

# **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 31 JANUARY 2002**

### **SENSORY IMPAIRMENT SERVICE: REVIEW OF STAFFING**

#### **Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the changing demands within Sensory Impairment Services and to seek approval to amend staffing of the service to best meet the needs of service users and carers.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following consultation with service users, carers, voluntary organisations and planning partners, a specialist Sensory Impairment Service was created in East Ayrshire. Social Work Committee of 26 February 1997 approved the East Ayrshire Strategy for Sensory Impairment Services and agreed the staffing arrangements.
- 2.2 A service review is currently being undertaken and the findings/recommendations will be reported to a future Social Work Committee. In the interim, a review of workloads and priorities has informed the staffing proposals set out in this paper.

## **3. SERVICE DEMANDS**

### **3.1 Rehabilitation/Mobility**

- 3.1.1 The Rehabilitation Officer works with children and young people to teach independent living skills. There has been an increase in the requirement for this service as young people with sight loss are increasingly supported through mainstream education and not within residential specialist blind schools.
- 3.1.2 Often the cause of sight loss is disease, which leads to a slow progressive deterioration in sight. Effective rehabilitation/mobility services should support service users at an early stage, thus preventing crisis situations.
- 3.1.3 By reviewing referral rates and the nature of the interventions required, it is evident that the current level of service does not provide the range of essential supports to service users and carers in a timeous manner. There are approximately 300 people with visual impairment who require review and assistance at this time.

### **3.2 Registration**

- 3.2.1 Registration is the process, which follows certification of visual loss (blind or partially sighted) and is recognised as a means of "passporting" people to benefits such as concessionary travel. It is not compulsory for people with visual loss to register with their local authority. However, there is a statutory requirement on local authorities to maintain registers of people with visual impairments and to report figures annually to the Scottish Executive.

3.2.2 A Clerical Assistant (GS1/2) completed this task, but the post is currently vacant. Service standards have continued to be met due to the introduction of the Departments' Reception Services which undertakes the initial collation of information and benefit checks.

### **3.3 Information/Advice**

3.3.1 The Information/Advice Officer provides service users and carers with information about accessing services and specialist supports. Information is provided in a range of formats to meet the communication needs of people with a sensory impairment.

3.3.2 The Information/Advice Officer has also been able to undertake the registration duties (averaging 7 per month) as a result of the reduction in benefit enquiries, following the implementation of Reception Services as the first point of contact at social work offices.

### **3.4 Sign Language Interpreting**

3.4.1 Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs) provide communication support between Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users and hearing people.

3.4.2 The core function of the service is to deaf people accessing council services and, in particular, to people accessing Educational & Social Services.

3.4.3 A review of referrals to the service indicates that current service demands can be met by 1.5 Sign Language Interpreter posts, and a 0.5 vacancy currently exists within the team.

## **4. SUMMARY : CURRENT GAPS IN SERVICE**

4.1 Service standards for registration and information referrals are being met.

4.2 Interpreting service figures indicate that the service to the local community can continue to be maintained with the current provision of 1.5 WTE Sign Language Interpreter posts.

4.3 Rehabilitation/mobility service levels currently do not meet the needs of people with a visual impairment, and consequently, an additional post is needed to meet the needs of local people. This can be achieved within existing resources as outlined in Section 5.

## **5. STAFFING PROPOSALS**

5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the current staffing structure and the proposed staffing structure, which would meet the service requirements as set out in this report.

5.2 As outlined, due to vacancies within the team, the amended staffing proposals can be implemented with no implications for existing post holders.

5.3 An implementation date will be set following Council approval.

5.4 The staffing proposals contained within this report are subject to consultation with Trade Unions.

## **6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposals enable the Local Authority to meet the statutory obligations imposed by (1) Section 5A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 which requires the Local Authority to prepare and publish community care plans for the provision of community care services and (2) Section 12A of the 1968 Act which obliges the Local Authority to assess individual needs and, on the basis of that assessment, decide whether the needs of that person calls for provision of any community care services.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposals can be met within the existing staffing budget, and the savings of £3,383.25 will be allocated to strengthen the provision of services, particularly to children and young people.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social Work Committee is asked to:

- (i) agree to the amendments of posts in the Sensory Impairment Service as outlined in section 5;
- (ii) refer the staffing implications to the Corporate Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

**John Mulgrew**  
**Director of Educational and Social Services**  
**9 January 2002**  
**Enc (1)**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

For further information please contact Susan Taylor, Service Unit Manager (Adults), telephone : 01563 576935, or Jackie Donnelly, Principal Officer Community Care, telephone: 01563 576931, Civic Centre, John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1BY.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : MORVEN GEMMILL

**CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE**

<b>POST NUMBERS</b>	<b>POST</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
PO2074 PO2075 PO2076	Sign Language Interpreters	2 WTE	AP4
PO2075	Information / Advice Worker	1 WTE	AP4/5
PO6247	Rehabilitation / Mobility Officer	1 WTE	AP4
PO1456	Clerical Assistant	1WTE	GS1/2
PO6250	Technician	1WTE	Tech 3
	<b>SALARY COSTS</b> (Including Employee Costs)	<b>114,345.00</b>	

**PROPOSED STAFFING**

<b>POST NUMBERS</b>	<b>POST</b>	<b>NUMBERS</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
PO2074 PO2075 PO2076	Sign Language Interpreters	1.5 WTE	AP4
PO2075	Information / Advice Worker	1 WTE	AP4/5
PO6247	Rehabilitation / Mobility Officer	2 WTE	AP4
PO6250	Technician	1WTE	Tech 3
	<b>SALARY COSTS</b> (Including Employee Costs)	<b>112,114.50</b>	

<b>AGENDA</b>
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