

**EAST AYRSHIRE
COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
SOCIAL WORK STANDBY SERVICE**

4th April, 2011

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of the intention of East Ayrshire Council to:
- 1) Notify Glasgow City Council that we wish to withdraw from the current Social Work Standby arrangements and give the required 12 months notice.
 - 2) Agree to work in partnership with North Ayrshire Council and South Ayrshire Council to establish a local out of hours Social Work Service for Ayrshire and Arran.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Glasgow City Council operate a Standby Social Work service alongside and on behalf of authorities across the West of Scotland. This service operates from 4.45 p.m. until 9.00 a.m. weekdays and on a 24 hour basis at weekends and holidays.
- 2.2 Standby deliver emergency Social Work Services for 11 Local authorities. This arrangement was put in place at local government reorganisation in 1996. At this time all of the West of Scotland Local Authorities agreed to contract Glasgow City Council to deliver an out of hours and emergency Social Work Service on their behalf. In 2009 both North and South Lanarkshire decided to provide their own service and withdrew from the contract.
- 2.3 The services which are used by local authorities vary dependent primarily on geographical proximity. Standby Services provide a full emergency service for the following local authorities:
- Glasgow City Council
 - Renfrewshire Council
 - North Ayrshire Council
 - West Dunbartonshire Council
 - East Ayrshire Council

- East Dunbartonshire Council
- Inverclyde Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Council

This service includes:

- Call Handling
- Initial Assessment
- Assessment and Care Management
- MHO Duties
- Child Protection Duties
- Adult Protection Duties
- Emergency Accommodation Duties

- 2.4 For Dumfries & Galloway and Argyll & Bute Council's (with the exception of the Helensburgh area) Standby provide a call handling service and service responses are co-ordinated by Standby, but the professional on call service is provided by the individual Local Authority. This arrangement is reflected in their financial contribution. These authorities currently pay 75% of the referral costs
- 2.5 Discussion has taken place between officers of the three Ayrshire Councils and NHS Ayrshire and Arran to consider developing an out of hours service model, based on the best available practice and experience. Those discussions have focussed around the possible development of a service to be based alongside a strategic partner such as the NHS ADOC service.
- 2.6 Over recent years inspection reports in respect of Social Work Performance and our joint Child Protection arrangements have made comment on the out of hours service and particularly around the accessibility of the service.

(Social Work Inspection Agency, Performance Inspection East Ayrshire Council 2009)

The West of Scotland out-of-hours service provided social work services. We heard that the out-of-hours G.P. service found it hard to get through to this service. This had improved since council staff had received a direct dial number. Foster carers still had problems contacting the service and they tended to contact the police rather than the standby service. East Ayrshire and the two other Ayrshire authorities were reviewing this service and considering the option of providing the service themselves across the three authorities.

(Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People in the East Ayrshire Council Area, 11 March 2010)

Social Workers in Initial Response Teams identify and assess risks to children effectively. However, risk assessments provided by the out-of-hours social work service remain variable.

(Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People in the East Ayrshire Area, January 2008)

(i) There were many examples of members of the public reporting concerns to both the police and social workers. Members of the public who did not have direct contact with children were vigilant and confident about taking effective action to protect children, for example, shop retailers. Although a 24 hour contact number was widely advertised some staff and members of the public had difficulty accessing a social worker to report their concerns to, particularly the West of Scotland Social Work Standby Service.

(ii) There were consistent difficulties encountered by a range of professionals and carers when attempting to contact the West of Scotland Social Work Standby Service.

(iii) Out of hours, social work assessments were not detailed enough...A social worker was not always available out of hours to carry out joint investigations

- 2.7 The Service contract specifies that the agreement is renewable on a triennial basis. This period comes to and end in March 2012. The contract between councils requires at least 12 months notice to be given before the end of the financial year. As a consequence, we need to give notice in March 2011 in order to withdraw from the service in 2012. If we do not meet the March deadline we will not be able to withdraw until 2013.
- 2.8 Glasgow City have indicated that they are currently redesigning Standby services. Glasgow City are keen to have an indication of future plans from the Ayrshire authorities.

