

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Personnel and Management Services Committee - 13 January 2003

REPORT ON: Social Work Department - Establishment of Additional Post

REPORT BY: Director of Social Work and Director of Personnel and Management Services

REPORT NO: 817-2002

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report seeks approval to establish a Customer Care Officer post, to allow effective operation of the statutory Social Work complaints procedure.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the establishment of a Part Time (18.5 hours) Customer Care Officer post, PO3-6, SCP37-40 (£25,241 - £27,479 pro rata).

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Provision has been made within the Social Work Revenue Budget for the cost of establishing the post of Customer Care Officer. The cost will be £15,350 in a full financial year (£3,840 in 2002/03).

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The appointment of a Customer Care Officer will enable service users to raise their concerns and have these responded to and acted on.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The complaints procedure allows all citizens to raise complaints. In addition, the appointment to this post will be made in line with the Council's equal opportunities policy.

6 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Background

- 6.1.1 The requirement for Social Work Departments to operate a dedicated complaint procedure was detailed in Section 5B of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and Section 52 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. Specific guidance to advise Local Authorities on the operation of the procedure was issued by the Scottish Office and further revised in 1996 (SWSG5/1996). This guidance remains intact.
- 6.1.2 Dundee City Council, in line with a number of Local Authorities, aligned the task of recording and monitoring the complaints procedure alongside that of the Registration and Inspection function, within the Quality Assurance Unit. The Head of Registration and Inspection held the responsibility for monitoring and recording complaints. This post holder also compiled an annual report, which detailed the effectiveness of the complaints procedure, gave an analysis of the complaints received and the actions taken in response to complaints. The Administration Assistant within the Quality Assurance Unit carried out the administration, recording and mentoring of complaints. Statistical management information was reported to the Social Work Directorate on a bi-monthly basis.
- 6.1.3 In April 2002, the function of registration and inspection moved from the Council to the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care. The statutory responsibility for maintaining and operating a complaints procedure remained with the Local Authority. Prior to the move, an examination of the work carried out by individual Registration and Inspection Teams was completed. The time spent by the team carrying out non-transferable tasks was identified and the monetary resources for these tasks remained with the Local Authority. The resources associated with the monitoring of the complaints procedure will fund the appointment of the post detailed within this report.

6.2 Maintaining the Complaints Procedure

- 6.2.1 An examination of the Social Work Department's current complaints procedure has highlighted a number of areas for further development, namely:
- The need to maintain dedicated time to ensure that co-ordination and the monitoring of complaints is in place.
 - The integration of the complaints procedure into other quality assurance systems to ensure best practice is developed and service standards are met.
 - The identification of key development and training issues arising from complaints received.
 - The review of the current complaints procedures to take account of complaints regarding commissioned services and to develop the links between the Local Authority complaints procedures and the Commission for the Regulation of Care and the Scottish Social Services Council.
 - Introduction of an effective system for first level (informal) complaints, which records and monitors the complaints made at this level and produces comprehensive management information.

6.2.2 To meet the requirements of the statutory complaints procedure and to further improve the current procedure, the appointment of a part time Customer Care Officer is needed.

6.3 **Customer Care Officer Post**

6.3.1 The purpose of this post will be:

- To administer the Social Work Complaints Procedure on behalf of the Director of Social Work.
- To monitor the use of the complaints procedure and ensure its effective application.
- To advise Departmental Managers and agencies under arrangement with the Department on the use of the procedure.
- To collate information from complaints received for the purpose of quality control and continuous improvement.
- To investigate complaints as directed by the Director of Social Work.

6.3.2 The postholder will report to the Section Leader, Strategy and Performance Service.

7 **CONSULTATION**

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

8 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 The following Papers were referred to in the preparation of this report.

Circular SWSG5/1996 - Local Authority Complaints Procedure.

Alan B. Baird
Director of Social Work

13 December 2002

J.C. Petrie
Director of Personnel and Management Services

13 December 2002

JOB DESCRIPTION – SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

IDENTIFICATION

POST TITLE Customer Care Officer (Part Time)
 SERVICE: Strategy and Performance Service
 RESPONSIBLE TO: Section Leader, Strategy and Performance Service
 RESPONSIBLE FOR

JOB PURPOSE

To administer the Social Work Complaints Procedure on behalf of the Director of Social Work.

To monitor the use of the complaints procedure and ensure its effective application.

To advise Departmental Managers and agencies under arrangement with the Department on the use of the procedure.

To collate information from complaints received for the purpose of quality control and continuous improvement.

To investigate complaints as directed by the Director of Social Work.

PRINCIPAL WORKING CONTACTS

Service users, including their carers and representatives

Departmental Managers and Service Manager Teams

Managers of Agencies

Council Solicitor

Scottish Complaints Officer Network

The Scottish Executive

Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care

The Mental Welfare Commission

Consumers Legal Representatives

Elected Members

Scottish Social Services Council

MAIN DUTIES

- 1 To acknowledge receipt of complaints and to contact the complainer and senior officers as necessary.
- 2 To prepare briefings as required including the annual report on complaints received, highlighting common themes, staff training and development issues, and the effectiveness of the procedure.
- 3 To collate information from formal and informal complaints received for the purposes of quality control, continuous service improvement and staff training.
- 4 To ensure that information arising from complaints is incorporated into the planning process to inform service development.
- 5 To ensure that the information regarding service standards and performance, which develops from complaints, is linked to other quality assurance systems within the Department.
- 6 To mentor and encourage the implementation of the action plans arising from complaints.
- 7 To advise managers and Elected Members on the use of the Complaints Procedure.
- 8 To promote staff understanding of the Complaints Procedure and the positive benefits of dealing with complaints effectively, through the organisation and delivery of staff training and through participation in team meetings.
- 9 To advise service users on the use of the Complaints Procedure and to deal initially with telephone complaints on behalf of the Directorate.
- 10 To develop in consultation with appropriate other staff means of raising consumer awareness of the Complaints Procedure.
- 11 To ensure that supplies of publicity material on complaints are widely available.
- 12 To ensure that there are equal opportunities for service users in using the Complaints Procedure and in responding to complaints.
- 13 To act as the designated Senior Officer to investigate complaints when so required by the Director of Social Work.
- 14 To monitor the application of the complaint procedures used by agencies providing services on behalf of the Department.
- 15 To liaise with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care designated officer in relation to complaints about services that are subject to registration and inspection by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.
- 16 To provide information to the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care as required.
- 17 To liaise with the Scottish Social Services Council as appropriate.

18 To contribute as required to the compilation of statistical returns on complaints.

OTHER MAIN DUTIES

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

Date prepared 27.10.02