

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 23 MARCH 2006

REPORT OF THE 21st CENTURY SOCIAL WORK REVIEW: CHANGING LIVES

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Social Work Committee of the recent publication of the National report of the 21st Century Social Work Review; advise Social Work Committee of the Scottish Executive response to this report and to recommend the next steps in East Ayrshire in light of key findings and recommendations contained in the report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 21st Century Social Work Review was an independent review, commissioned in the Summer of 2004 by the Scottish Executive to take a fundamental look at all aspects of Social Work in order to strengthen its contribution to the delivery of integrated services.

- 2.2 In particular the Review Group was tasked to: -

- (i) Define the role and purpose of Social Workers and the Social Work profession.
- (ii) Identify improvements in the organisation and delivery of Social Work Services.
- (iii) Develop a strong quality improvement framework and culture, supported by robust inspection.
- (iv) Strengthen leadership and management giving clear direction to the service.
- (v) Ensure a competent and confident workforce.
- (vi) Review and if necessary modernise legislation.

- 2.3 The Review Group comprised of a variety of professionals across a number of disciplines, including Social Work.

3. CHANGING LIVES

- 3.1 The Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review “Changing Lives” was launched on Tuesday 7 February 2006.
- 3.2 The Report highlights a number of strengths in and challenges to raise Social Work practice in Scotland which include: -
- (i) Social service workers delivering essential services to some of our most vulnerable people. Within this there were countless examples of services transforming people’s lives and protecting them and their communities.
 - (ii) There was evidence of many strengths upon which to build upon, not least practitioners working successfully in the most challenging of circumstances, making fine judgements about risk.
 - (iii) Social Work’s knowledge, skills and value base were seen as highly relevant to society’s changing needs with Social Work Services dealing skilfully with complex problems.
 - (iv) An appetite for performance improvement and new inspection arrangements was evident.
 - (v) There were unreasonable expectations of what services could do to sort out society’s problems.
 - (vi) Evidence of services and workers being overwhelmed by bureaucracy and systems, often gathering information that served little purpose.
 - (vii) The expectation of citizens of the 21st Century for more accessible, responsive public services of the highest quality. Resulting in people expecting more and more of a fixed resource which is highly unsustainable.

4. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Key recommendations within the report centre around 3 themes: -
- Building capacity to deliver personalised services
 - Building the capacity of the workforce
 - Building capacity for sustainable change

Within these themes 13 key recommendations are made:-

- (i) Social Work services must be designed and delivered around the needs of people who use services, their carers and communities.

- (ii) Social Work services must build individual, family and community capacity to meet their own needs.
- (iii) Social Work services must play a full and active part in a public sector wide approach to prevention and earlier intervention.
- (iv) Social Work services must become an integral part of a whole public sector approach to supporting vulnerable people and promoting social well-being.
- (v) Social Work services must recognise and effectively manage the mixed economy of care in the delivery of services.
- (vi) Social Work services must develop a new organisational approach to managing risk, which ensures the delivery of safe, effective and innovative practice.
- (vii) Employers must make sure that social workers are enabled and supported to practise accountably and exercise their professional autonomy.
- (viii) Social Work services must develop a learning culture that commits all individuals and organisations to lifelong learning and development.
- (ix) Social Work services should be delivered by effective teams designed to incorporate the appropriate mix of skills and expertise and operating with delegated authority and responsibilities.
- (x) Social Work services must develop enabling leadership and effective management at all levels and across the system.
- (xi) Social Work services must be monitored and evaluated on the delivery of improved outcomes for people who use services, their carers and communities.
- (xii) Social Work services should develop the capacity and capability for transformational change by focusing on re-designing services and organisational development.
- (xiii) The Scottish Executive should consolidate in legislation the new direction of Scottish social work services.

5. THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

5.1 The Scottish Executive welcomed the findings of the 21st Century Social Work Review. At this stage the Executive has outlined what they will take forward as being particularly important and includes: -

- (i) Establish a system for setting national priorities in social work services as the basis of providing clarity of purpose and prioritising future action;
- (ii) Deliver a culture of continuous improvement in service delivery through a new performance improvement framework;
- (iii) Establish a rolling process for driving social work service redesign at the local level on an inter-agency basis;
- (iv) Invest in developing the leadership the profession will need into the future;
- (v) Strengthen the role of the Chief Social Work Officer and emphasise a responsibility for professional leadership and governance;
- (vi) Create the framework and support for front line social workers to have more devolved authority and operate more autonomously within an accountable framework;
- (vii) Support the creation of new opportunities for skilled front line social workers to remain in front line practices for their whole career;
- (viii) Encourage the development of a new para-professional role to work under the direction of social workers and equipped to work across professional boundaries, promoting joined up working;
- (ix) Ensure that people who use services and their carers have ever greater choice and involvement in decisions about their own care and the design and delivery of services, through new approaches to the co-production of services;
- (x) Expect our universities and colleges to work together and with stakeholders to review current programmes of education and training to ensure they equip our next generation of workers with the skills they will need to meet the demands of modernised practice and that our universities and colleges are active participants in the change process;
- (xi) Legislate to give Ministers and Parliament powers in setting national priorities and the performance improvement framework and provide a new foundation for social work services based on improving personal and community wellbeing;