3 PROFILE OF CURRENT SERVICE ACTIVITY

3.1 Information from Glasgow City Council on Standby Service usage for the period 1 January to 31 December 2010 is as follows:-

Call Outs -Total

	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
Call Out, Urgent	69	85	38	192
Call Out, Non Urgent	2	2	0	4
No Call Out, Urgent	978	1261	571	196
No Call Out, Non Urgent	570	806	350	1726
Total	1619	2154	959	4732

Call Outs-Reason

	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Total
Children and Families	1266	1563	555	3384
Mental Disorder	87	125	88	300
Other	266	466	316	3684
Total	1619	2154	959	4732

3.2 It is evident that the majority of contacts with this service are by telephone and actual home visits made are minimal, averaging 6 per calendar month (East Ayrshire), 7 (North Ayrshire) and 3 for South Ayrshire.

3.3 The financial contribution of the three Councils are:-

North Ayrshire	£248,656
South Ayrshire	£120,428
East Ayrshire	£227,160

Charges are based on the number of referrals by Standby with an 8% management fee added on.

- 3.4 Some comparison work has begun and a visit was undertaken by officers from East Ayrshire to an out of hours service which covered 3 local authority areas, and was co-terminous with the health board. The service covered a population of 300,000 and cost £400,000 per annum to run excluding homecare out of hours services. The service is staffed by an internal secondment arrangement across the three councils providing developmental opportunities across the staff group. There are four senior social workers and a bank of 30 sessional staff who are paid at an hourly rate when called upon. Each authority operates a different information system which can present challenges. These costs do not include management, training and development and apportioned costs.

There is positive integration across day and out of hours services due to the fact they are accommodated within the same building and work is crossed over including check visits out of hours.

- 3.5 A further visit was undertaken to a local authority who have established a single authority service, with their neighbouring authority doing likewise - both authorities share one health board area. The service covers a population of 325,520 and costs in the region of £350,000 per annum. These costs do not include management, training and development and apportioned costs.

Staffing of the service comprises; one service manager, two senior social workers, and 3.5 social workers. The service provides an emergency response rather than an out of hours service.

4 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Initial discussions with the NHS are encouraging. A combined three councils and NHS out of hours service would have a number of advantages;

- A combined contact centre for the citizens of Ayrshire.
- Single point of contact for other emergency agencies.
- Possibility of better aligned responses between the councils and the NHS, for example, around home care support for those at risk of emergency admission to hospital or care homes.

As part of option appraisal we will further consider the proposed partnership with NHS and other strategic partners such as Strathclyde Police.

Para 3.2 above indicates that there are less than 4 call outs to Ayrshire each week. All local options provide significant enhancement of service capacity supporting preventative models of intervention being developed across functions in each of the Council areas.

- 4.2 In the event of failure to agree arrangements with partners outwith local government, it is proposed that a pan Ayrshire model is developed and located within one of the current Council facilities. An option would be to link with an existing 24/7 facility such as a Community Alarm Service or similar, these services may benefit from further shared services review.

5. LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and subsequent legislation for delivery of effective Social Work services this includes a response outwith office working hours. The proposals in this report seek to enhance current arrangements for the delivery of services.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is intended that the redesign of out of hours social work services will be within resources available to the Service and will deliver best value through service improvement.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 7.1 The provision of effective Social Work services supports the Improving Health and Wellbeing and Improving Community Safety themes of the Community Plan.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Proposals within this report seek to improve continuity of Social Work services to the most vulnerable people in our communities, and contribute to address risks to individuals, the Council and our communities.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed at this time and consideration will be given to proposals as they are developed to ensure there will be no disproportional negative impact on any single group.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the CHP committee support the recommendations to :-

- (i) Agree to negotiate with Glasgow City with a view to all three Councils giving 12 months notice in March 2011.

- (ii) That officers will develop options for a pan-Ayrshire service alongside the strategic partners or based within one of the local authorities.
- (iii) That a further update will be presented to a future CHP committee as the model is developed.

Eddie Fraser
Co-chair, OLG (Adults)

March 2011

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Social Work Inspection Agency, Performance Inspection, East Ayrshire Council 2009
2. Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People in the East Ayrshire Council Area, 11 March 2010
3. Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People in the East Ayrshire Area, January 2009