame them for seeking change because they are finding their work stressful and satisfaction low. The Director and Children's Services Manager must ensure that messages about a change in career direction make it an acceptable and positive step to ask to be transferred to work in another setting in these situations.

Staff need to be able to give young people some space and distance if they are upset and indicating that they need to be separate for a period. A cooling off period can be beneficial for all.

Young people find restraint very unpleasant and sometimes painful. They feel that it should only be used when there are serious risks to young people or staff, or the young person is "really out of control".

Young people want staff to take time to try to find out what is bothering them first. They feel that the manager in the unit needs to know more about what is happening to them and what is making them upset and to spend less time in the office.

Young people suggest that a room in a unit could be set aside as a "Frustration Room" where there would be beanbags and a punch bag and some soundproofing so that they could get rid of frustration in an acceptable way.

Some young people see the loss of privileges as the best deterrent to reduce violence.

As more and more alternative therapies become commonplace for reducing stress, it would be important to consider whether there are some that would help young people who are dealing with a lot of difficult emotional issues.

Achievements.

1 Staff in units are working together to achieve a consistent approach to the needs and behaviour of young people whichever staff are on duty.

2 Staff have been trained in the CALM approach to defusing violent situations and in the use of restraint.

3 The Counselling Service is being used by a number of staff and has been a positive support to them.

Recommendations

1 The Department needs to ensure that there is a full assessment of the needs of young people, and their areas of stress and aggression, as the essential starting point for assessing the likelihood of challenging behaviour and how to manage it.

Staff groups need to spend time to plan how they will respond to a young person who is displaying aggressive or challenging behaviour.

3 The discussions with the police need to be continued so that consistent approaches are achieved to their involvement in responding to challenging behaviour in the units.

4 Opportunities for CALM training in the de-escalation and handling of challenging behaviour need to be maintained and refresher training readily available.

5 The Department and the Council need to support staff when it is agreed that a move from residential childcare work would be positive. There requires an acknowledgement of the feelings of failure that some staff experience in asking for a transfer of location and service and there should be no criticism if a move is requested.

There needs to be a corporate approach to transfers of staff in these circumstances and opportunities at the time of restructuring residential care services taken to help the service to release these staff and be able to recruit people with energy and experience. This is not going to be an easy task because of shortages of experienced and skilled residential social workers across the country but it is an important step to consider.

STAFFING ISSUES, ROTAS, WAKING NIGHT SHIFTS, WORKING PATTERNS

There is considerable pressure on Residential Resource Managers because of the position that they hold as the only identified manager for a unit. Structures for the future management of units are being addressed in a draft forward plan that the Children's Services Manager has circulated to the Staff Working Group.

Discussions about the future shape of the residential childcare services have covered the need for increased senior staff levels within units. An increase would be significant in helping to have a more consistent management presence in the units. The exact shape of the management group in units needs further discussion and the review of the roles and responsibilities and working effect of the Team Leaders at The Elms should inform the debate. The roles and responsibilities of any additional senior staff will need to be allocated clearly. Other senior staff allocated to the units would mean that the range of senior responsibilities could be allocated clearly. Their appointment could cut down on some of the demands on the Service Manager and Senior Officer who are on call when issues arise in the absence of the Residential Resource Manager.

It is important that the Management Team in each unit is present in the unit across the full range of waking hours to ensure that they keep abreast of the needs of the young people. This would also facilitate them being able to model, in their direct contact with the young people, the nature of the relationships and the care approach that they want to see practised by other staff in their unit. This is not to recommend that Residential Resource Managers cover shifts but that, over an agreed number of weeks, they are present in the unit at the different points of the early and late shifts. Research has identified that the manager of a unit and his/her values, and that manager's ability to share those values with staff so that they understand them and follow them, is the single most significant factor in a unit being successful in fulfilling the care tasks.

All the staff that I have met have shared with me their concerns about the level of staffing in the units to enable sufficient direct work to be done with the young people. Staffing levels are not currently sufficient to enable staff reliably to spend time in activities or in listening to young people for as long as the young people need or want. Young people agreed that the

staff did not have the time to do things with them and were seen as always having office work to complete before they were able to be with the young people. This has been the subject of debate in the Working Group chaired by the Director of Personnel and Management Services and an agreement has been reached that extra staff are needed to offer more adequate care to the young people and to reduce the pressures for staff.

Managers, unions and staff have all agreed in the working group that the level of staff to cover the late shift currently is usually insufficient. This will be further considered as part of the continuous plan for improving services in residential childcare in the city.

The staffing levels in the units which will deal with short term and emergency care need to be further assessed so that there are resources to work intensively with young people as they enter care and to try to ensure that those young people who can return home can do so safely.

Extensive debate has taken place in the Working Group, and in units, about what type of staff rota should be used. The reality is that there are very varied views on the best arrangement for staff working their weekly hours. The decisions about the final rotas to be used must be based on the principle that they are organised to reflect the needs of the young people, with attention to the times when young people are most in need of staff time and attention. The timing of shift changes needs to be sensitive to the events for young people and, for example, not have all staff involved in changeover at the time when young people are returning from school.

The Service Manager and Residential Resource Managers have requested an increase in ancillary staff for cleaning and administration and the assessment of the shortfall should be progressed as soon as possible.

The question of whether social care workers and residential resource workers should be cooking meals for the unit is more difficult to address. Cooking can be an activity in which young people are very appropriately involved but if there are only two members of staff on duty then flexibility is restricted. Employing cooks creates a more institutional feeling unless those cooks also have some other care tasks. The employment of part-time care assistants who could do some of the main meal preparation and cooking, as well as providing some direct services involving them with the young people, could be beneficial. Consideration could be given, for example, to them providing transport to school where needed or going shopping with young people preparing for independence.

In units where there is a high level of change, or a lot of challenging behaviour, they will continue to need cover from waking night staff. It is not acceptable or productive to have staff who have had seriously disrupted sleep-ins being so tired the next day that they cannot manage their shift and sessional staff having to be found at short notice to cover the shift. If a unit reaches the point where their resident group is more settled then it would be important to assess the continued need for waking night staff on a permanent basis. Each unit needs to have the potential to have staff on waking nights during any unsettled period if the late shift events indicate a high likelihood of disturbance during the night. Night staff who are dedicated to that work pattern are somewhat isolated from the whole staff team and it is more difficult to have a cohesive staff group when all workers seldom have the opportunity to meet and share issues.

Some of the benefits of having waking night staff have been shared with me by both staff and young people. Nights can be difficult times for some young people who are going through a very stressful period. The less busy times at night are ones that some young people use well to talk to the night staff at length. These issues have to be taken into account as decisions are made about what pattern is agreed.

The costs of having two waking night staff are high and the use of additional staff for a twilight shift has been used with good effect in some units and at a lesser cost thus releasing resources for other times of the day.

Young people have told me that they resent the increased numbers of staff who have access to personal details about them and their families if the unit has a lot of sessional staff.

The position of sessional staff is often an ambiguous one. They may be working very regularly over a period of months yet they have no security of employment. A bank of retained sessional/locum staff, some of whom could be on stand-by at any time, may seem costly but those staff could provide greater continuity and reduce the stress on unit management in finding replacements at short notice. Additionally, these staff would be working more regularly and could be attached to one specific unit for supervision, information and work wherever this made sense. The time that all units are spending in trying to locate sessional staff is extensive. This is not a productive use of the time of staff or managers. It would be a positive step if good central administrative back up could be provided to undertake some of the personnel tasks relating to sessional staff. One authority has a member of personnel staff based at Social Work HQ who manages the allocation of sessional staff work and units contact this person to carry out the search for staff. Additionally, this means that there is more oversight of how much work a sessional member of staff is being asked to do. It also provides a central point where any concerns about sessional staff can be located, or for the sessional staff to discuss service issues. If increases in permanent staff levels can be funded then sessional staff should have the option of being made permanent members of staff.

The possibility of linking some of the tasks relating to disciplinary investigations in residential settings into a central personnel role could develop a sound and productive partnership over these difficult areas and prevent the managers of childcare services spending disproportionate amounts of time on essentially personnel issues.

The level of sickness absence in the residential childcare service is a current concern. At any one time there are likely to be several workers in each unit who are absent from work on sick leave. Their absence puts stress on remaining staff, means that familiar workers are not there for continuity for the young people, and is costly for the Council as other staff have to be paid to cover shifts. For the worker who is off sick many are concerned about their colleagues and the young people and feel that they are letting them down. There are some staff who are less willing to return to work as soon as they are able and the approach to these different types of absence need to be differentiated.

Some staff have said that they feel exhausted with the work in residential childcare units. Some are finding the care they are now asked to provide as very different from the care they were providing even 10 to 15 years ago. Some of these staff find it hard to face work. Some staff have had lengthy periods off work following a violent incident and injury. I interviewed a staff member who finally, after a long period off sick, had been helped to transfer to work in another type of care and had begun to look forward to work and find different satisfactions in working with another user group.

The level of exhaustion and distress some staff experience impacts on the young people and creates tensions in units as the manager struggles to find cover for shifts and progress with fulfilling the work required by some care plans is affected adversely. Finding ways of helping some of these staff to move on from the frontline stress is important.

Some staff are anxious about their pension level in the future if they spend some of their latter working life in a lower paid less stressful setting. Exploration of the ways in which

pension payment levels could be based on their higher salary scale could alleviate the problems of moving for some staff.

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Transfers to other settings are not going to be easy to achieve but there needs to be Council-wide attention to the issues and ability to look at earlier action for a small number of staff rather than that member of staff reaching a point where there is medical necessity for a transfer. The proposals for reviewing further the shape of residential childcare services provides another opportunity to examine the possibilities for transfers.

The recruitment of appropriate staff into this stressful area of work is crucial and the attention to selecting the best staff is under continual review by the Council.

Involving young people in some way in meeting the applicants can be helpful as young people have to live with the consequences of appointments and their views can be frank and refreshing. This is not asking them to make the appointments but hearing their voice in the whole process.

For staff who have never had a previous post in residential childcare it is hard to predict how they will respond and cope with the difficult tasks. Some authorities have introduced a probationary period for these new workers with regular assessments of their performance over their first year in post. If there are no problems then they can be confirmed in a permanent post. If there are areas of concern for them or the service then extra training and support can be offered and the probation period extended or, if this is not going to resolve the concerns, the probationary period can be the total of their employment in that position.

Achievements

- 1 The Working Group have worked together to debate some of the very complex issues about staffing and the organisation of shifts and rotas.
- 2 There has been collaboration from many staff in this work and a commitment to continue to discuss the future shape of the service has been made.
- 3 The proposal for staffing increases in the units have been put to the Social Work Committee.

Recommendations

- 1 The Council should also consider some of the current sessional staff for permanent contracts as new posts are created. This would have the advantage of providing some stability to staff groups and enhance the continuity and quality of care for the young people.
- 2 An assessment of the shape of the management team required in residential childcare units should be concluded in the next phase of planning.
- 3 The assessment of the level of ancillary staff required in the units should be completed and financial assessments of the extra costs be progressed for consideration.
- 4 Efforts should be made in the longer term units to reach a level of stability where consideration could be given to reducing the need for waking night staff unless there is a period of instability.

Where there are challenging and changing needs of young people, there require to be waking night staff to be able to respond to the needs of distressed young people speedily and to prevent sleep-in staff having their sleep seriously disrupted.

5 A more effective way of managing access to sessional staff needs to be found. Some central allocation of the tasks of monitoring the availability of sessional staff, and of contacting them to arrange to cover shifts, should be considered. The provision of a dedicated member of staff with personnel expertise could facilitate more effective contact with sessional staff who are needed for shifts and, additionally, allow their work patterns to be monitored centrally in the Social Work Department. While recognising the pressures on personnel staff the further allocation of some tasks in relation to the investigation of allegations and disciplinary matters could be a positive step to take and could release some management time from residential resource managers. Contact with the Council, which has set up an arrangement for this, could be productive.