- (xii) Deliver additional resources to support the change process following further consideration of a detailed implementation plan and steer required in a co-ordinated way through a Cabinet Delivery Group of key Ministers.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive intends to take forward the development of Social Work Services in the context of wider public service reform, which will in turn require universal services to engage in change.
- 6.2 In driving forward the change programme key issues can begin to be addressed now, with others following after further consideration.
- 6.3 Early emphasis is placed on the following: -
 - (i) National priorities for Social Work within a new performance framework.
 - (ii) Personalised services delivered by a well informed and competent workforce.
 - (iii) New systems and approach to increase devolved responsibilities and new governance arrangements.
 - (iv) Redefining and strengthening the role of the Chief Social Work Officer.
 - (v) Shifting the focus from welfare to wellbeing.
- 6.4 The Scottish Executive intend to enter into further dialogue with all interested parties on the detailed implications of the reviews findings. This will inform a full implementation plan to be published later in the year.
- 6.5 The Scottish Executive have arranged to visit East Ayrshire on 4 April 2006 to discuss the report findings in more detail. All Social Work Committee members are invited to one of the seminars planned.

7. MOVING FORWARD IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 7.1 In order to address the emerging strategic direction of Social Work it is proposed that the Executive Head of Social Work continues to explore the implications associated with the key findings identified in Section 5.1 in order to prepare the Social Work Service in East Ayrshire for full implementation of the Review.
- 7.2 In addition the Executive Head of Social Work will further consider the implications of rising public expectations and changing needs against available resources and the consequence of the proposed shift from welfare to wellbeing.

7.3 It is proposed that the Executive Head of Social Work reports back on these matters to Social Work Committee in due course.

8. AGENDA FOR ACTION

8.1 Given the level of inspection and regulation now impinging on Social Work Services, i.e. Social Work Inspection Agency, Care Commission, National Standards, Mental Welfare Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Audit Scotland, a re-defined performance and quality framework, in line with best practice will be put in place. This will be in line with any recommendations emerging from the Review Report and the Council's existing Performance Management Framework.

8.2 Workforce Planning is already in hand and will be further informed by the requirements of the Review to ensure a competent and confident workforce.

8.3 The Social Work Budget is regularly monitored and reported to the Budget Scrutiny Group. As a result, the Executive Head of Social Work is fully informed in respect of any issues. The budget is essentially linked to planning processes and the delivery of essential Social Work Services in East Ayrshire. One issue that remains outstanding that requires addressing is that of sustainability within the budget. This requires to be taken forward in a planned manner having regard to, for example the strategic direction of Older People's Services, any remaining Non-Statutory services and, any hotspots in the budget.

8.4 The efficient and effective management of information systems is essential, particularly at a time where the Social Work Service is expanding and changing. Consequently, a review of current systems will be undertaken to strengthen existing arrangements across and between organisations where this is needed.

8.5 A desk top review of Strategic Planning in Social Services within East Ayrshire as benchmarked against Audit Scotland's Priorities and Risk Framework outlined several areas which Social Work intend to address in planning future services. These include the need to develop more effective information systems; more robust performance arrangements; and greater clarity in respect of resource allocation. The Social Work Management Team is working on this agenda and the Executive Head of Social Work has met with the External Auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, to strengthen future service delivery arrangements within a sustainable budget.

8.5.1 Service Unit Based Actions: -

Across all units

- (i) Ensure an effective Communication Strategy is developed across the Social Work Service.

- (ii) Continue to improve the suite of management information and resources.
- (iii) Reduce absence management levels.
- (iv) Develop a standard approach to continuous professional development based on Best Value Practice.
- (v) Develop consistency of approach of risk assessment tools across the 5 service units.
- (vi) Explore further responsibilities for single management arrangements across Health and Social Work Services.

8.5.2 Service Unit Specific Actions: -

Criminal Justice

- (i) Reshape the Criminal Justice Partnership into a Community Justice Authority.

Community Care Adults

- (i) Improve access to person centred training.

Community Care Fieldwork

- (i) Develop a plan for all Home Care staff to gain relevant qualifications, building on successes in this area to date.

Community Care Older People and Health

- (i) Develop operational guidance and procedures for staff.

Children and Families

- (i) Further develop Social Work resources to ensure safe social work services.
- (ii) Strengthen Social Work presence in Learning Partnership arrangements to build on Joint Working arrangements.

9. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no immediate issues, however, proposals to make legislative changes will become clearer in due course.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There will be resource implications which are as yet undetermined. This is acknowledged in the initial Scottish Executives response.

11. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report supports the Improving Opportunities and Eliminating Poverty themes within the Community Plan

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Social Work Committee is asked to:-

- (i) Note the key issues contained in this report;
- (ii) Note the Scottish Executives response;
- (iii) Agree that the Executive Head of Social Work continues to work on the strategic direction of Social Work Services and issues of sustainability outlined in the Agenda For Action in point 8;
- (iv) To note that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services will submit a report to a future Social Work Committee to identify any implications and proposals for East Ayrshire Council, Social Work Services in respect of the key findings of the review; and
- (v) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew

Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JD/HC

6 March 2006

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (1) Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, Changing Lives, 2006
- (2) Scottish Executive Response to the Report of 21st Century Social Work Review, 2006
- (3) Priorities and Risk Framework, Audit Scotland, 2005

For further information on this report please contact:-
Jackie Donnelly, Executive Head of Social Work, Telephone: 01563 576917

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY