

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2000

BEST VALUE REVIEW: SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the outcome of the review of Criminal Justice Social Work Services, and to seek approval of the proposed action resulting from the review.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the Scottish Executive's Best Value agenda all local authorities are required to undertake service reviews across all of their services.
- 2.2 The Best Value Implementation Plan (approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 3rd December, 1998) (Item No 9 Page No 4028.) included a proposal to undertake a service review of Criminal Justice Social Work Services.
- 2.3 Service reviews require to assess the purpose, quality and cost of a service. They are required to make comparison with other providers, consider if the service delivery arrangements are the most appropriate for ensuring best value, and ensure it is undertaken within the context of consultation with a number of key stakeholders.
- 2.4 Criminal Justice Social Work Services was nominated for the department's first best value service review for three reasons:
- (i) Criminal Justice Social Work Services are delivered from within a discrete service unit having a clear strategic context;
 - (ii) The service has been subject to a set of agreed service specifications (National Standards) for a number of years but had not been reviewed within a wider context;
 - (iii) The department wished the service to be in a strong position and delivering quality services prior to the outcome of proposed national organisational changes in the delivery of criminal justice social work services.

3.0 PROCESS

- 3.1 The review of criminal justice social work services was led by the Service Unit Manager (Criminal Justice) in partnership with the departmental lead officer for Best Value (Principal Officer, Quality and Planning).

3.2 The service review was undertaken on a planned basis and included a number of key stages. These are summarised as:

- (i) preparation – agreeing review team and the scope of the review;
- (ii) service specifications – strategic and operational;
- (iii) consultation arrangements;
- (iv) comparison and performance;
- (v) assessment against European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Criteria;
- (vi) option appraisal;
- (vii) scrutiny – Corporate: Best Value and Performance Unit and Member – Officer Working Group

3.3 The formal review of Criminal Justice Social Work Services commenced as the work relating to the three-year strategic plan neared completion. The preparation of the strategic plan included key elements essential for the service review, namely:

- (i) involvement of a cross sectional group of staff;
- (ii) needs assessment;
- (iii) review of strategic intentions;
- (iv) proposed service developments based on assessed need;
- (v) process improvements based on a review of the effectiveness of current arrangements;
- (vi) proposed partnership arrangements with other providers.

4.0 OUTCOME

4.1 The EFQM assessment tool is the cornerstone of the Council's approach to service review. Based on nine criteria (leadership; policy and strategy; people management; resources; customer satisfaction; people satisfaction; impact on society; performance results) the results of the EFQM assessment of criminal justice social work services were integrated into the service review and resulted in the development of an Improvement Action Plan.

4.2 The service review demonstrated that criminal justice social work services in East Ayrshire has a vision for the future and has a set of strategic objectives laid out for the period of its Strategic Plan. The service has identified its stakeholders but requires to develop its approach to involve them in planning and monitoring services more routinely.

4.3 East Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services are comparable with other providers and better than some in some processes and service delivery areas. Services operate within the framework of adherence to National Standards. In this respect East Ayrshire's services perform at 80%, or better, adherence to these standards.

4.4 Improvements in services since 1996 have been in line with targeted policy and strategy. Future measurement will be against the Strategic Plan.

4.5 The Service Review has provided a focus for the department to assess the overall performance of criminal justice social work, and to identify areas for improvement which will guide the service towards continuous improvement in service delivery.

4.6 Areas for improvement are set out in an Improvement Action Plan. The Service Review identified a number of specific action points by which the Service Unit will progress and monitor improvement. The Improvement Action Plan provides a target for the implementation of these actions and progress in the achievement of targets. The Action Plan is available within the members lounge.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Councils have a statutory duty to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services. This service review has been carried out to assist the Council in meeting this duty.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The review of criminal justice social work services was conducted within the terms of the Council's Best Value Implementation Plan. This recognises service reviews as a key feature of the Council's approach to securing continuous improvement in service delivery.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The findings and outcome from the review will help shape how the Service Unit improves its approach to involving staff in policy and strategy planning, seek further improvement in listening to and responding to the views of service users, adds value to our current partnership arrangements, and improving performance against standards through a more routine and robust approach to benchmarking.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) approve the proposed action within the Improvement Action Plan;
- ii) agree that the Director of Educational and Social Services continues to monitor the implementation of these actions and present an annual progress report to Committee;
- iii) note the outcome of the review of criminal justice social work services.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

DF/SM
15th August, 2000

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Criminal Justice Social Work Services – Review Report
Member/Officer Service Review Reports

The above reports are available from the office of the Head of Social Work.

For further information please contact Bernadette Docherty, Head of Social Work,
Tel: 01563 576920 or Donal Flannery, Service Unit Manager, (Criminal Justice). Tel:
01563 576907

AGENDA