6 The Council should review what improved support could be offered to staff who are off work following a violent incident. A small staff support scheme could ensure that staff off sick are kept advised about the different options open to them for the future and are given support while absent from work. These support staff would need to be able to access information about the range of benefits available to staff off work following an incident at work.

Any future changes in the shape of residential provision should be carefully planned and staff given opportunities to move from frontline stressful jobs in units where their health and wellbeing is being seriously affected.

The Council could explore the possibility of pensions being preserved at a person's highest salary point if they move for the latter years of their career to a less well paid post.

8 Given the very stressful content of the job of residential workers in childcare, it is important that recruitment is very thorough. Even with that rigour some staff who have had no previous experience of residential childcare work do not work as well as had been assessed in interviews.

9 If these staff were able to be appointed for a probationary period where their progress was monitored, their training and support needs met then, if an assessment at the end of the probationary period identified that they were not suitable for the work, they could have their employment terminated. For the member of staff a probationary period would enable them to leave if they had not found the job suitable.

TRAINING FOR STAFF

Dundee has had a successful approach to staff training with a high percentage acquiring relevant qualifications in social care. This high number of staff with an SVQ Level 3 is a real achievement. The automatic progression to the post of Senior Social Care Officer on gaining a SVQ Level 3 has, I think, caused some confusion.

The SVQ attainment is about competence to do one's present job and not about suitability for the next level of management. Managing a team or group of staff requires some training in people management and resolving difficult staff issues that may come up on shift. Some of the Senior Social Care workers have carried out this senior position with competence while others have found the senior tasks less comfortable. There should continue to be recognition of the acquisition of a qualification in terms of salary placement but not automatic progression to a senior position until an assessment of their skills for taking on senior duties has been undertaken.

The training needs of staff to help them to gain knowledge and skills to carry out, with confidence, their difficult job, and to enhance their understanding of the issues that affect the young people in the units, require to continue to be addressed by Residential Resource Managers.

Work is taking place with the Scottish Institute for Residential Childcare to assess the needs of all residential childcare staff and to look at how programmes could be developed to meet those needs. Individual training opportunities and group learning sessions are planned.

The introduction of CALM training has been welcomed although, as with any restraint method, there are areas of dissatisfaction. The extension of the training to include Breakaway techniques has been requested by some staff. The commitment of the Service Manager for Residential Childcare Units to keep a close watch on the issues arising from practice is positive. She is in contact with the key training personnel who have pioneered the CALM approach and is involving them in seeking resolutions to the practice issues that arise. Refresher training is in place and attention to in-unit refresher training is vital. This will allow work to be done on the particular factors that need to be taken into account because of the physical space in the different units and the different skills of staff. The availability of trainers to provide refresher training in units needs to be monitored as the Residential Resource Managers, some of whom are providing the refresher training, already have a heavy workload in running the units and this must be their first priority.

Understanding difficult and aggressive behaviour is a module that has been identified as needed by staff and work is in progress for this to be delivered by the CALM trainers.

Achievements

- 1 There are a high number of residential child care staff who have achieved an SVQ Level 3.
- 2 CALM training is now well established and commitments to keep its relevance and effectiveness under review have been made.

Recommendations

- 1 Dundee should continue to place a high value on residential childcare staff gaining recognised qualifications.
- 2 There needs to be continued collaboration with the SIRCC to develop training courses that meet the needs of staff groups as well as individuals.
- 3 CALM training should be continued with regular reviews of the effectiveness and value of this method of restraint. The extension of the training to consider Breakaway techniques is seen as positive by staff. The understanding of what provokes challenging behaviour and how to manage it should be a further module for development.
- 4 Individual training plans for all staff would contribute to the development of staff skills and show the value that management places on staff members' personal learning.

STAFF SUPERVISION

Staff supervision and support is vital for workers, particularly for those who are in demanding frontline posts. The Supervision Policy, which has recently been introduced, will further promote good practice in supervision.

Some staff have not had the level of supervision that they should receive while others have praised the quality and quantity of supervision received. Consistency in offering supervision needs to be improved following the introduction of the Supervision Policy.

Supervision enables practice to be reviewed and learning from a more experienced member of staff is positive. Supervision will also include attention to work that is not being done to the highest standard and provide help to change working practices. Regular supervision allows issues to be aired at an early point and managers and staff need to commit the time to preparation and follow up of issues and learning.

Achievement

1 The supervision policy is comprehensive and provides a sound basis for high quality practice in supervision.

Recommendations

1 The recently published Supervision Policy is a significant and positive development which needs to be widely circulated and discussed.

2 The implementation of the Supervision Policy will require to be monitored as residential care shifts make arrangements for regular supervision more complex than in a team where all staff work office hours.

3 Senior staff with supervisory responsibilities must have the time allocated in their workload to fulfil their supervisory tasks.

4 Team leaders, or other senior staff if introduced, need to have opportunities for training in delivering supervision.

CONSULTATION FOR UNITS

In considering the tasks that residential staff are allocated from care planning, it is clear that they are working with complex problems. They are not only being faced with the issues that individual young people present when they are in care, they also have to work with the young people as a group and deal with the different tensions that arise from group living. When they are caring for young people with intense emotions it can be very challenging for staff to try to find ways of helping the young person.

The availability of external consultancy has been found to be beneficial in several authorities and voluntary agencies. This can provide the staff teams in units with someone with relevant skills and experience who can spend some time with staff to look at different ways of working with young people in crisis and in the longer term. They can help staff to look at both the young person's emotions and reactions, as well as the reactions and responses of staff. They can help staff to look at different ways of approaching issues that may reduce tensions. Some of the staff from the current Dundee specialist resource teams have helped units in different ways and this could be increased as they have a valuable contribution to make to this area of work.

The demands on the Service Manager as the external manager of the five residential units mean that she has neither the time nor the distance from the direct work with the young people to offer this kind of consultancy. The potential of external help is to open up debates and assist staff to develop different approaches and working practices.

We now know that many young people who are looked after and accommodated have mental health difficulties. This means that their behaviour may be volatile, they may have great difficulties in making relationships, they may have problems in sleeping and may harm themselves, they need to have skilled help at the right time to overcome some of these difficulties which, if unresolved, may lead to longer term mental health problems

The project already referred to earlier in my report in the West of Scotland has a team of people with skills in working with mental health problems who have been allocated a number of hours dedicated to working with residential care units on a weekly basis. These hours can be used for training, consultation or working with a young person. This expert back up reduces the fears of residential workers that they may get out of their depth and increases their abilities to respond appropriately to difficulties. Letting young people put faces to psychiatric personnel also helps to alleviate their fears of what mental health services are like and hopefully achieve earlier referrals where needed and more positive help to the young people. Although this service is costly, (See *Appendix 4*), such a team could enhance the care for young people and help to prevent some mental health problems becoming more entrenched in later life. For staff it could help to raise morale and their skills could be enhanced with support from a team of consultants.

Another organisation has a number of attached consultants who can be called on by staff to help them with particular issues. They make a commitment to offer a day regularly to staff for this consultation.

Achievements

- 1 Dundee has a number of specialist teams who can provide specialist advice to young people and to staff.
- 2 The input of staff from specialist teams has proved beneficial to the young people and staff in the unit.

Recommendations

- 1 The specialist workers from the Department eg Choice, The Rowans, Drug Action and Community Support Teams should continue to work with units in providing specialist advice and direct work with young people in the units.
- 2 Consideration should be given to setting up arrangements for external consultancy for the residential childcare units from experienced staff with special knowledge and interest in the work of residential care. The possible service from the Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care could be explored.
- 3 The opportunity to discuss with Tayside Mental Health Strategy Group the development of a team of health personnel who could get to know the units, the young people and the staff would also be a positive step forward. Such a team could provide early intervention when mental health difficulties arise. Models from other Councils could be explored and discussed.

THE ELMS

The opening of The Elms during the summer has contributed to the range of residential services available locally for young people.

Close support care is designed to provide opportunities for young people to regain control of some parts of their lives through intensive work with staff in the unit. The decisions about

the appropriate levels of control and the permissible restrictions on free access and exit from the unit require more clarity.

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Staff at The Elms have worked intensively with the young people placed there to try to address some of the risky behaviours causing concern. Some of the young people have been able to use the help that the staff have offered to work on difficult issues and to regain some of their self-esteem. Control of their behaviour has been resented at first but it has had positive outcomes for several young people.

Providing secure care demands a different approach from other types of care and this has proved even more challenging than was envisaged before the unit opened. Young people come to secure care in crisis and have demonstrated such risky or out of control behaviour that only by severely restricting their freedom is it assessed they can be helped to reduce their risky and unsafe behaviour. The young people in secure care have challenged the staff in many ways since the unit opened. There is great potential for the unit with the inclusion of on site education and the possibility of progression to close support in the same setting giving a measure of continuity to the young person.

The actual day to day operation of the Close Support and Secure Unit has presented some specific problems. It could not have been foreseen that the technical alarm and safety systems would be full of snags. The programme being planned to resolve the problems is extensive but essential.

In relation to the staffing levels in The Elms, with the benefit of experience of the needs and demands of the young people placed, and the particular frustrations that living in secure care brings, the current review of the numbers of staff required to carry out the range of tasks involved in providing this type and intensity of care is essential.

The range of activities that are available to young people in secure care also impacts on levels of frustration and attention needs to be given to what activities for leisure and exercise can be provided in the setting of The Elms and how some secure outdoor activities can be managed safely. It is important to look at what activities could be enjoyed by young women as their interests may lie outside sports.

Finding ways for young people to have the chance to retreat and have some privacy in the secure unit is not easy but constant staff surveillance can feel oppressive. The risks to a young person will vary and some will be able to be in their rooms without staff continually being in the immediate vicinity.

Having to operate a new and challenging form of care with the attention of the media focused on its operation. and any problems publicly paraded, has been an additional pressure.

Having sufficient staff on all shifts will continue to be vital and a reliable way of replacing staff who are off sick needs to be found. It is essential that the credibility of placements in secure care at The Elms is regained and that staffing levels reflect the action that is required to make care safer and supportive.

Achievement

1 The Elms has been opened and has been able to help some young people to regain control of their behaviour. There have been some notable successful outcomes.

Recommendations

A review of the staffing levels required to provide safe and intensive care is already in process and should be completed and implemented as soon as possible.

The financial consequences of changes in staffing levels to provide safe care should be supported by the whole Council.

3 The major building related works that have been agreed as required to resolve the building and security issues at The Elms require to be completed as soon as possible.

4 The work that has been started to review procedures within the secure unit with the aim of resolving some of the earlier difficulties should be completed. The procedures for security, for supervised leave and for secure external activities offsite are all different in this setting from the other units and need to be clear and well understood by all staff.

5 Consideration of how young people's personal space can be further respected should be part of the current review of policies and procedures at The Elms and attention given to the range of activities available for young people.

6 Time needs to be available when the procedures and maintenance tasks are nearing completion to enable staff teams in The Elms to work together to ensure that they fully understand the procedures and policies. It is essential for the staff to be able to provide a very consistent response to these young people who will be in opposition to many of the rules and procedures.

7 The procedures need to address the different powers and responsibilities that the Council needs to exercise for young people in close support care from those in secure care.

SECURE ACCOMMODATION AND EXTERNAL PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

There will continue to be a number of young people who require to be placed in secure care for a period to provide the external controls to their behaviour. The local provision at The Elms is targeted at short-term placements and some young people who are placing themselves and others at significant risk will need secure care for longer periods.

In discussion with senior social work and finance staff I have seen the detailed work that is underway to assess the pattern of need for external secure and residential placements for the next few years. Given the numbers of challenging young people who are identified by the Courts, Hearings, Education and Social Work Department it is unlikely that this number will decrease much until some of the early intervention and intensive programmes for diverting young people from care, resolving school exclusion and reducing offending behaviour are further developed.

The opportunities to use some of the specialist community resources with young people in residential care will tackle some of the difficulties and help young people to reduce their offending or risky behaviour (eg Choice, ACE carers, Community Support Team, the Rowans Resource Team). These community options require to be staffed at a level that can enable them to offer packages of support consistently. Children's Hearings and parents will need opportunities to see the benefits of these packages of support for challenging young people rather than having reliance on a placement in secure care.

