

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 19 MAY 2005

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of the publication of the annual Standards and Quality Report for the Department of Educational and Social Services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 East Ayrshire was one of the first Councils to publish a standards and quality report for its services. Since that time, a document has been published annually as part of the framework for public performance reporting. The report has also played an important part in the improvement planning cycle, since it represents a clear statement of the progress and achievements within the service.

3. THIS YEAR'S REPORT

- 3.1 In the early part of 2004 senior officers of the Department of Educational and Social Services met as a Quality Forum. It was the view of the group that upto this point Standards and Quality reports had served a useful purpose. However, the particular and traditional focus (notably educational achievement and school based services) no longer reflected the integrated nature of the Department. On the other hand a report that covered all aspects of the Department's work would be unwieldy. What was needed was a document that was simultaneously comprehensive while still being specific enough to be of interest to both practitioners and service users.
- 3.2 In order to meet this need, a report has now been produced. It uses an innovative format. The key feature of this new document is that it is presented in special-to-purpose folder. Thereafter, reports have been produced which are specific to the various service areas within the Department. A copy of the full departmental report is available in the Member's Information Point.
- 3.3 Of particular note is the fact that within this structure there now exists separate reports for both Community Learning and Development and Social Work. It is believed that these two are the first such documents in Scotland, representing a significant development in public performance reporting for both services. Moreover, it means that information is now available on these services which is linked to an overall improvement process. Therefore, public accountability has also been improved. The Social Work report is included at Appendix A.

- 3.4 A report has also been compiled for Onsite services, recognising the significant contribution made by this service unit to the lives of people in East Ayrshire and the Department. This also reflects the role that Onsite plays in the delivery of initiatives that have strong educational and social dimensions – most notably “Hungry for Success”.
- 3.5 In addition to the general report on school-based education, there is a specific report on Early Years’ Services. This reflects the distinctive place of this service in the life of the Department. In the past early years has been contained within the general educational report. It was felt though, that a clear and distinct statement on early years would be of specific interest to parents and staff.
- 3.6 These individual reports are concise, readable and contain a wealth of factual information. They will be of interest to workers within the services of the department and to their colleagues. Most importantly there is information that will be of interest to particular service users. Individually, and as a whole, they describe the considerable achievements within the Department. They provide an opportunity to celebrate success.

4. POLICY/LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report contains considerable information which is of direct relevance to areas of progress within most themes of the Community Plan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members:
- (i) note this report will also be considered by the Education Committee; and
 - (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
10 May 2005
Enc (1)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

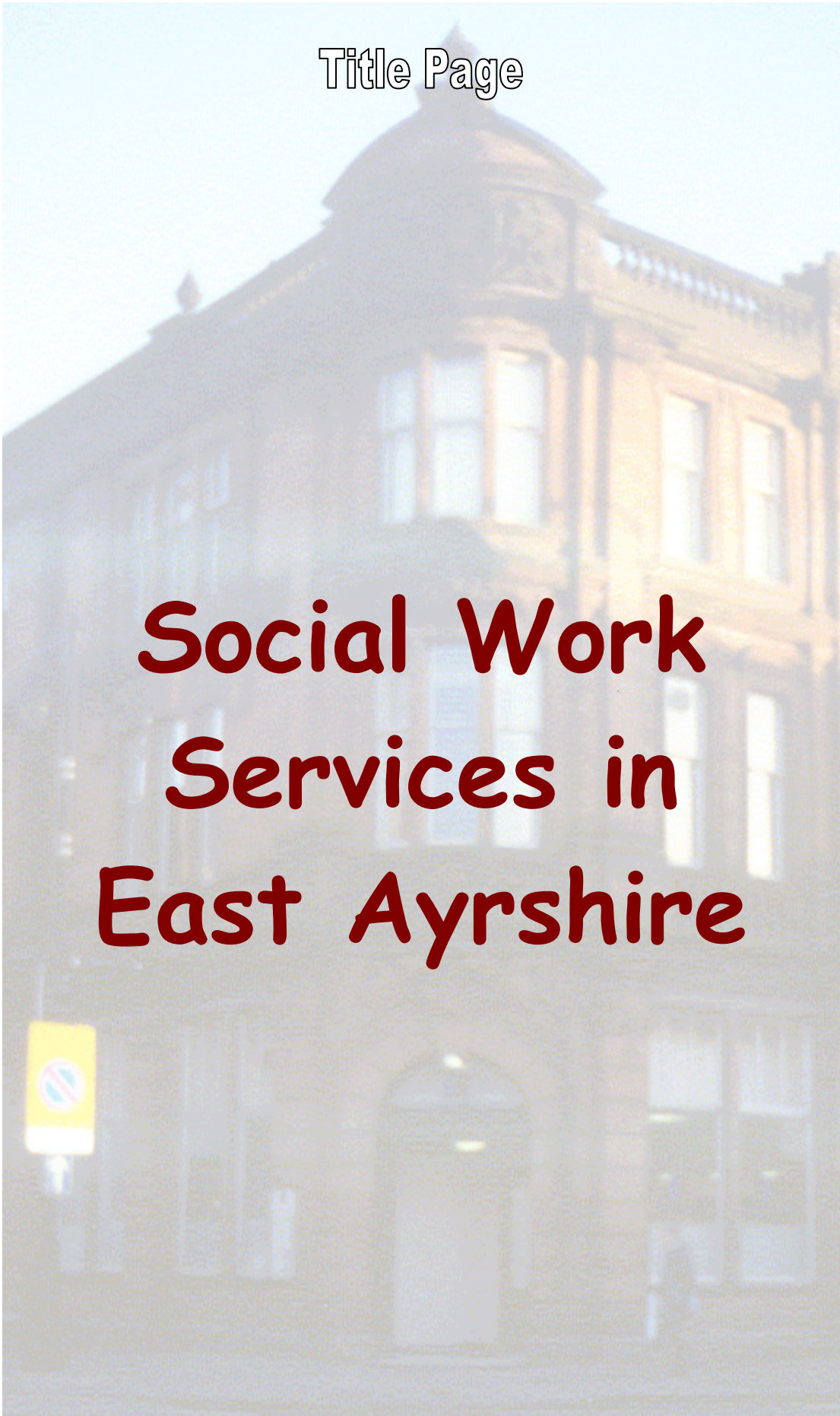
1. Further Developments in Approaches to Quality Within Social Work Services, Social Work Committee 24 January 2004

