

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Personnel and Management Services Committee - 20 October 2003

**REPORT ON:** Social Work Department - Establishment of Additional Fixed Term Posts - Video Interactive Guidance (VIG) Development Officers

**REPORT BY:** Director of Social Work and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

**REPORT NO:** 636-2003

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report requests approval to establish two VIG Development Officer posts (fixed term for one year) within the Social Work Department's Staff Development Service. The post holders will lead on the development of VIG as an approach to improving service delivery and to enhancing staff communication skills, and interactions with others, both within the Department and with staff in other agencies

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the establishment of two posts of VIG Development Officer (fixed term of one year), graded at AP 4/5 +1 (SCP 27-35) £19,632-£24,888.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The cost of the above posts will be £24,000 in 2003/04 and £35,000 in 2004/05. This will be met from the reallocation of existing resources within the Social Work Department's Revenue Budget.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposal will develop the quality and effectiveness of social work services for users across Dundee, furthering the Council's commitment to supporting children within their own families and adults independently in their own homes wherever possible.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## 6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 VIG is a new and innovative technique which was originally developed in the Netherlands to help promote positive interactions between parents and their children and improve communication and relationships in families. The approach was used with individual families in their own homes and involves a 5 - 10 minute film being made of family members together. These films are then micro-analysed by a professional trained in this approach known as a Video Interaction Guider. Selected clips of successful interactions are used as a focus for discussion with individual families to help them recognise how their positive interactions help communication and to provide the opportunity for them to build on their communication skills.
- 6.2 Evaluative studies carried out in the Netherlands show VIG to have a success rate of 60%-70% and it is viewed as a powerful approach which can effect positive change in the challenging area of family relationships where other approaches have in the past proved much less effective. It is proposed that VIG is successful because it changes individual levels of self-awareness, and through a process of self-modelling supported by the Video Interaction Guider, promotes positive changes in communication, interactions and relationships in families.
- 6.3 As such, VIG has a significant contribution to make to the services offered by the Social Work Department, both in terms of facilitating the assessment of interactions between parents and their children, and providing a technique which empowers parents to identify and to make positive changes in their own communication patterns with their children.
- 6.4 VIG is now also being used to positive effect in direct work with adults with a range of different needs living in a variety of different care and community settings. Experience is growing for instance of the benefits of VIG to adults with learning disabilities as it helps improve individual insight, social skills and relationships with others.
- 6.5 In addition, VIG as an approach and technique is being used to enhance the skills and abilities of supervisors and managers responsible for providing supervision, and support to staff delivering services to children, adults and families. In the Netherlands VIG and the principles upon which it is based are used as a tool and a total management approach within their Social Services , with video being used in meetings, supervision sessions, training activities etc to allow the opportunity for analysing and building upon workers' communication skills. This can lead to more effective management of meetings, improved working relationships and staff support systems at both a team and corporate level.
- 6.6 Dundee City Council's Social Work Department first began training staff in the use of VIG in February 1999. The majority of Social Work staff trained and in training in the use of VIG are employed within Children's Services, but there is representation amongst the Trainee group of staff from Criminal Justice Services, as well as a growing number of staff from Community Care. Because VIG as an approach and technique is practice based, trainees are involved from the outset of their training in using VIG in direct work with service users or other staff. It is estimated that to date in excess of 200 individual service users and staff have benefitted from either the direct provision of a VIG service or the use of VIG for staff support and development.

- 6.7 The Social Work Department recognises that effective communication skills are a core competence not only for front line staff involved in direct work with service users, but also for supervisors and managers. A significant investment in terms of resources and staff time have already been made in VIG towards this end and a Departmental communication strategy is being developed which will incorporate VIG as a one of its main cornerstones.
- 6.8 As part of this strategy, it is proposed that 2 new posts of VIG Development Officer be established on a temporary basis for 1 year to lead on the development of VIG as an approach to improving service delivery and to improving staff communication skills and interactions with others.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (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.

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10 October 2003

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10 October 2003