In school support and off-site provision are both crucial in maintaining not just a pattern of attendance but also the placements of young people.

Residential schools provide an appropriate placement for some young people whose care and educational needs require a structured and unified approach. The provision that residential schools offer is very varied and some staff and panel members have described the real progress that some young people make in this environment. It is important to try to provide packages locally for care and education but some young people will continue to

thrive in the structured learning and care environment. The young people who will need these resources are the corporate responsibility of the Council, and financing the placement should continue to be the shared responsibility of the two key departments. The mechanisms for agreeing any external placements now involve the two key managers and finance representation. The costs of these placements are often high but until local resources are sufficient there will continue to be appropriate demands made for external placements.

Achievements

- 1 Detailed estimates of the funding needed for external placements are now available for forward planning and the allocation of the budgets of the Council.
- 2 Monitoring and management reviews of placements are studied by key managers on a regular basis.

There has been a good development of community resources in Dundee.

Recommendations

Dundee City Council should continue to make budgetary provision for purchasing secure places and residential school places outside Dundee to meet the needs of these young people. This should be a budget with resources from education and social work and the proportion of funds from each could be reviewed as each department carries equal responsibilities for the care and education of these young people.

- 2 The work in hand to assess the likely demand for secure placements and residential school placements needs to be completed and the outcome of this work presented to the Directors of Social Work and Education and to the Chief Executive as the best assessment of the demand for external placements that the Council will have to meet.
- 3 Community resource teams' staff should continue to work with young people in external secure care so that they can be helped to return successfully to Dundee when their care requires that move.
- 4 Strategic planning through the Children's Services Planning process should continue to keep all the different parts of the service working together and provide the forum for debate about the direction and funding of these services.

DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Dundee has a range of innovative and successful community based resources: the Choice Project, the Community Support Team and the Rowans Resource Team. In meeting the staff in these specialist teams I have seen the opportunities that they have taken to increase their knowledge and skills in working with young people facing disadvantage, risk and distress. Young people have often seen these staff as more approachable and available than their social workers, largely because they do not usually carry case responsibility. Young people also know that these staff have less involvement in the statutory aspects of their being in care.

Dundee also has a strong foster care service with Mainstay and ACE carers. The Permanency Team works with children waiting for permanent family placements and provides support for children and families where the family has made a commitment to care for the child throughout their childhood and beyond.

The recent exploration of the issues about the sexual exploitation of young people has been one example of the way a resource team can build expertise, make links with key partners and bring the work into the forefront of the child protection agenda in a positive way. The groupwork initiative about to be run, the development of protocols and training material relating to work with young people who are being sexually exploited, have been progressed. These developments will be positive for the young people involved and will help to give staff the confidence to work more effectively with young people at high risk.

The development of specialist family based carers within the ACE scheme provides opportunities for young people who present considerable challenges to be placed with carers who have had additional training, who are free from heavy family commitments of their own and who can support a young person in a variety of settings.

Close collaboration between the Community Support Team and the emergency admission unit is required to try to prevent unnecessary admissions and to increase the likelihood that the young person can return home as soon as possible wherever this is safe. Forward plans are considering the potential of closer collaboration of preventive and outreach work with that of the emergency unit.

The work of the Choice Project has been based on its staff working in collaboration with the police and other social work staff. The methods used to challenge offending in an intensive group experience have potential for use in other settings. If we are to help young people break a cycle of difficulty and distress there needs to be maximum attention given to them to try to ensure that they regain some controls over their risky behaviour before they reach adulthood and become involved in adult justice and homelessness problems. The skills of some of the resource staff could be shared with residential staff through discussion and in direct work with young people.

The funding of a specific post from drug and alcohol monies based in the Choice Project is a development that will contribute positively to working with the problems that young people in the city are experiencing with the misuse of drugs and alcohol. The access of units to this postholder will increase the confidence and knowledge of residential staff about the issues.

Involving the young people themselves in debating how they can turn their behaviour around is also a skill and the use of "Who Cares?" and the Children's Rights Officer in helping young people and staff to find resolutions to difficult situations needs to be enhanced. While recognising that young people must retain the right to make complaints there can be much value for staff and young people being offered mediation. One young person told me that she felt that more discussion and less confrontation would make living in a unit much more pleasurable. She felt that a person who could assist with this mediation would be very useful. Exploring the potential of some greater use of mediation would be a useful addition to improving care. A group of staff, young people and "Who Cares?" workers could be asked to work on a proposal for action.

Achievements

- 1 The work of resource team staff has developed innovative ways of working with young people.
- 2 The development of family placements for more children with more complex difficulties is an important strand of the child care strategy.

Recommendations

- 1 Dundee should continue to develop community resources to work with young people at risk of being accommodated and with those in residential care.

2 The initiatives to tackle the problems of sexual exploitation should be maintained and the focus of the work through the Child Protection Sub Committee should continue to be the route for service development and awareness raising.

3 Opportunities for using the techniques of the Choice Project in residential childcare units should be explored to try to reduce offending behaviour of some of the residents.

4 A group of staff, young people resident in the units, "Who Cares?" and the Children's Rights Officer should be asked to explore the possibilities of a mediation service to help to resolve specific confrontational issues in units and reduce the levels of mistrust that can build up when disagreements continue.

USING EXISTING SERVICES FOR STAFF SUPPORT

Regular supervision is the main basis for this support and for staff development. There are already services set up to offer staff help when they are feeling under pressure or feeling that their management is not understanding their concerns. The Counselling Service and the Council Helpline are two significant routes for support.

It is important to stress the need for staff to seek to resolve difficult matters initially with their direct manager. There will be occasions when the concern which staff have is about the actions of their line manager. In these circumstances there is the option of approaching the next manager in the hierarchy. I have met a small number of staff who speak about the way in which former managers addressed contentious issues. These staff continue to feel unsure whether they will be given a fair hearing if raising difficulties about issues. The current Director and senior managers in Children's Services have been clear that they want to hear the views of staff and, if there are concerns, to have those brought into the open. I am aware that even with these invitations to respond there is resistance from some staff to trust the systems.

The aftermath of a violent incident has left some staff with the feeling that managers do not understand the impact of the incident on them as a worker. They have felt isolated when off work. There is the need to ensure that the procedures in place do make contact with the employee a clear responsibility of a named member of staff. There may be occasions when the violent incident raises issues about the staff member's practice and these will need to be worked with by their supervisor. It can be difficult for a worker who has suffered an assault to accept as necessary a detailed exploration of their actions in the incident. The skills and attitude of the manager are key to making this an experience that does not further distance or distress the worker.

Some of the staff whom I have seen have been very upset and hurt by accusations made against them by young people. Some of these have included threats against the staff member and his/her family and property. The response of the Residential Resource Manager is crucial in these circumstances and staff need to have their fears taken seriously. The support and concern of managers at the levels above Residential Resource Manager is also important.

The use of the Counselling Service for staff who have been the subject of a violent incident or allegation has been valued by those staff who have used it. Being given the time to reflect on the impact of the incident, on the feelings that it or an allegation has raised, and on the future work plans for the employee, have been found to be very helpful. In meeting the staff who provide counselling I was aware of the skilled work that they were doing and the need for this to be accommodated in their workload. The Counselling Service needs to have

the resources to offer help to staff whose work environment places them under a high risk of being involved with a violent incident. This needs to be complemented by a personnel policy that offers as much opportunity for staff as is possible to look at a return to work in a setting that they are able to manage. Return to their original workplace will be the resolution for the majority of staff but the option of other resolutions need to be maintained.

Regrettably violence is a feature of several of the environments where social work staff work. Selection and induction must have the issue of working with aggression on the agenda. It is not good for the service, or the young people in its care, if staff are appointed who have an inability to deal with the pressures that residential childcare will bring however much managers at all levels try to reduce the incidence of violence. This is not about managers in any way condoning violence to staff or to other young people but a realistic assessment of the nature of the work that will be required.

The Council Helpline is another source of support for staff who can make a confidential call to it. It is rarely used and staff could use the opportunities that it offers for a discussion, even an anonymous one more often. Information about it needs to be regularly circulated as staff will forget about its existence if they rarely need its services. Some members of staff may identify that a counselling service is not what they are seeking yet they need to know what their rights and responsibilities are in situations where allegations are made, and what they can expect in terms of benefits, medical assessments and possible transfers. Two members of staff have suggested that some staff support officers could be introduced who could have a part time position in residential care and, for part of their week, be available across the residential child care units as a listening ear and source of advice when staff are faced with these stressful situations and are not at work. They could be drawn from current members of staff in the units but would not provide support in their own workplace so that the scheme would meet Council policy in this area.

Achievements

1 Procedures are in place to deal with violent incidents and work is ongoing on the specific issues for social work settings.

2 The Counselling Service continues to be valued by staff for the support and advice that counsellors give.

Recommendations

1 The procedures for managers responding to violent incident reports needs to be carefully followed so that workers are given time to discuss the incident and the impact on them and the young person. Young people also need to be given the opportunity to go over the incident and to work out their feelings and part in the events.

The Service Manager needs to try to ensure that she is aware of the serious incidents and that a personal response is made when there is contact next in the unit.

The importance of each staff member feeling that care is taken about them enhances their commitment and care for young people.

2 The Counselling Service supported by the Social Work Department should be continued and assessment made of the resources needed to make this service readily available to the staff who request their help.

3 A complementary staff support service that could offer peer support for staff who are isolated from their workplace following an incident or allegation should be explored.

4 The selection and induction procedures for staff for posts in residential childcare need to include discussion about the attitudes and tolerance of the applicant to potential verbal or physical violence in their work.

COMMUNICATION

Professional social work journals have recently published a number of articles that identify the extent of press criticism that is being levelled at social work services at this time. There is recognition that it is a difficult field of work to portray in the media as so much of the information that social workers have is confidential to individual service users. There is little national appreciation of the complexity of the tasks that are the responsibilities of Councils and their Social Work Departments.

Elected members can be very influential in ensuring that there is better public awareness of the tasks, responsibilities and the limits of powers that Officers hold. Support for the Officers across the Council, when they are struggling with very intractable problems, is most important. Elected members need to have sound information on the issues facing services and need to use this to increase the joint commitment that is required across Councils to give service users the care and support that they require.

Some Councils have faced sensitive issues which were likely to be featured in the press by their Director giving confidential briefings to each of the leaders of the different parties represented on their Social Work Committee. Others have used cross party confidential briefings regularly as difficult issues have developed.

Several Councils in Scotland have been featured adversely in the press over past months and their difficulties in providing childcare services, and especially residential care services, have been highlighted.

The high level of attention to events in residential units in the local Dundee press has been an additional issue for the management of these challenging services. The very public and direct criticisms of young people, staff, services and managers has had a considerable impact, not just on employees, but on young people. They have been anxious about what friends, school and family will think of them following the kind of publicity about sexual exploitation and "bad" behaviour which has been featured. Mention of individual young people and their histories has been hurtful to young people and to staff. Some of the information could only be gained from inside the Council and this has serious implications for the professional values relating to confidentiality and respect for users that social work staff are required to uphold. The basic confidentiality that users of the service have the right to expect should not be broken and even if no young people's names are printed there has been enough detail for some young people to feel identified.

After the adverse publicity, the visits to the residential childcare units by the Convener to meet young people and staff gave visible support in this difficult period.

Staff have an obligation to raise concerns with their managers about issues that they believe put young people at risk and there are communication channels within the Council for people to put their considered concerns to senior managers for discussion and action where such is needed. There are clearly some staff who feel that using these routes is counterproductive as nothing has happened in the past in relation to their concerns. The routes for sharing concerns have recently been restated by the Director of Social Work who has recently had direct communication with residential workers. She has been active in always following up concerns that have been raised. It will be necessary to monitor whether this enables people to contact the appropriate management staff who are available for discussion and resolution.

