

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 18 MAY 2006

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for further development of the Community Care infrastructure in East Ayrshire to meet the changing needs of vulnerable people in our communities.
- 1.2 This report proposes a range of measures to strengthen our frontline services to ensure they are being delivered in a safe, effective and efficient manner.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Supporting people to live independently in the community when it is safe and practical to do so is a core national and local priority for Social Work. This report focuses on specific areas of our care at home services where success in implementing this policy is resulting in significant stresses on the service.

3. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- 3.1 The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, commenced in October 2005, placed additional statutory duties on the Council for the assessment, support and wellbeing of people with a mental disorder. The Act specifically placed additional responsibilities on Mental Health Officers (MHOs). In anticipation of this, and as part of a wider action plan the Council approved the establishment of three additional Mental Health Officer posts which have been successfully recruited.
- 3.2 Implementation of the Act and recent National reports (e.g. The Borders Report) has increased the need to implement actions to ensure the protection of Vulnerable Adults. As a consequence there has been increased use of Adults with Incapacity legislation, largely with respect to pursuing Guardianship of people unable to protect themselves because of their mental disorder. This has in turn increased demand on Mental Health Officers both in their statutory role in preparing reports for Court and in intensive care management.
- 3.3 Mental Health Officers are Social Workers who have undertaken extensive additional training to work in the field of mental disorder. The Council has a statutory duty to “appoint a sufficient number of persons for the purpose of discharging in relation to their area, the functions of mental health officers.”
- 3.4 In recognition of their additional skills and responsibility, Mental Health Officers currently receive an additional allowance of £750 per annum for undertaking the role. Neighbouring Councils have increased their allowances significantly and our

payment is no longer competitive which impacts on Social Work's ability to recruit and retain.

- 3.5 National Standards for Mental Health Officers were recently published detailing expectations as to how they are to be supervised, how they retain and improve their knowledge and understanding and operate effectively in their role.
- 3.6 There are currently 20 qualified Mental Health Officers located across a range of Social Work Services in East Ayrshire. A further two Officers are undertaking MHO training. The additional and increasing work requirements placed on Mental Health Officers is impacting on our ability to cover the Councils staffing requirements.
- 3.7 The increasing requirement for staff management, staff development and casework supervision has significantly impacted on the span of control of first line management in our Mental Health services. This gives cause for concern in a service that has significant responsibility for risk assessment in terms of both protection of individual vulnerable people and of the wider community.

4. CARE AT HOME SERVICES

- 4.1 Social Work continues to evidence increasing success at supporting vulnerable people, particularly older people in the community. A significant factor in this success has been the development of our community care locality working arrangements. In each of six locations, a Team Manager is responsible for the management of social work, occupational therapy and home care services. As a consequence each Team Manager can now be directly responsible for up to 16 staff, and indirectly through Home Care Managers for up to 100 Personal Carers. We require to address this as the span of control is too great to ensure safe service delivery.
- 4.2 Another significant feature in maintaining people at home is both the increase in care hours covered and staff employed in the Home Care Service. In addition there is a need to ensure robust financial working arrangements around Direct Payments whilst attracting external funding such as Independent Living Fund (ILF) to best fund complex packages of care.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To meet increasing demands on the Mental Health services it is proposed to create:
 - three new Social Worker posts (Mental Health Officers) who will support the Council to meet the additional demands arising from Mental Health legislation and the protection agenda;
 - one post of Team Manager for Mental Disorder, to share the increased Mental Health workload;
 - one post of Team Manager with specific responsibility for home care across the six teams;

- one post of Support Assistant who will develop our Direct Payment arrangements, maximise external funding and provide administrative support to Care Managers who monitor these complex support packages;
- one post of Senior Clerical Assistant who will provide clerical support to the Mental Health Services team.

5.2 In recognition of the increasing specialist area of work now carried by MHOs and in order to recruit and retain them it is proposed that the additional allowance be increased from £750 to £1,500 per annum.

5.3 In accordance with the Council's current arrangements, all gradings will be temporary pending completion of the Job Evaluation exercise which is part of the Single Status Agreement.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 These proposals will improve the Council's capacity to ensure safe Social Work Services are delivered to Vulnerable Adults and will meet the Council's statutory requirements.

6.2 These proposals are subject to consultation with Trade Unions

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The total additional costs associated with the above proposals amount to £230,644 including employer's costs which will be met from a combination of funding received from Resource Transfer Monies from Health and new funding from the Scottish Executive in relation to developing homecare services and efficient management of Direct Payments.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The proposals at Section 5 directly support the Improving Health and Improving Opportunities themes of the Community Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Social Work Committee is asked to:-

- (i) approve the service development proposals contained in paragraph 5 above;
- (ii) refer the staffing implications to Corporate Governance Committee; and
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director Of Educational & Social Services

JD/EF/DN
27 April 2006
Encl (0)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
2. National Standards for Mental Health Officers
3. Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996

For further information on this report please contact:-
Eddie Fraser, Senior Manager (Community Care)
Telephone: 01563 576926

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : JACKIE DONNELLY