

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 27 MARCH 2003

SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL CODES OF PRACTICE

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform elected members of the issuing of the Codes of Practice by the Scottish Social Services Council;
- 1.2 To inform elected members of the plans to disseminate information in respect of the Codes of Practice.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 created, amongst other things, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Its principal duty is to promote high standards in conduct, practice, education and training.
- 2.2 The Policy and Objectives of the SSSC are to:
 - Strengthen and support the workforce
 - Raise standards of practice
 - Protect those who use services
- 2.3 A major responsibility of the SSSC is to register social services staff on a phased basis, commencing from April 2003.

3.0 REGISTRATION

- 3.1 In relation to the above the SSSC is on target to begin registration of the social care workforce from 1 April 2003.
- 3.2 In Scotland, the first phase of registration will cover Social Workers, Registration and Inspection staff of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission), residential child care staff and managers of day care and residential services for adults.
- 3.3 Registration dates for these groups will vary. Social Workers will begin registration in April 2003 and students undertaking the new Honours Degree in Social Work will be able to register from 2004, as will Care Commission Officers.

- 3.4 Residential child care staff will register from spring 2005 and managers of residential homes and day care services for adults will register towards the end of 2005.
- 3.5 Registration will take place on a phased basis by geographical area. The SSSC has advised the Council formally that registration of qualified social workers in East Ayrshire will commence in June/July 2004. In advance of the commencement of registration, the SSSC will lead workshops to explain the process to staff affected by it and to underline the benefits and obligations of registration.

4.0 CODES OF PRACTICE

- 4.1 The Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers were launched in September 2002.
- 4.2 Social services workers must sign up to the Codes of Practice as a condition of their registration process. Individual workers are responsible for registering and for maintaining registration thereafter.
- 4.3 Employers are obliged to promote the Code of Practice for Social Services Workers and have written policies in place to enable workers to meet the Code of Practice.

5.0 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

- 5.1 As an employer of Social Services staff, East Ayrshire Council will implement a programme of staff briefings to ensure wide dissemination and discussion of the Codes of Practice. This process will afford an opportunity to consider all issues arising, including training implications.
- 5.2 Briefings will be organised in respect of the Codes of Practice. They will follow the registration timetable and will therefore firstly be aimed at qualified social workers, as outlined at para. 3.5 above.
- 5.3 Briefings will focus on:
- What the codes are;
 - How they will be used;
 - What the codes mean for East Ayrshire Council as an employer and also for its employees as registrants.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As registration is rolled out, social services workers will not be employable unless they are registered. This will include meeting qualification and character

standards. Employers must take account of the SSSC Codes of Practice in making any decisions relative to the conduct of workers and the SSSC must be informed about any misconduct that may affect fitness to be or remain registered.

8.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As a social services employer, East Ayrshire Council must have written policies and procedures in place to enable social services workers to meet the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers. A review of relevant policies and procedures is being undertaken to ensure that the Council is able to meet its obligations in full in this respect. In that regard, further reports will be submitted to future meetings of this Committee and to the Corporate Sub-Committee of Policy and Resources Committee, as appropriate.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Committee is requested to :-

- i) note the implications of the SSSC Codes of Practice, as described above;
- ii) endorse the plan for dissemination of information in respect of the Codes;
- iii) refer the report to the Corporate Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee, for its interest and information.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

7 March 2003

List of Background Papers

1. SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Services Workers and Employers (September 2002)
2. Correspondence from SSSC dated 6 January, 11 February and 24 February 2003

For further information, please contact John Alexander, Principal Officer (Quality and Planning) on extension 6978

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