It has been hard to identify exactly what lies behind the current fears of this small number of staff about raising poor standards, or indeed any practice points, with a manager. There still appears to remain powerful feelings in a few staff about possible negative and threatening outcomes if raising a concern. Actions and attitudes that have been mentioned by some staff do not appear to me to fit in with the current management approaches that I have seen. Staff who are responding to concerns need to be very careful to listen to the issues and to remember that staff who are raising concerns may be anxious about speaking out. There have been examples in other parts of the country of adverse consequences for staff who speak out. The fact that a few staff see management at all levels beyond their own as potentially untrustworthy and uncaring, based on their recall of other managers in the past, appears to be a factor in some of the recent recourse to airing internal issues publicly. Regular joint meetings with different levels of management in Children's Services, residential care managers, staff from residential childcare units and Care and Assessment Teams to look at some of the worrying issues for young people and staff could be explored. Staff need to be committed to caring for young people who can be abusive and challenging. This requires managers and staff to be committed to try to ensure that violence is kept at a minimum and that unacceptable behaviour is worked with and its impact on staff appreciated at all levels in the Council.

Achievements

1 The Director has made very public commitments in trying to ensure that communication in the department is improved and that staff feel that their concerns are listened to.

Recommendations

1 The Council should continue to seek to support staff to express their concerns about practice at any level.

2 The Director, Children's Service Manager and Service Managers should continue to appreciate that some staff have felt unsupported when raising concerns and that extra care is needed to try to understand some of the very deep-seated feelings which remain from some previous management approaches.

3 Staff need to have their responsibilities to the professional values of confidentiality for the service users and their responsibilities to use the Council procedures to raise concerns and not the media restated.

4 The Director should review with senior managers in Children's Services what kind of regular meetings could be helpful in bringing together the different players in child and family work to enable managers to be accessible to a wider range of staff than is possible on an individual basis.

5 Methods for the most effective way of giving confidential briefings to members of the appropriate Committees of the Council when sensitive and significant issues emerge should be further examined.

MANAGING PUBLICITY

There has been intermittent but intensive pressure from the local press on the Social Work Department and the Council in relation to the care of young people. There will always be tensions for a Council or Service Department in responding publicly to press coverage that is inaccurate or damaging to individual young people or staff. Such responses can lead to a repeat of the original reports and renewed upset for the young people who are the subject of inaccurate and misleading information. The young people need their "corporate parents" to

act decisively and in a supportive way when their lives and actions are subject to inaccurate reporting.

The recent meeting of the Lord Provost and the Convener of Social Work with some of the young people who are looked after and accommodated has helped those young people to feel that they have been listened to by the Council. It reassured them that the Council should be supportive of their need for privacy from the press and inaccurate reporting. The young people also want a continuing commitment that Councillors will not agree publicly with the press allegations without knowing the facts.

The visits that I understand some elected members made to units were important in confirming the commitment and support of members to the young people and the staff. The direct information that young people and frontline staff can give to members will assist in future discussions about the development of services.

There is the need for information to be given to the public to raise greater awareness of the complexity of the tasks that social work involves. Action needs to be swift after adverse publicity and there is a need for public support from elected members for the difficult tasks that the staff carry. If there are criticisms of policy or practice then these are properly the concern of the Director and senior management staff to address in the department and they need to be given that opportunity before the issues are aired publicly, often with incomplete facts.

Publicity should not be the threat that it has developed into in the recent past. Opportunities to present the information about the range of social work tasks which the Council must provide need to be taken, although the press are seldom interested in the kind of information that can be disclosed without infringing the rights to privacy of young people and their families. The successes of young people who are looked after and of the Council also need to be given publicity.

Achievements

1 There is a greater recognition of the need for good publicity about the issues faced by the Council in providing social work services.

Recommendations

1 The Council should continue to give employees clear information about using the appropriate channels for raising concerns or complaints.

2 The Council should continue to view seriously any breach of confidentiality by staff about the work of the department or the needs of young people who are "looked after".

3 The Council should consider how some of the challenges and dilemmas of providing social work services can be brought to the attention of the public and how the media could help to raise awareness of the types of services that the Council provides and for whom.

4 The responses of elected members need to reflect an understanding of the complex issues that arise in delivering social work services. They need to be supportive publicly of their senior managers as they deliver services in difficult situations and to recognise the aspirations of their managers to achieve services that are the best that can be provided.

MISTAKES, NEGLIGENCE, BAD PRACTICE

When an issue about the quality or content of direct care is raised, the way that the Residential Resource Manager and Service Manager respond will affect the way the staff member can be helped to tackle the issue and develop better practice from the situation. There will be genuine mistakes made in care settings, which are inevitable from time to time but it would be helpful if these could be looked at in the spirit of exploring what happened and the consequences for the service user and the service. The impact of the mistake may, on occasions, require the response to shift from an exploration of practice to a more formal investigation.

Negligence in providing a service requires a different response and an investigative approach is likely to be needed.

Poor practice requires to be tackled in a formal way with the needs of the staff member for training and help with raising their standards being an integral part of the way ahead.

Young people will raise complaints about staff from time to time. These need a sensitive and speedy response. All complaints that are directed at a member of staff cause a lot of pain and self-doubt as staff feel that they are being criticised whilst the young person may be able to make the complaint with no challenge even if it is unfounded. This is a sensitive area and the approach of managers is crucial in maintaining morale while also listening to the young person.

Providing support for the person about whom an allegation has been made is not easy for the manager who will be involved in investigating the situation. There is the need to preserve the appropriate distance so that any investigation can be impartial and fair. The options for support for staff and for the young person making the allegation must be reliable. The Children's Rights Officer or "Who Cares?" can have a valuable role in the follow-up to this event for young people. Support from someone from a staff support scheme as mentioned in a previous section, or from the Counselling Service, should be available to the member of staff to ensure that they do not become further distanced from their workplace and colleagues.

Working in another setting during an investigation should be fully considered unless there is risk to users in such a move as the staff member is a valuable resource and suspension impacts adversely on all parties.

Achievements

1 Management's willingness, in discussions about this review, to consider the differential responses to incidents including genuine mistakes is important.

Recommendations

1 The Council's procedures for dealing with performance issues should be restated and the approach of managers dealing with these issues needs to be thorough, timeous and fair.

2 Mistakes will be made on occasions and managers need to differentiate them from negligence in their approach to an enquiry into the incidents.

3 Allegations must be taken seriously and the young person listened to carefully. In the past, from enquiries of abuse in some Councils across the UK, young people often did try to tell someone that abuse was happening and staff need to appreciate that managers will have to enquire about the allegation and that this will be a difficult time for all parties to the events.

4 The impact of allegations on staff has to be kept in mind throughout any investigation of an allegation. Speedy contact and appropriate support for the person about whom the allegation is made can reduce some of the future difficulties that they inevitably face.

MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Managing the Children's Services provided by the Social Work Department is challenging and generates high levels of stress. There are continual demands for resources that can rarely all be met.

There are high risk factors in providing care and in protecting children and young people. The work of all levels of staff is subject to internal and external scrutiny.

Unallocated work waiting in the Care and Assessment Teams creates stress as senior staff try to ensure that some service is provided but often at the cost of other work that is also necessary.

Managers try to offer support to staff who feel vulnerable to criticism for any failure to keep young people safe. Because the work is demanding and decisions are rarely clear cut, staff at basic grade level in Care and Assessment Teams and in Residential Childcare Units look for a lot of advice and support in their work and planning of care for children. Access to managers who they see as experienced, skilled in direct work with young people, and able to empathise with the complexity of the work, is very important to enable them to provide the care and protection that the young people need.

Senior Social Workers and Residential Resource Managers carry the dual responsibility of managing direct work with children and young people and securing their safety in care, as well as having responsibility for the care, support and safety of their staff. As evidenced in the earlier parts of this report, the pressures felt by these managers are high and they look to Service Managers for their support and assistance with setting priorities and direction in their work. The accessibility and visibility of Service Managers is very important and staff need to feel confident that the difficult issues they are facing, or have faced, are acknowledged by their Service Manager. The stated procedures to follow up a violent incident report may not require a Service Manager to make a response to the member of staff as this is done by the first line manager but, for staff who have been badly affected by an incident, a personal expression of concern from a Service Manager is valued greatly.

The Service Managers have demonstrated, in my contacts with them, a high level of professionalism and skilled management, as well as concern for the young people and staff who are their responsibility.

The Children's Services Manager is a key post with strategic and operational responsibilities for services across the spectrum of childcare work. His role in decisions about external residential placements and the financial costs related to them (which is held jointly with Education managers) is not well understood at lower levels of the organisation.

It is always difficult to balance the two key responsibilities of strategy and operations when in a post like Children's Service Manager yet staff want the postholder to be accessible and visible, particularly during any crises that occur. Staff perceive too great a distance of this post from the day to day realities of work with service users in childcare and this perception creates opportunities for misunderstanding and for myths to be perpetuated about likely approaches to contentious issues. Maintaining the strategic direction of service delivery requires time, and the competing demands of the two parts of the post need to be in

balance. This has been particularly problematic over the last twelve months as so much time has been taken up in dealing with the crises in the service which have been so public.

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The Director has played a very significant role through being closely in touch with the difficult issues that have arisen in residential care in the last year. Young people see her as very accessible and know that she holds the power to make changes, and for decisions to be reviewed. The downside of this accessibility is that young people do sometimes try to bypass the managers who are trying to resolve any issue that the young person has raised. This could be disempowering for the middle managers. It is not always possible for the Director to have as full an assessment of a situation as is possible at the lower levels of the department. A full assessment of the different aspects of any issue brought to the Director needs to be available to her before decisions are made. This is important so that both young people and staff have the opportunity to provide the Director with the information that she needs to make a well-informed decision. The Director is very understanding about the feelings of the young people who are looked after and accommodated and this direct contact keeps her in touch with the complexities of the caring task. Her role in encouraging people to review situations from different perspectives gives a very positive message to young people and to staff.

The reality for all staff in the Department, from the Director to social care workers and social work assistants, is that there are pressures in each day's work. One social care worker expressed the view that it was a pity that everyone felt that their pressure was the most difficult one to bear. He hoped that greater acceptance of the different pressures that everyone faced would reduce the need to find someone in the hierarchy to blame for the pressures. He saw the need to focus on how staff could support each other at all levels within the department rather than finding someone to blame for a problem.

The skills required to manage children's services are considerable. There needs to be a high level of knowledge about the complexities of child development, providing residential care, legislation, staff care, service planning and financial management. Managers need to be able to express personal concern for the young people and for the staff and create a climate of responsiveness that is visible to staff and young people. Because of the levels of tension and challenge that staff face in this service they do demand a lot from their managers and have high expectations of them. Staff can be hard taskmasters for managers and make considerable demands. If those demands can be seen in the light of the pressures that the staff are experiencing, then a collaborative, open and honest approach can be taken and a level of agreement reached about the reality of what is and is not feasible.

Staff want to see the service raise its head above the recent difficulties. Managers have been hit hard by the press and staff criticism about their level of concern and their integrity and this has led in some cases to periods of low morale.

All levels of staff need to have the opportunity to contribute to debates about the future shape of services and the resources to achieve them. Staff need to be listened to and valued and to appreciate that there is the will across the Council to achieve developments in children's services and that their part in that is valued and respected.

The recent Annual Report prepared by the Chief Social Work Inspector has identified that Dundee has fewer managers than several Councils across Scotland. The workloads of the managers in Children's Services in Dundee are onerous and it would be important to review the position as the developments in service provision progress.

Achievements

1 Despite pressures of work, and the complexity of the issues faced, managers at all levels have expressed to me their desire to see services improve and to surmount the current difficulties.