Members requiring further information should contact:
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Implementation Officer: Graham Short

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Social Work Services in East Ayrshire



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JUSTICE MINISTER OPENS NEW CHILDREN'S UNIT Thursday, March 17, 2005

A new Intensive Support Unit which will help young people to address their behaviour was officially opened by Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson in Kilmarnock last week.

Based in Montgomery Place, the Unit is a four-bedroomed house in which four young people will be provided with intensive support and intervention to help turn around their behaviour and return them to their communities. Staffed by residential care workers, the Unit will also be supported by education staff and social workers from the Council's Youth Justice Team.

The Unit is funded by the Scottish Executive through the Intensive Support Fund which was introduced in 2002 to enable local authorities and voluntary organisations to increase the level of community-based supervision of young offenders and to improve support for those returning to their communities from secure accommodation.



Cathy Jamieson said: "The Executive's aim is to provide the best services for all young people. For the most vulnerable young people, that might mean a period of highly intensive support to reduce the risk they present to themselves or others.

"Part of the challenge is to get the infrastructure right. So I am delighted to see such a high quality new facility starting to operate in Kilmarnock, a well thought out development that provides an excellent environment for the young people who need intensive support. By getting young people's lives back on track, we help them, we help their families and we help their communities.

Community Based

Always on Call

Residential



SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

What we provide:

East Ayrshire Council's Social Work services are delivered by the Department of Educational and Social Services. The Executive Head of Social Work fulfils the statutory responsibilities of the Chief Social Work Officer. Services are delivered directly by a workforce of almost 1200. Additional services are purchased from and delivered on behalf of the Council by a range of providers in the Independent Sector. These include care home places, addiction counselling and support services and information and advice services such as those delivered by East Ayrshire Advocacy Services and East Ayrshire Carers Centre.

Services are delivered in line with the Council's four guiding principles of quality, equality, access and partnership and three key priorities identified for Social Work:

- Protection
- Partnership
- Performance

Social Work services aim to:

“provide vulnerable people with a genuine choice of leading a fulfilling life within their home and community and ensure a positive environment for their care if they are no longer able to be supported at home.”

Areas of responsibility include the provision of:

- Care and protection of all children including those looked after or accommodated by the Council
- Protection of vulnerable adults
- Services to children and young people at risk or in difficulty
- Services to children and adults with learning difficulties
- Services to children and adults with physical disabilities
- Services to children and adults with mental health problems
- Services to older people
- Services to children and adults with addiction problems

- Criminal Justice services

Statutory Framework

Social Work services are delivered within a complex legal framework.

The primary underpinning piece of legislation is the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 which sets out the duties and functions of local authorities in respect of Social Work provision. Additional significant pieces of legislation include the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Children's (Scotland) Act 1995. Criminal Justice Social Work services address a range of legislative requirements which are specified within a framework of National Objectives and Standards.

