

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Personnel and Management Services Committee - 24 June 2002

REPORT ON: Social Work Department - Establishment of Posts, Staff Development Service

REPORT BY: Director of Personnel and Management Services

REPORT NO: 453-2002

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report requests approval to establish five SVQ Assessor posts in the Staff Development Service. The posts are required to ensure the Social Work Department achieves a qualified workforce in line with new National Care Standards and Qualification Frameworks. The Committee is requested to note that the duties and responsibilities of these posts are already being carried out in the Social Work Department.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the establishment of 5 posts of SVQ Assessor, AP3 (£16,673 - £18,296).

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of the recommendations contained in this report will be £105,720 in a full financial year, which will be contained within the Social Work Staff Development Service's existing budget. The Committee is requested to note that the duties and responsibilities of these posts are already being carried out in the Social Work Department.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposal will further develop the quality of local social care services, supporting the commitment to maintain people independently in their own homes wherever possible.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This is a positive measure to support a predominantly female workforce achieve Scottish Vocational Qualifications, whilst helping to raise standards of practice and increase development opportunities.

6 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1 The Director of Social Work has undertaken a review of the Staff Development Service in order to ensure its ability to continue to support the development of SVQ assessment amongst staff employed by Dundee City Council.

The establishment of five SVQ Assessor posts will provide the resource required to achieve a high volume of qualified staff at appropriate levels. These posts will also provide development opportunities for existing Social Work staff, allowing them to gain the experience and skills required to become competent work based assessors.

The five Assessor posts will be primarily dedicated to assessing staff in service areas where there is a pressing need for high volume assessment. These posts will be permanently established but will be offered to employees on a secondment basis for a fixed period of 2 years, to ensure postholders will have up to date operational knowledge.

Assessors must be competent in the area of work in which the candidate is being assessed and familiar with the work context. An Assessor should be in a position to judge the competence of staff, possess a sound knowledge of the work content and understand the range of evidence required to prove that a staff member is working to the competence required to provide evidence for an SVQ.

- 6.2 The Social Work Department employs a high number (600) of care staff who have no formal or relevant qualification. There is increasing pressure and, in due course, it will become a legal requirement, to employ only staff with an appropriate qualification. These staff will have to be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council, the new national registration body based in Dundee. It is predicted that care related SVQs will become the standard qualifications for all staff employed within the health and care sector in Scotland, apart from staff who already have a relevant professional qualification such as Social Workers, Registered Nurses and Occupational Therapists.

The Home Care Service workforce is an example of a significant staff group, employed by the Social Work Department, requiring a formal qualification. The realignment of services to neighbourhoods was detailed in Report No. 748-2001 - Developing a Home Care Service (approved by Personnel and Management Services Committee on 10 December 2001). This group of staff are continuously working to develop the quality of service provided, within a context of change and joint working with colleagues from health and other agencies. They work to national care standards and are evolving into a competent and professional staff group. To maintain these standards of high quality home care provision and free personal care, they require an appropriate qualification. SVQs provide the qualification necessary for this particular group of staff.

- 6.3 The Social Work Department needs to train and maintain a significant number of social care staff. Opportunities for staff to undertake SVQs, whilst employed by the Council, will increase the department's ability to attract new staff, in an increasingly competitive market. Furthermore, the opportunity for staff to train to become SVQ Assessors, and to be seconded to the Staff Development Service, will provide openings for experienced staff to gain further qualifications and supervisory experience. Full time Assessors employed by the department provide the best option for SVQ assessment. It is essential that good links are maintained between Assessors and operational line managers, to ensure that sensitive practice issues are addressed and client confidentiality is protected.

7 CONSULTATION

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

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

9 SIGNATURE

Director of Personnel and Management Services

Date