Recommendations

- 1 The Council should continue to recognise the difficult tasks involved in managing Children's Services.
- 2 In recruiting managers to childcare services attention needs to be given to the style of management that is needed in this service. An ability to describe to staff the key values on which the work of the team is to be based, and how to translate those values into their practice, has been found to be a strong indicator of successful management of Children's Services.
- 3 As the service continues to consider further improvements in the provision of residential and community services for children and young people, the Children's Services Manager and Service Managers need to ensure that they are accessible to staff and involving them to discuss the way forward, and to hear the views of staff on any proposals for change.
- 4 The Children's Services Manager and Service Managers should consider how they can be involved with staff at a range of levels to ensure that all managers are in touch with the key issues for the service. Recognition is required that staff have high expectations of their senior managers to provide support, to resolve difficult issues and to shape the services that are needed.
- 5 The Council should ensure that in considering improvements in the service there is an assessment of the workloads of Senior Social Workers, Service Managers and the Children's Services Manager. (The management of the residential childcare units is already being considered as improvements are developed).

CONCLUDING POINTS

Residential childcare services in Dundee have experienced a very difficult period over the past year.

The collaboration between staff in the units, senior managers from Social Work Department and Personnel and Management Services, and the unions has formed the basis for the working group looking at staffing, rotas and training. This working group has demonstrated the willingness of a large number of staff and key managers to work together on difficult issues. This method of working is positive and needs the continued commitment of all parties to achieve progress.

Clear communication remains critical to helping reduce the stress and misunderstandings that can arise when all staff from Director to social care staff face considerable pressure in delivering services.

This review has allowed many staff to voice their views on the issues facing the Council in looking after and accommodating young people. There has been a willingness to share ideas for resolving some of the difficult issues.

There are many staff with skills, experience and commitment to improve the service and to surmount the problems of the past.

Some staff have expressed the wish to move from direct care positions in residential childcare units. Their position needs to be considered sympathetically.

Training for staff is a key component in helping staff to develop their skills and regular supervision helps to keep work in perspective and supports staff to provide high quality care.

Dundee City Council has the opportunity to build stronger services with the changes that are currently being discussed. The development of future residential care provision should continue in close collaboration with staff at all levels across the different parts of Children's Services and with the young people who will be the users of the services.

When staff are recruited with care, given good support and valued by their managers they do deliver high quality care.

The staff levels in the units need to be adequate to ensure that time is available for each young person to be listened to, to be involved in activities which are special to him/her, and to be understood as an individual.

The social workers in the Care and Assessment Teams need to have the time and skills to ensure that young people who are looked after and accommodated are given the help that they need. They need to work with the young people, residential and resource team staff to resolve the difficulties that have brought the young people into care.

The developments that are being discussed as part of the Best Value Review, and as continuous improvements to the service and those proposed in this review, are achievable if there is adequate financing for the services. A recent paper prepared for ADSW has shown that the actual finances available for Children's Services across Scotland have decreased in recent years in real terms despite the increases in commitments and demands. Dundee, in common with many other Councils in Scotland, does spend above their GAE allocation on children's services. The real cost of caring for troubled young people needs to be calculated and agreed across Scotland so that representations can be made to the Scottish Executive about funding issues. High quality services which young people need when they are looked after and accommodated will make high financial demands on Councils. It is important that these costs are built into budgets so that young people now and in the future can get the care, support and guidance they need to help them to develop into adulthood.

Sharing information across Councils about developments in residential childcare that can offer the best outcomes for young people would be productive and Dundee could be influential in working with colleagues in the Association of Directors of Social Work to inform, develop and advise best practice.

A review from an external consultant can only provide some pointers for the future. I have found a willingness in staff to look forward and to be positive about the potential of services although their morale has been affected by the recent critical issues the services have faced. I believe that there are still a number of problems to surmount but I see this is possible given the quality and commitment of the staff involved. There needs to be discussions about some further investment in children's services so that the Council can fulfil all its statutory and corporate responsibilities to the children and young people who are looked after by the Council.

Anne Black
Independent Consultant

ANNEX 1
RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SERVICES IN DUNDEE - ACTION PLAN

| 1 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>1.1 <i>Dundee has a range of policies and procedures that are clear and comprehensive</i></p> <p>1.2 <i>They have been maintained and updated on a regular basis and new policies have been developed as the need for them has been identified</i></p> | <p><i>These include a series of Human Resource policies, the employee help-line "Whistle-blowing" policy, the management of violence and aggression, physical intervention, sanctions and access to residential resources</i></p> <p><i>All policies and procedures are maintained and updated through the Strategic Planning Section</i></p> | | |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>1.1 The Social Work Department should continue to develop policies and procedures for the guidance of staff and the direction of services</p> <p>1.2 The department should ensure that the development of policies and procedures are advised by the work of staff at unit and team level and that there are opportunities for staff to reflect on new documents as teams and to develop their practice in line with the procedures</p> <p>1.3 All Council-wide policies and procedures need to be accompanied by clear implementation plans and processes for monitoring their effectiveness. Regular monitoring the adherence to the procedures are also needed</p> | <p>An Induction Pack for all Social Work Department new staff has been introduced</p> | <p>Work being completed on policy on Drug and Alcohol misuse. List to be drawn up of all areas where there is a need to review policy/procedures. Lead responsibility for this rests with Strategic Planning Section</p> <p>Residential Resource Managers to be advised that these issues should be included in team meetings</p> <p>All new policies and procedures will have a plan for implementation and monitoring agreed by the Children's Services Management Team</p> | <p>September 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> |

| 2 THE EVENTS OF SUMMER 2001 | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>2.1 <i>The Social Work Department's internal review of residential childcare carried out in the Spring of 2000 was implemented</i></p> <p>2.2 <i>The numbers of residents in the units was reduced</i></p> <p>2.3 <i>Balgowan Avenue took responsibility for emergency admissions</i></p> <p>2.4 <i>Monitoring and Review Groups for external placements were set up with senior managers from Education, Finance and Social Work</i></p> | <p><i>All recommendations were accepted and implemented in a planned way between June and December 2001</i></p> | <p><i>Areas identified as requiring future action have been carried forward into the Working Group on Staffing/Training chaired by the Director of Personnel and Management Services</i></p> | <p><i>March 2001</i></p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>2.1 The level of communication to key managers needs to be kept consistently high. The difficult decisions that the Director and Children's Services Manager had to make during the summer period, and will continue to have to make, need to be shared with Service Managers at the earliest possible opportunity</p> <p>Service Managers are key in helping front-line staff make sense of decisions that may be necessary because of other external factors</p> <p>2.2 Openness about the dilemmas faced by managers can help to create a shared effort to make the best use of what is available. It is then more possible to explain to external agencies, particularly the Children's Hearings, the nature of the constraints on the Social work Department and the Council</p> | <p>Decisions made at Placement Review Group and the Residential Resources Monitoring Group are now issued in writing. Weekly briefing meetings for service managers are chaired by the Children's Services Manager. These are in addition to fortnightly team meetings</p> <p>Priority and Allocation Meeting minutes are circulated to first line managers</p> <p>Wide ranging debate has taken place within the Children's Services Management Team and with the Director about how to balance needs and limited resources in a consistent manner. Decision making processes have been made explicit to staff at all levels and in meetings with Children's Panel members</p> | <p>Greater use will be made of e-mail systems which has been installed in all units and the Council Intranet Site for information sharing and as a "Discussion Forum"</p> <p>Programme of formal and informal meetings are planned with Children's Panel members.</p> <p>Follow-up meetings to be held between Children's Services Managers and Senior Social Workers.</p> | <p>September 2001</p> <p>September 2001</p> |

| 3 THE FABRIC AND FURNISHINGS OF THE UNITS | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>3.1 <i>A comprehensive survey of the fabric and furnishings of the units was completed and staff had a key role in identifying the needs of their unit</i></p> <p>3.2 <i>A considerable amount of painting and re-furbishing took place in the units which improved the quality of the environment in the units considerably</i></p> | <p><i>£100,000 was set aside across 4 units to make immediate improvements to the fabric and furnishings</i></p> <p><i>Completed</i></p> | | |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>3.1 A continuing programme of repairs and improvements to the units needs to be maintained until longer term decisions are made about the shape of residential care provision for young people</p> <p>3.2 Responses to repairs in the units should be given a high priority</p> <p>3.3 The level of cleaning staff time for the units is being addressed and the assessment of need for extra cleaning hours in the units should be implemented as soon as possible</p> | <p>A Departmental property strategy is being prepared.</p> <p>Temporary appointment made to post of handyperson for the units</p> <p>A new system for repairs notification and responses is included with the property strategy</p> <p>Assessment of need completed and report received outlining recommendations</p> | <p>There will be implementation of the priority actions within the property strategy</p> <p>Recruitment on a permanent basis to this post</p> <p>This will be actioned</p> <p>Implementation plan to be agreed</p> | <p>September 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> |

| 4 CARE PLANNING | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|---|---|-----------|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>4.1 <i>The Looked After Children paperwork has been introduced across the city and is being used</i></p> <p>4.2 <i>The agreement to recruit to vacant posts in Care and Assessment Teams will enable some pressure to be removed from existing staff and seniors and release time for more work with accommodated young people</i></p> <p>4.3 <i>The establishment of Balgowan Avenue for emergency admissions has relieved the pressure on groups of young people and staff in the other units</i></p> <p>4.4 <i>The model of weekly planning meetings in short stay units provides a good mechanism for ensuring that Care Plans are progressed</i></p> | <p><i>Agency staff recruited to undertake short-term work over summer period</i></p> <p><i>Recommendation from internal Residential Review Report achieved in 2000</i></p> <p><i>Model implemented at Balgowan Avenue and The Elms and reinforced through weekly Priority and Allocation meetings</i></p> | <p><i>Recruitment has taken place and vacancies will be filled in all Care and Assessment Teams by September 2001</i></p> | |

| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| 4.1 The developments being discussed for short stay and emergency resources for young people who are to be admitted to care are positive and point the way to improved services for young people at the point of crisis | Project Team and Task Group established to plan for the replacement of the existing facilities at Balgowan Avenue | Finalising of plans and specification for the new facility | September 2001 |
| 4.2 The linking of other resources into the emergency provision which can help to keep young people safely at home with support is a positive direction | Working links established between Balgowan Avenue and the Community Support Team | Re-establishment of emergency foster carers | March 2002 |
| 4.3 The recruitment to vacant posts in the Care and Assessment Teams for Children's Services is also positive. The workloads of the social workers need to be kept under review | Workshop has been held for senior social worker and social workers to discuss the introduction of new case prioritisation system | This will be implemented | September 2001 |
| 4.4 The volume of paperwork required when "looking after and accommodating" children is being considered. Some resolution needs to be found to reduce the time needed to complete the extensive sets of forms currently required | | Short life working group is to be established to consider this issue and make recommendations | December 2001 |
| 4.5 There is a need to conclude an assessment framework that can be used across the department which will give the units and the teams the opportunity to develop care plans which are firmly based on a comprehensive assessment of need | An assessment framework has been piloted and is being revised in the light of initiatives in England and Wales | Work on an assessment framework is implemented | March 2002 |

| 5 | INTER DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|----------------|---|---|---|------------|
| Recommendation | <p>5.1 The planning processes at Council level should continue, and strategies developed that recognise the competing demands on resources, with the recognition of the particular responsibilities that the Council holds for young people accommodated by the Council</p> | <p>These plans are discussed in a variety of forums:-</p> <p>Directorate Children's Services Management Team Meetings Strategic Planning Group Meetings Development and Implementation Group Meetings</p> <p>Joint planning/commissioning mechanisms already underway at Children's Services Planning Group</p> | <p>Preparation is underway for the next 3 year Children's Services Plan which should be available in draft form by April 2002</p> <p>Bids are being prepared to access the Changing Children's Services Fund to re-focus services</p> | April 2002 |
| 6 | WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |

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| <p>EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED</p> <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>6.1 <i>The policy on Education and Looked After Children has been agreed</i></p> <p>6.2 <i>Educational needs of young people looked after and accommodated have been highlighted in a number of recent documents and help to raise awareness of the key importance of education for these young people</i></p> <p>6.3 <i>Off-site units have been able to retain young people in regular attendance and to raise their self-esteem and Achievements</i></p> <p>6.4 <i>The success of young people in off-site units should be noted</i></p> | <p><i>The Education Department have reviewed this provision and are consulting on proposals for change</i></p> | <p><i>Actions to be implement the joint policy are being taken forward within the Education and Social Work Departments</i></p> <p><i>Steps to raise awareness of staff in both Education and Social Work Departments are included within the policy</i></p> | <p><i>August 2001</i></p> |
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| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p>6.1 Exclusion policies must ensure that there are very early discussions where a “looked after and accommodated” young person is on the brink of exclusion</p> | <p>Items 6.1-6.6 are addressed in the Joint Policy on the Education of Looked After Children. The Education Department are also consulting on a new policy on exclusions from schools.</p> | <p>Actions to implement the joint policy are being taken forward within the Education and Social Work Departments via Children’s Services Manager and Education Services Manager</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>6.2 Residential child care staff and social workers for children and young people should give the educational needs of looked after young people greater prominence in planning their care and then supporting young people to achieve their educational goals. This may include acting as an appropriate advocate for the young person in educational issues in the absence of a parent fulfilling this role</p> | <p>Residential Resource Managers have been nominated as the liaison contact with schools as a further improvement to existing practice.</p> | <p>Further discussion through Development and Implementation Group for Looked After Children regarding “Learning With Care”</p> | <p>December 2001</p> |
| <p>6.3 In line with the joint policy on the education of young people looked after by the Council, all school management teams and social work staff need to acknowledge the special needs of young people who are looked after for support in their educational placement and for programmes which meet their needs</p> | | | |
| <p>6.4 The issues raised in the recent Scottish Executive report “Learning with Care” should be studied and the collaboration that is recommended in this report compared with the current practices in Dundee and any shortfall addressed</p> | | | |
| <p>6.5 Joint training for education, residential care staff and social workers in specific areas relating to the curriculum and attainments, reasons for young people being looked after and the respective powers and duties of the key Council departments should be considered</p> | <p>Joint policy on the Education of Looked After Children has been approved by Committee</p> | <p>Joint training is a high priority for action</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |

| Recommendations (contd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|------------|-----------|
| <p>6.6 The Council needs to ensure that there is extensive collaboration and understanding of the corporate responsibilities of the Council for looked after and accommodated young people and through this collaboration enhance the educational attainments of young people with whom the Council has a special relationship</p> | <p>Joint policy on the Education of Looked After Children has been approved by Committee</p> | | |

| 7 THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PLACE THEMSELVES AT SIGNIFICANT RISK | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|------------------------------|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>7.1 <i>Collaboration in approaching the issues of sexual exploitation has been positive. The creation of a sub-group of the Dundee Child Protection Committee to address the range of issues is positive</i></p> | <p><i>Improved and closer working relationships between the Police and the Social Work Department</i></p> <p><i>Staff have greater awareness of sexual exploitation issues and agency responses</i></p> | <p><i>The publication of a protocol for inter-agency work</i></p> | <p><i>September 2001</i></p> |
| <p>7.2 <i>Risk assessments are being developed in most units</i></p> | <p><i>Unit managers and staff have revised existing risk assessment format for this purpose in each unit</i></p> | <p><i>Risk assessment format will be standardised and linked to common assessment format which is to be introduced</i></p> | <p><i>March 2002</i></p> |
| <p>7.3 <i>Services are being developed to try to prevent young people continuing or starting involvement in sexual exploitation</i></p> | <p><i>Specialist Group established to review and develop current procedures</i></p> | <p><i>Additional service developments are currently under consideration</i></p> | |

| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|---|-------------------|
| <p>7.1 Early intervention when young people are identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation and making services available to respond to their needs should continue to be a priority for the Council and partner agencies</p> <p>Resources need to be made available to make their intervention effective</p> <p>7.2 Co-ordination of responses at a city-wide level would maximise the value of all the services and ensure that the services developed were relevant to the needs of all the young people involved. This co-ordination should continue to be closely linked with Child Protection Services</p> <p>The Sub Committee needs to continue to assess the need for resources and to seek funding sources for the services required at different points in the young person's involvement in sexual exploitation</p> <p>The ability to co-ordinate responses and services for young people caught in sexual exploitation should be explored. An assessment of the benefits of re-instating a specific post with a lead role in developing and co-ordinating the whole range of Child Protection Services could be undertaken. The impact of using money for this post needs to be debated in the light of other reductions that would be necessary to appoint to the post</p> <p>Protocols are being developed for responding to young people who are being sexually exploited and these need to be finalised and a reliable information sharing system put in place</p> <p>7.3 There needs to be continued attention to the safety of young people by the police and police activity to deter the perpetrators of the abuse of young people through sexual exploitation</p> | <p>Child Protection Conferences are already used as the vehicle to safeguard young people who are identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation</p> <p>See page 10, item7.1</p> <p>One of the service managers now takes the lead role in developing and co-ordinating Child Protection Services</p> <p>The Sub Committee of the Child Protection Committee with multi-agency representation will continue to agree how we jointly tackle sexual exploitation issues</p> | <p>Further specialist resources needed to tackle this issue. Will be incorporated into the new Children's Services Plan</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |

| Recommendations (cont'd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
| <p>7.4 The work of the specialist workers with individual young people who are being sexually exploited needs to be supported and their ability to offer the young people continuity of support, even if placed at a distance from Dundee, needs to be fully considered</p> | <p>Work on this issue will continue to be given high priority</p> | <p>Specialist responses will be agreed between all agencies through the sub committee of the Child Protection Committee</p> | |
| <p>7.5 Training for staff in residential units to help them to gain a greater understanding of the issues for young people involved in sexual exploitation should be increased. The involvement of young people who have experienced sexual exploitation could enhance the value of the training</p> | | <p>Further training will be provided for residential staff</p> | <p>January 2002</p> |
| <p>7.6 Multi-agency work in relation to drug misuse and offending behaviour is established and should be kept under review as new issues emerge in patterns of drug misuse and in youth crime</p> | <p>Monitoring and development of services through Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Strategic Planning Group and Development and Implementation Group</p> | <p>New project bids are to be made for development funding</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>The successful projects need to be resourced to enable them to reach more young people and to be able to share their skills with residential staff to improve the work done with young people in units</p> | <p>An appointment has been made of a Youth Justice Strategy Co-ordinator - this post has been advertised</p> | | |
| <p>7.7 Close collaboration from the CHOICE Project with residential staff could help to inform the units of the different approaches that are likely to be appropriate for persistent offenders. Joint work could also be explored in relation to drug misuse and already the work with the police has been of value to the units</p> | <p>Specialist post dealing with drug misuse has been established within the CHOICE Project</p> <p>Training in drug misuse issues provided by Police for residential staff</p> | <p>Method of joint working will be agreed between CHOICE, residential staff and police</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>7.8 Mental health problems faced by young people need the collective resources of Health and Social Work.</p> | <p>A new Child Mental Health Strategy is in preparation</p> | <p>An options appraisal is to be undertaken to consider this type of development and will be considered as part of the Changing Children's Services Fund</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |
| <p>The possible development of a Mental Health Team with psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric community nurses and social workers should be explored within the Tayside Child Mental Health Strategy structure. This model has been found to be very beneficial to both young people and staff in one of the Councils I visited</p> | | | |

| 8 RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>8.1 <i>Procedures for assessing risk are being developed</i></p> <p>8.2 <i>The policy on sanctions will be used with young people to help them to think through their behaviour and its consequences</i></p> <p>8.3 <i>The Health and Safety Forum for residential childcare provides an opportunity for staff, managers and unions to debate the important issues of safety in units</i></p> | <p><i>Exploration of issues through health and Safety Forum and discussions regarding CALM restraint training</i></p> <p><i>Draft sanctions paper produced</i></p> <p><i>Has met 3 times to date</i></p> | <p><i>Development of new risk assessment format</i></p> <p><i>Approval of policy and implementation</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> | <p><i>September 2001</i></p> <p><i>July 2001</i></p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>8.1 The risk assessment process created by Residential Resource Managers should continue to be developed so the process is understood and assessments carried out in each unit in a consistent way</p> <p>8.2 The involvement of the young person in this assessment can further stress the responsibilities of the young person and staff to try to identify and manage the risky behaviour</p> <p>8.3 The developing policy on sanctions within units should be completed and available for discussion in the units with staff and young people</p> <p>8.4 The work of the Health and Safety Forum for residential childcare should be supported and wider representation from staff in the units pursued</p> | <p>Policy has been approved</p> <p>Policy has been approved</p> | <p>Development of new risk assessment format in conjunction with CALM organisation will add to existing approaches</p> <p>This will be kept under review by the Health and Safety Forum</p> | <p>September 2001</p> <p>July 2001</p> <p>July 2001</p> |

| 9 MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AND THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND STAFF | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>9.1 <i>Staff in units are working together to achieve a consistent approach to the needs and behaviour of young people whichever staff are on duty</i></p> | <p><i>Regular meetings chaired by service manager to address training needs</i></p> <p><i>CALM training content has been reviewed</i></p> | <p><i>Confirmation of appropriate supplementary course to be provided by CALM organisation</i></p> | <p><i>August 2001</i></p> |
| <p>9.2 <i>Staff have been trained in the CALM approach to defusing violent situations and in the use of restraint</i></p> | <p><i>9 CALM courses provided to date</i></p> <p><i>102 staff trained</i></p> | <p><i>Regular provision for new staff and refresher training for existing staff</i></p> | <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> |
| <p>9.3 <i>The Counselling Service is being used by a number of staff and has been a positive support to them</i></p> | <p><i>Counselling Service has been pro-active in promoting the service at points of particular pressure/strain within the residential service</i></p> | <p><i>Notice has been sent to all units publicising the Staff Counselling Service, emphasising confidentiality and highlighting the benefits to staff who deal with challenging young people</i></p> | <p><i>July 2001</i></p> |

| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p>9.1 The Department needs to ensure that there is a full assessment of the needs of young people, and their areas of stress and aggression, as the essential starting point for assessing the likelihood of challenging behaviour and how to manage it</p> | <p>See page 13, item 8.1 and page 14, item 9.1</p> | | |
| <p>9.2 Staff groups need to spend time to plan how they will respond to a young person who is displaying aggressive or challenging behaviour</p> | <p>See page 13, item 8.1 and page 14, item 9.1</p> | | |
| <p>9.3 The discussions with the police need to be continued so that consistent approaches are achieved to their involvement in responding to challenging behaviour in the units</p> | <p>Meetings held between Head of Service and Senior Police Officers, regular meetings are held between local police stations and units</p> | <p>There is a revised protocol on absconders and missing young people to further develop the good local inter-agency working which exists in Dundee</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>9.4 Opportunities for CALM training in the de-escalation and handling of challenging behaviour need to be maintained and refresher training readily available</p> | <p>Programme of refresher training in place. Staff trained as instructors</p> | <p>Proposal agreed to facilitate refresher training by using peripatetic staff cover in units</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>9.5 The Department and the Council need to support staff when it is agreed that a move from residential childcare work would be positive. There requires an acknowledgement of the feelings of failure that some staff experience in asking for a transfer of location and service and there should be no criticism if a move is requested.</p> | | <p>Proposals developed and to be discussed with trade unions through Working Group on Staffing/Training (chaired by Director of Personnel and Management Services)</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |
| <p>There needs to be a corporate approach to transfers of staff in these circumstances and opportunities at the time of restructuring residential care services taken to help the service to release these staff and be able to recruit people with energy and experience. This is not going to be an easy task because of shortages of experienced and skilled residential social workers across the country but it is an important step to consider</p> | | | |

| 10 STAFFING ISSUES, ROTAS, WAKING NIGHT SHIFTS, WORKING PATTERNS | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> | | | |
| <p>10.1 <i>The Working Group have worked together to debate some of the very complex issues about staffing and the organisation of shifts and rotas</i></p> | <p><i>Report to Social Work Committee re-establishing Working Group</i></p> | | <p><i>June 2001</i></p> |
| <p>10.2 <i>There has been collaboration from many staff in this work and a commitment to continue to discuss the future shape of the service has been made</i></p> | | | |
| <p>10.3 <i>The proposal for staffing increases in the units have been put to the Social Work Committee</i></p> | <p><i>Report to Social Work Committee proposing temporary staffing increase and re-establishment of Working Group to consider larger term options</i></p> | | <p><i>June 2001</i></p> |

| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| <p>10.1 The Council should also consider some of the current sessional staff for permanent contracts as new posts are created. This would have the advantage of providing some stability to staff groups and enhance the continuity and quality of care for the young people</p> | <p>The established practice is to encourage sessional staff to apply whenever temporary or part-time vacancies arise</p> | <p>Recruitment to planned cover team and deployment to all units</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>10.2 An assessment of the shape of the management team required in residential childcare units should be concluded in the next phase of planning</p> | | <p>Management proposals to be discussed by Working Group on Staffing/Training</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |
| <p>10.3 The assessment of the level of ancillary staff required in the units should be completed and financial assessments of the extra costs be progressed for consideration</p> | <p>Assessment of domestic support requirements completed. Management Services Review of Admin Support has been completed</p> | <p>Final agreement on implementation</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>10.4 Efforts should be made in the longer term units to reach a level of stability where consideration could be given to reducing the need for waking night staff unless there is a period of instability.</p> <p>Where there are challenging and changing needs of young people there require to be waking night staff to prevent sleep-in staff having their sleep seriously disrupted</p> | | <p>To be finalised by Working Group on Staffing/Training</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |

| Recommendations (cont'd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| <p>10.5 A more effective way of managing access to sessional staff needs to be found. Some central allocation of the tasks of monitoring the availability of sessional staff, and of contacting them to arrange to cover shifts, should be considered. The provision of a dedicated member of staff with personnel expertise could facilitate more effective contact with sessional staff who are needed for shifts and, additionally, allow their work patterns to be monitored centrally in the Social Work Department.</p> <p>While recognising the pressures on personnel staff the further allocation of some tasks in relation to the investigation of allegations and disciplinary matters could be a positive step to take and could release some management time from residential resource managers. Contact with the Council, which has set up an arrangement for this, could be productive</p> | <p>Arrangements have been set up for central management of sessional pool</p> <p>The Director of Personnel & Management Services is of the view that this responsibility should remain with social work management including the residential resource managers as appropriate. This is line with existing practice across the Council.</p> | | <p>July 2001</p> |
| <p>10.6 The Council should review what improved support could be offered to staff who are off work following a violent incident. A small staff support scheme could ensure that staff off sick are kept advised about the different options open to them for the future and are given support while absent from work. These support staff would need to be able to access information about the range of benefits available to staff off work following an incident at work</p> | <p>Arrangements have been put in place for a formal response by Headquarters staff to all violent incident reports.</p> | <p>Proposal of further improvement to be developed in conjunction with the review of the Department's Staff Counselling Service</p> | <p>September 2001</p> |

| Recommendations (cont'd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p>10.7 Any future changes in the shape of residential provision should be carefully planned and staff given opportunities to move from frontline stressful jobs in units where their health and well-being is being seriously affected.</p> <p>The Council could explore the possibility of pensions being preserved at person's highest salary point if they move for the latter years of their career to a less well paid post</p> | | <p>Proposal to be discussed and negotiated with trade unions through Working Group on Staffing/Training</p> <p>The Pension Regulations provide for retirement benefits being calculated on the employee's highest earning year going back several years. Every effort will be made to redeploy employees within the Social Work Department and, if necessary, other departments of the Council.</p> | December 2001 |
| <p>10.8 Given the very stressful content of the job of residential workers in childcare, it is important that recruitment is very thorough. Even with that rigour some staff who have had no previous experience of residential childcare work do not work as well as had been assessed in interviews</p> | | <p>Approval to be sought to implement National recommendations of Recruitment and Selection Consortium in full when they are published</p> | March 2002 |
| <p>10.9 If these staff were able to be appointed for a probationary period where their progress was monitored, their training and support needs met then, if an assessment at the end of the probationary period identified that they were not suitable for the work, they could have their employment terminated. For the member of staff a probationary period would enable them to leave if they had not found the job suitable</p> | | <p>Proposal to be discussed and negotiated with trade unions through Working Group on Staffing/Training</p> | March 2002 |

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| <p>11 TRAINING FOR STAFF</p> <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>11.1 <i>There are a high number of residential child care staff who have achieved an SVQ Level 3</i></p> <p>11.2 <i>CALM Training is now well established and commitments to keep its relevance and effectiveness under review have been made</i></p> | <p>PROGRESS TO DATE</p> <p><i>Residential Resource Manager seconded to Staff Development Officer/SVQ Assessor post with specific remit for residential child care service in order to maintain this high standard</i></p> | <p>NEXT STEPS</p> | <p>TIMESCALE</p> <p><i>August 2001</i></p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>11.1 Dundee should continue to place a high value on residential childcare staff gaining recognised qualifications</p> <p>11.2 There needs to be continued collaboration with the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) to develop training courses that meet the needs of staff groups as well as individuals.</p> <p>11.3 CALM training should be continued with regular reviews of the effectiveness and value of this method of restraint. The extension of the training to consider Breakaway techniques is seen as positive by staff. The understanding of what provokes challenging behaviour and how to manage it should be a further module for development.</p> <p>11.4 Individual training plans for all staff would contribute to the development of staff skills and show the value that management places on staff members' personal learning.</p> | <p>PROGRESS TO DATE</p> | <p>NEXT STEPS</p> <p>See item 11.1 above</p> <p>Opportunities provided by SIRCC will be highlighted to staff</p> <p>See item 11.1. Staff Development Officer will liaise with SIRCC, and service manager to facilitate provision of training</p> <p>Proposals to be put to wider staff group about revising the training in light of operational experience</p> <p>All units are required to produce training plans for SIRCC. Staff Development Officer will collate individual training plans</p> | <p>TIMESCALE</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2001</p> <p>December 2001</p> |

| 12 STAFF SUPERVISION | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>12.1 <i>The supervision policy is comprehensive and provides a sound basis for high quality practice in supervision</i></p> | <p><i>All units have implemented this policy</i></p> | | |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>12.1 The recently published Supervision Policy is a significant and positive development which needs to be widely circulated and discussed</p> <p>12.2 The implementation of the Supervision Policy will require to be monitored as residential care shifts make arrangements for regular supervision more complex than in a team where all staff work office hours</p> <p>12.3 Senior staff with supervisory responsibilities must have the time allocated in their workload to fulfil their supervisory tasks</p> <p>12.4 Team leaders, or other senior staff if introduced, need to have opportunities for training in delivering supervision</p> | <p>Monitoring arrangements are to be put in place</p> <p>Team leader roles at The Elms have been reviewed - Committee Report prepared</p> <p>Training has been booked for all Residential Resource Managers, Residential Resource Workers and Team Leaders through SIRCC in October/November</p> | <p>Role of Residential Resource Managers and Residential Resource Worker to be reviewed by Working Group on Staffing/Training</p> | <p>July 2001</p> <p>March 2002</p> <p>October/ November 2001</p> |
| 13 CONSULTATION FOR UNITS | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |

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| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>13.1 Dundee has a number of specialist teams who can provide specialist advice to young people and to staff</p> <p>13.2 The input of staff from specialist teams has proved beneficial to the young people and staff in the unit</p> | <p>Consultation already provided by:-</p> <p>CHOICE Project Community Support Team Rowans Resource Team</p> | | |
| <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>13.1 The specialist workers from the Department eg CHOICE, The Rowans, Drug Action and Community Support Teams should continue to work with units in providing specialist advice and direct work with young people in the units</p> <p>13.2 Consideration should be given to setting up arrangements for external consultancy for the residential childcare units from experienced staff with special knowledge and interest in the work of residential care. The possible service from the Scottish Institution of Residential Child Care could be explored</p> <p>13.3 The opportunity to discuss with Tayside Mental Health Strategy Group the development of a team of health personnel who could get to know the units, the young people and the staff would also be a positive step forward. Such a team could provide early intervention when mental health difficulties arise. Models from other Councils could be explored and discussed</p> | | <p>These arrangements will continue</p> <p>Unit Managers and staff to discuss the potential uses of external consultancy</p> <p>See page 12, item 7.8 - plans in hand</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2002</p> |

| 14 THE ELMS | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>14.1 <i>The Elms has been opened and has been able to help some young people to regain control of their behaviour. There have been some notable successful outcomes</i></p> | <p><i>Secure Unit</i> 12 admissions since the unit opened 5 assessed as needing longer term secure provision 7 placed as per care plan to home or other positive provision</p> <p><i>Close Support Unit</i> 10 admissions since the unit opened 2 assessed as needing longer term secure provision 8 others placed positively as per care plan</p> <p><i>Overall</i> 70% of all admissions diverted from longer term secure accommodation.</p> | <p><i>Continue to develop the role and remit of The Elms in line with the aim of diverting young people from secure care</i></p> | <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> |
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>14.1 A review of the staffing levels required to provide safe and intensive care is already in process and should be completed and implemented as soon as possible</p> <p>14.2 The financial consequences of changes in staffing levels to provide safe care should be supported by the whole Council</p> <p>14.3 The major building related works that have been agreed as required to resolve the building and security issues at The Elms require to be completed as soon as possible</p> | <p>Staffing proposals in draft form. Consultation with staff and unions underway.</p> <p>Approved by Social Work Committee in May 2001. Detailed plans now complete and contractor appointed. Consultation with Social Work Inspectorate complete and works agreed as appropriate</p> | <p>Report to be presented to Social Work Committee. Implementation within 3 months</p> <p>Approval of report to Social Work Committee</p> <p>Contractor finalising programme of work Completion of all building work</p> | <p>Aug 2001</p> <p>Aug 2001</p> <p>June 2001 Sep 2001</p> |

| Recommendations (cont'd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| <p>14.4 The work that has been started to review the procedures within the unit for the wide range of situations that arise to resolve some of the early difficulties needs to be completed. The procedures for security, for supervised leave and for secure external activities offsite are all different in this setting from the other units and need to be clear and well understood by all staff</p> | <p>New procedures and policies are in place</p> | <p>Training is being provided for whole staff group and induction for new staff</p> | <p>July/August 2001</p> |
| <p>14.5 Consideration of how young people's personal space can be further respected should be part of the current review of policies and procedures at The Elms and attention given to the range of activities available for young people</p> | <p>Structured programme of interventions have been time-tabled to meet individual needs</p> | <p>The policy on the responsibilities, rights and privileges of young people resident at The Elms is to be completed</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>14.6 Time needs to be available when the procedures and maintenance tasks are nearing completion to enable staff teams in The Elms to work together to ensure that they fully understand the procedures and policies. It is essential for the staff to be able to provide a very consistent response to these young people who will be in opposition to many of the rules and procedures</p> | <p>See items 14.4 and 14.5</p> | <p>Team building and training will take place over a 4 week period in summer 2001</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |
| <p>14.7 The procedures need to address the different powers and responsibilities that the Council needs to exercise for young people in close support care from those in secure care</p> | <p>Currently being developed. Staffing proposals include the establishment of a secure care team and a close support team</p> | <p>Staff training and implementation of proposals within the report to be presented to Social Work Committee</p> | <p>August 2001</p> |

| 15 SECURE ACCOMMODATION AND EXTERNAL PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>15.1 <i>Detailed estimates of the funding needed for external placements are now available for forward planning and the allocation of the budgets of the Council</i></p> <p>15.2 <i>Monitoring and management reviews of placements are studied by key managers on a regular basis</i></p> <p>15.3 <i>There has been a good development of community resources in Dundee</i></p> | <p><i>Placement Review Group and Residential Resource Monitoring Group established</i></p> <p><i>These include:</i> <i>ACE Carers</i> <i>Revision of Family Placement Services</i> <i>Community Support Team</i> <i>CHOICE Project</i> <i>Rowans Resource Team</i></p> | | |