Significant legal powers, duties and obligations are vested in staff in relation to all areas of provision.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS REPORTED IN 2004

The following section details some of our achievements in improving performance:

Community Care

- For older people there has been a shift in the balance of respite care from institutional settings to care at home. This is indicative of Social Work Services' success in supporting people at home, making it unnecessary for them to require residential respite care. For other adults we have increased both home based and residential respite care services.
- 460 older people and people with disabilities in the Kilmarnock and Loudoun area received a household maintenance service via an agreement between the Council and a local voluntary organisation called Helping Hands.
- Partners in the Council and the NHS are actively working together to implement the Joint Future Agenda which promotes the delivery of seamless services. Social Work teams are now aligned with GP surgeries promoting greater integrated working. In 2003-04 our staff undertook over 11,000 Single Shared Assessments.
- We have improved our delivery of homecare services. 1,395 older people received a service. In total 20,317 hours of service were provided in 2003-

04 compared to 11,790 in 2002-03. The statistics reflect our focus on supporting people to stay in their own homes.

Children and Families

- We have agreed a Joint Statement of Assurance with our Partners which pledges our commitment to improving child protection services
- We were responsible for 338 looked after children in 2003-04 – a 2% fall. Of these, 126 were placed in community based placements - an increase of 21% reflecting good Social Work practice in ensuring that young people are being cared for by family and carers in their own communities rather than in institutional care settings.
- We have improved services to young offenders through implementing the Fast Track Children's Hearing pilot resulting in a reduction in the number of repeat offences committed by the young people involved.
- We have tailored our operational arrangements to support the establishment of 9 Learning Partnerships which have been developed to ensure an integrated approach to the delivery of services to children and young people across all disciplines including Education and Health.
- We continue to support the development of the Pan Ayrshire Integrated Assessment Framework which will result in a consistent approach to assessing the needs of children with the Local Authority.

Criminal Justice

- We have improved our performance in the delivery of Social Enquiry Reports requested by the courts. Despite an increase in requests of 26% to over 1000, the Criminal Justice Social Work team improved its performance, delivering 98.8% within the set timescales.
- Our Criminal Justice Social work staff supervised 227 Community Service Orders (an increase of 6% on the previous year) and 316 new probation orders (an increase of 5% on the previous year).

All Sections

- Our frontline specialist staff have helped to ensure that citizens have taken up any benefits to which they are entitled. Over £2.7m in additional benefits was raised in 2003/04 for over 1400 citizens.

- Specialist staff helped over 300 citizens deal with over £2m worth of indebtedness.
- We have implemented a new Information Technology system resulting in improved efficiency and better reporting activity.

STRENGTHENING FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Locality teams have been established within Children and Families resulting in an increased effectiveness of local response to child protection issues and child care issues.
- In Community Care locality team arrangements have been consolidated with teams increasingly aligned with GP practices. Single shared assessment procedures have been implemented on an Ayrshire wide basis, streamlining the process of assessment and access to services. This approach reflects our work with partners in the Joint Future Partnership.
- We have reviewed our anti poverty services. The outcomes of this are a stronger in - house focus on the needs of social work service users and the further development of partnership working arrangements with independent sector partners to ensure services are available to the wider community.
- We have strengthened our service delivery arrangements at the 'front desk' to ensure easier access for service users.
- We have focused our efforts on the recruitment and retention of staff resulting in a reduction of vacant posts despite the national recruitment and retention crisis in social work. Early indications are that East Ayrshire's overall employment package including salary and family friendly policies, is competitive in relation to other authorities resulting in an improved recruitment position.
- We undertook a 'Best Value Review' of services to Looked After and Accommodated Children in 2004 which identified a Service Improvement Plan.
- We have further developed our links with independent sector providers to ensure a comprehensive range of service provision and choice for service users.

- We have agreed a programme of Best Value Service reviews and service evaluation arrangements to ensure we continue to deliver the right kind of services to the highest possible standards.

FUTURE PLANS

In 2005 we will:

1. Through a process of continuous professional development ensure that every member of staff is fully briefed on protection issues in relation to both adults and children and their corresponding responsibilities and duties.
2. Modernise our approach to training to reflect our commitment to high quality service delivery by properly trained and supported staff and the corresponding need to ensure continuous professional development.
3. Continue to enhance partnership working arrangements via the Joint Future Partnership, Learning Partnerships and with Service Users, Carers and Independent Sector Providers.
4. Monitor and measure our performance rigorously to ensure a programme of continuous improvement and best value in service delivery.
5. We will implement the improvements identified in the review of services to looked after and accommodated children.
6. Implement our new anti poverty service delivery arrangements.
7. Implement a range of other changes as they emerge and ensure that decision making is clearly made as close to the service user as is practical.