

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services
DATE	2 December 2014
DIRECTOR	Liz Taylor
TITLE OF REPORT	Social Care & Wellbeing Lone Working Arrangements
REPORT NUMBER:	SCW/14/029
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	YES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Further to an internal audit process in relation to Lone Working arrangements for social care – reported to Audit & Risk Committee on 16th April 2014 – SC&W were directed by Committee to provide a report which details the arrangements for Lone Working within social work services.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee:

- i. Note the content of the attached Lone Working Report and;
- ii. Instruct its implementation.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a cost for the technology solution required to fully implement the ‘working outwith normal hours’ process, but this can be achieved by the use of the existing technology platform CM2000, and so will have a minimal recurring cost, which can be met from within existing SC&W budgets.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Subsequent to the request for this report by A&R Committee, the Council announced its restructuring programme – which includes the realignment of Directorate arrangements for what was the Social Care & Wellbeing Directorate. Members can be assured that all of the elements within this report can progress within the new structural arrangements. The CM2000 system can be used across Directorates,

and the other processes can be applied within any structural arrangements.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has a responsibility under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety:-
 - of its employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
 - of persons not in its employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by it of its undertaking
- 5.2 These risks include those relating to the lone working of staff. The attached report relates to that specific risk.
- 5.3 Social Care, by its very nature, involves individuals and teams becoming engaged with some of the more challenging elements of our communities. This includes working closely with individuals and families who may have complex needs, challenging behaviours and/ or lead lifestyles which can be problematic. It also requires social care staff to work within parts of the community where wider problematic behaviours are exhibited, and with that potentially expose them to risks just by virtue of passing through on their way to see their service users.
- 5.4 Much of the work undertaken by social care staff is also done outwith normal working hours, and with that, there are challenges in ensuring that our staff are supported to do their work without unnecessary risk to their wellbeing or safety.
- 5.5 Social Care staff understand the risks being presented to them on a daily basis, and are trained to manage and mitigate these risks in part by applying common-sense approaches to difficult situations, but the Council also plays its part in supporting staff to complete their tasks in safe conditions.
- 5.6 To support staff there are systems in place to ensure that, in as much as is feasible, we know where our staff are going and the anticipated time of return – if this is during working hours.
- 5.7 Social Care & Wellbeing staff have adhered to the Council's 'Lone Working Policy', but it has been acknowledged that our staff's willingness to undertake sometimes challenging work, in sometimes challenging circumstances, outwith normal hours, has had a weakness in our ability to monitor how staff are returning home safely after hours, when the normal monitoring systems are no longer available. Attempts to cover this situation in the past have been cumbersome and largely unsuccessful.

- 5.8 However, in an age of more sophisticated technological solutions, which support the management of risk whilst not upsetting the critical business flow, we are now in a position to reviews our existing systems and present a non-intrusive process for supporting staff in lone working situations. The attached report and appendix presents those processes.
- 5.9 If Committee accepts the implementation of this policy and its attendant processes, they will be introduced on a phased basis across SC&W services. The phased approach will allow for live system testing.

6. IMPACT

Aberdeen City Council (ACC) has a statutory responsibility for lone workers under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The social Care & Wellbeing Business Plan Vision Statement identifies that “We want a Social Work Service that “...*Supports staff to do their job and makes sure that they have the chance to build their skills and knowledge*”

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

This report is concerned with the management of risk to our social care staff in lone working situations. It presents detail on how these risks can be mitigated.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Aberdeen City Council Lone Working Policy
- Internal Audit Report: Lone Working Arrangements (SC&W)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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