| Recommendations | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|--|--|-------------------|
| <p>15.1 Dundee City Council should continue to make budgetary provision for purchasing secure places and residential school places outside Dundee to meet the needs of these young people. This should be a budget with resources from Education and Social Work and the proportion of funds from each could be reviewed as each department carries equal responsibilities for the care and education of these young people</p> | <p>A report on residential school placement trends and their financial implications (including the continued need for provision for external service care) will be brought forward in view of a potential budget overspend. Representations have been made on this issue to the Scottish Executive</p> | <p>The development of criteria for residential school placements and very close monitoring of the demands on the corporate budget are to continue.</p> | |
| <p>15.2 The work in hand to assess the likely demand for secure placements and residential school placements needs to be completed and the outcome of this work presented to the Directors of Social Work and Education and to the Chief Executive as the best assessment of the demand for external placements that the Council will have to meet</p> | <p>See above</p> | <p>See above</p> | |
| <p>15.3 Community resource teams' staff should continue to work with young people in external secure care so that they can be helped to return successfully to Dundee when their care requires that move</p> | <p>This is included in the remit and targets for the Community Support Team</p> | | |
| <p>15.4 Strategic planning through the children's Services Planning process should continue to keep all the different parts of the service working together and provide the forum for debate about the direction and funding of these services</p> | | <p>The production of a new Children's Services Plan will provide a focus for this activity as will the multi-agency Child Health Strategy</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |

| 16 DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>16.1 <i>The work of resource team staff has developed innovative ways of working with young people</i></p> <p>16.2 <i>The development of family placements for more children with more complex difficulties is an important strand of the child care strategy</i></p> | <p><i>The Foster Care Strategy was approved by the Social Work Committee in March 2001</i></p> <p><i>Most carers are now on new terms of approval which will increase the availability of emergency care</i></p> | <p><i>Recommendations within the strategy are being implemented in this financial year, including an extension of the ACE Scheme from 6 to 8 carers</i></p> | <p><i>March 2002</i></p> |
| <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>16.1 Dundee should continue to develop community resources to work with young people at risk of being accommodated and with those in residential care</p> <p>16.2 The initiatives to tackle the problems of sexual exploitation should be maintained and the focus of the work through the Child Protection Sub Committee should continue to be the route for service development and awareness raising</p> <p>16.3 Opportunities for using the techniques of the CHOICE Project in residential childcare units should be explored to try to reduce offending behaviour of some of the residents</p> <p>16.4 A group of staff, young people resident in the units, "Who Cares?" and the Children's Rights Officer should be asked to explore the possibilities of a mediation service to help to resolve specific confrontational issues in units and reduce the levels of mistrust that can build up when disagreements continue</p> | | <p>Options to be considered for use of Rowans Resource Team. A proposal for further developing community resources are to be prepared</p> <p>See Page 10, item 7.1 and page 11, item 7.1</p> <p>This will be implemented at The Elms in the first instance</p> <p>A meeting will be convened by the Children's Rights Officer to discuss this possibility</p> | <p>November 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>October 2001</p> |

| 17 USING EXISTING SERVICES FOR STAFF SUPPORT | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>17.1 <i>Procedures are in place to deal with violent incidents and work is ongoing on the specific issues for social work settings</i></p> <p>17.2 <i>The Counselling Service continues to be valued by staff for the support and advice that counsellors give</i></p> | | | |
| <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>17.1 The procedures for managers responding to violent incident reports needs to be carefully followed so that workers are given time to discuss the incident and the impact on them and the young person. Young people also need to be given the opportunity to go over the incident and to work out their feelings and part in the events.</p> <p>The Service Manager needs to try to ensure that she is aware of the serious incidents and that a personal response is made when there is contact next in the unit.</p> <p>The importance of each staff member feeling that care is taken about them enhances their commitment and care for young people</p> <p>17.2 The Counselling Service supported by the Social Work Department should be continued and assessment made of the resources need to make this service readily available to the staff who request their help</p> <p>17.3 A complementary staff support service that could offer peer support for staff who are isolated from their workplace following an incident or allegation should be explored</p> <p>17.4 The selection and induction procedures for staff for posts in residential childcare need to include discussion about the attitudes and tolerance of the applicant to potential verbal or physical violence in their work</p> | <p>The Service Manager is made aware of all serious incidents</p> <p>These aspects are included within selection process and applicants are advised of the need to complete physical restraint training</p> | <p>In order to further develop the existing policy and procedure, a review to the reporting format is to be undertaken to ensure that step by step guidance is provided for managers and staff. One person will be responsible for quarterly monitoring</p> <p>A report analysing violent incidents is to be presented to the Directorate</p> <p>Training to be arranged for supervisors in post incident debriefing</p> <p>Additional options for following up on incidents are being explored, including the role of the Staff Counselling Service</p> <p>The needs of the residential child care services will be considered within the review of the Staff Counselling Service</p> <p>This option will be considered within the review of the Staff Counselling Service</p> <p>See page 19, item 10.8 Recruitment and Selection Consortium recommendations</p> | <p>March 2002</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>March 2002</p> <p>September 2001</p> <p>August 2001</p> |

| 18 COMMUNICATION <i>Achievements</i> 18.1 <i>The Director has made very public commitments in trying to ensure that communication in the department is improved and that staff feel that their concerns are listened to</i> | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>18.1 The Council should continue to seek to support staff to express their concerns about practice at any level</p> <p>18.2 The Director, Children's Service Manager and Service Managers should continue to appreciate that some staff have felt unsupported when raising concerns and that extra care is needed to try to understand some of the very deep-seated feelings which remain from some previous management approaches</p> <p>18.3 Staff need to have their responsibilities to the professional values of confidentiality for the service users and their responsibilities to use the council procedures to raise concerns and not the media restated</p> <p>18.4 The Director should review with senior managers in Children's Services what kind of regular meetings could be helpful in bringing together the different players in child and family work to enable managers to be accessible to a wide range of staff than is possible on an individual basis</p> <p>18.5 Methods for the most effective way of giving confidential briefings to members of the appropriate committees of the Council when sensitive and significant issues merge should be further examined</p> | <p><i>The Director has written to every staff member, reminding them of the various routes for raising concerns</i></p> <p>This point has been acknowledged and accepted</p> <p>This issue was covered in the Director's letter to staff</p> <p>The Directorate and Children's Services Management Team will implement regular meetings from August onwards See Page 2, Item 2.2 also</p> <p>Director of Social Work holds informal, confidential briefings, on occasions as the need arises</p> | <p>Staff to be reminded of the Council's "Whistle-blowing" policy with specific reference to examples from residential child care</p> <p>The need for an explicit confidentiality policy for the Social work Department is to be further examined</p> | <p>August 2001</p> <p>March 2002</p> <p>August 2001</p> <p>September 2001</p> |

| 19 MANAGING PUBLICITY | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|---|---------------------|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>19.1 <i>There is a greater recognition of the need for good publicity about the issues faced by the Council in providing social work services.</i></p> | | | |
| <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>19.1 The Council should continue to give employees clear information about using the appropriate channels for raising concerns or complaints</p> <p>19.2 The Council should continue to view seriously any breach of confidentiality by staff about the work of the department or the needs of young people who are “looked after”</p> <p>19.3 The Council should consider how some of the challenges and dilemmas of providing social work services can be brought to the attention of the public and how the media could help to raise awareness of the types of services that the Council provides and for whom</p> <p>19.4 The responses of elected members need to reflect an understanding of the complex issues that arise in delivering social work services. They need to be supportive publicly of their senior managers as they deliver services in difficult situations and to recognise the aspirations of their managers to achieve services that are the best that can be provided</p> | <p>A close working relationship has developed between Public Relations and the Social Work Department.</p> <p>Timely responses to media enquiries have been provided</p> | <p>See page 29, item 18.1</p> <p>See page 29, item 18.3</p> <p>Staff are being invited to speak on local radio about their jobs and how they achieve job satisfaction</p> <p>Human interest stories are to be provided for the local news media</p> <p>See page 29, item 18.5</p> | <p>October 2001</p> |

| 20 MISTAKES, NEGLIGENCE, BAD PRACTICE <i>Achievements</i> 20.1 <i>Management's willingness, in discussions about this review, to consider the differential responses to incidents including genuine mistakes is important.</i> | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p>Recommendations</p> <p>20.1 The Council's procedure for dealing with performance issues should be restated and the approach of managers dealing with these issues needs to be thorough, timeous and fair</p> <p>20.2 Mistakes will be made on occasions and managers need to differentiate them from negligence in their approach to an enquiry into the incidents</p> <p>20.3 Allegations must be taken seriously and the young person listened to carefully. In the past, from enquires of abuse in some councils across the UK, young people often did try to tell someone that abuse was happening and staff need to appreciate that managers will have to enquire about the allegation and that this will be a difficult time for all parties to the events</p> <p>20.4 The impact of allegations on staff has to be kept in mind throughout any investigation of an allegation. Speedy contact and appropriate support for the person about whom the allegation is made can reduce some of the future difficulties that they inevitably face</p> | <p>This approach was highlighted in Director's open letter to all staff outlining the management approach within the Social work Department</p> <p>All allegations are investigated under Dundee City Council Child Protection procedures for complaints procedures</p> <p>Every effort is being made to adhere to response times laid down within Operational Procedures</p> | <p>Exploration of these issues will be covered at The Elms in staff training.</p> <p>Other units to receive the same input.</p> <p>A training session to be arranged for managers in relation to performance management,</p> <p>It will be emphasised to managers that they must exercise judgement carefully whilst acting in accordance with Dundee City Council procedures</p> <p>Staff will be reminded of the procedures through team meetings and individual supervision and through the use of the Induction Pack</p> <p>Ways of supporting staff about whom allegations are made have been further examined within the Children's Services Management Team and amended procedures are to be sent out for consultation</p> | <p>August 2001</p> <p>September 2001</p> <p>December 2001</p> <p>July 2001</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2001</p> |

| 21 MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><i>Achievements</i></p> <p>21.1 <i>Despite pressures of work, and the complexity of the issues faced, managers at all levels have expressed to me their desire to see services improve and to surmount the current difficulties</i></p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>21.1 The Council should continue to recognise the difficult tasks involved in managing Children's Services</p> <p>21.2 In recruiting managers childcare services attention needs to be given to the style of management that is needed in this service. An ability to describe to staff the key values on which the work of the team is to be based, and how to translate those values into their practice, has been found to be a strong indicator of successful management of Children's Services</p> <p>21.3 As the service continues to consider further improvements in the provision of residential and community services for children and young people, the Children's Services Manager and Service Managers need to ensure that they are accessible to staff and involve them to discuss the way forward, and to hear the views of staff on any proposals for change</p> | <p>A Service Improvement Group for the Social Work Department has been set up to consider Rewards and Recognition for staff and managers</p> <p>Working Group on Staffing/Training has already been held with the full involvement of staff at all levels in the residential service</p> | <p>Proposals arising from this group will be implemented</p> <p>Person Specifications for management posts will reflect the importance of an appropriate value base in line with the management approach outlined in the Director's open letter to staff</p> <p>The Working group on Staffing/Training is to continue and report by March 2002</p> | <p>March 2002</p> <p>August 2002</p> <p>March 2002</p> |

| Recommendations (cont'd) | PROGRESS TO DATE | NEXT STEPS | TIMESCALE |
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| <p>21.4 The Children's Services Manager and Service Managers should consider how they can be involved with staff at a range of levels to ensure that all managers are in touch with the key issues for the service. Recognition is required that staff have high expectations of their senior managers to provide support to resolve difficult issues and to shape the services that are needed</p> | <p>Communication is a subject area for a Service Improvement Group across the whole department</p> | <p>Recommendations arising from the Service Improvement Group will be implemented</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |
| <p>21.5 The Council should ensure that in considering improvements in the service there is an assessment of the workloads of Senior Social Workers, Service Managers and the Children's Services Manager. (The management of the residential childcare units is already being considered as improvements are developed)</p> | | <p>The implications for management workloads of proposals for service improvement will be fully considered and the advice of the Personnel and Management Services sought</p> | <p>March 2002</p> |