

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Social Care and Wellbeing
DATE	10 November 2011
DIRECTOR	Fred McBride
TITLE OF REPORT	Annual Report of the Chief Social Work Officer
REPORT NUMBER:	SCW/11/067

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of the key areas of work undertaken by the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) over the last twelve months.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Committee note the areas of work undertaken, work which is underway and ongoing and areas of work which require to be taken forward.
- 2.2 Instruct the CSWO to produce an annual progress report in twelve months time.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no specific financial implications, however the professional advice of the CSWO will be fed into the Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) exercise and the production of the Corporate 5 year business plan.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The CSWO is required to ensure the provision of appropriate professional advice in the discharge of local authority's statutory social work duties. For the role to be effective in the varying circumstances and configurations of Scottish local authorities, a focus on role and function rather than position or structures is appropriate. However, the CSWO should be positioned at a level of seniority commensurate with being able to advise the local authority and undertake the complex duties described in guidance.

The CSWO is a 'proper officer' in relation to the social work function: an officer given particular responsibility on behalf of a local authority, where the law requires the function to be discharged by a specified post holder.

The CSWO also has responsibility for ensuring clear linkage between social work professional standards and values and community planning priorities and that these adequately reflect the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded members of our community.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no further specific implications of this report.

6. REPORT

6.1 This is the second CSWO annual report and will cover:-

- **Standards of Social Work Practice**
- **Professional Advice given to Council by CSWO**
- **Partnership Working**
- **Summary on Statutory Complaints**
- **Progress on actions set out in the previous annual report**
- **Summary of actions to be progressed over next 12 months**

6.2 Standards of Social Work Practice

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) conducted a follow up inspection in March 2011 and reported very significant progress from the previous full inspection in 2008. The summary report states as follows:-

“Social Care and Wellbeing had undergone significant and profound change since our performance inspection and follow up report. This remained an ongoing process. The permanent senior management team had only been fully in place since May 2010. The period had seen a further embedding of defined lines of accountability and decision making, a strong sense of professional social work identity and a more open approach to partnership working.

There was a significant degree of confidence amongst staff and managers about the changes that had taken place and the future direction of travel. The Chief Executive and Elected Members were unequivocal in their support for the senior management team and were very positive about the progress that had been made in developing and improving the service”.

6.2.1 Authorisation of the placement of children in secure accommodation.

- In law, the CSWO, in agreement with the Head of Secure Establishment, has final decision making powers in relation to the detention and release of children in secure accommodation.

An authorisation by a Children's Hearing can either be implemented or not by the CSWO.

- In the year to September 2011 there have been 5 admissions to secure accommodation (this is the same figure as the previous year). There have been 7 authorisations made by the Children's Hearings.
- The city now has an Intensive Support and Monitoring Service (ISMS) in place as a direct alternative to secure care. As part of this service the Children's Hearing can now impose a Movement Restriction Order on a child (electronic tagging). This has been used in a small number of cases. The development of ISMS in the City has been as the result of the pilot Youth Justice Whole System approach and has been a central factor in the strategy to reduce numbers of young people in secure accommodation and specialist residential placements. There is work ongoing to sustain this service beyond the pilot phase.

6.2.2 Emergency transfer of children

The CSWO authorised 17 emergency transfers of children and has met with the social worker and/or team members with case responsibility.

6.2.3 Approval of Mental Health Officers (MHO's)

Aberdeen City Council currently have 31 Mental Health Officers. This includes 4 MHO's who work with Out Of Hours Services. We have a further two about to qualify so numbers are gradually increasing.

Aberdeen City is one of the few local authorities who pay MHOs at an enhanced rate and this seems to be having a positive effect on recruitment and retention.

6.2.4 Guardianship

Activities around guardianship are as follows:-

Local Authority Guardianships held by CSWO

18 Learning Disability cases

34 Old Age cases

5 Mental Health cases

4 other

61 in Total

Private Guardianships

105 Learning Disability cases
 32 Old Age cases
 11 Others – acquired brain injuries etc
148 in Total

6.2.5 Child Protection

The Aberdeen City Child Protection Sub-Committee is the strategic group responsible for the quality and improvement of multi-agency child protection practice in Aberdeen. This group continues to be chaired by the CSWO, and is part of the Integrated Children's Services Partnership, and the North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee. Over the last year, the Sub-Committee has strengthened its links to the Aberdeen Alcohol & Drugs Partnership and the Adult Protection Committee so that children affected by parental drug or alcohol use, and children who live with adults who need protection, can more easily receive the support they need.

The work of services to protect children, which includes police, social work, education and health, was inspected by the external Social Care and Social Work Inspectorate Scotland (SCSWIS) in March 2011. This inspection was positive, with improvement noted in many areas in comparison with the inspection outcomes from 2008. The outcomes of the inspection are as follows:

Children are listened to and respected	Good
Children are helped to keep safe	Satisfactory
Response to immediate concerns	Satisfactory
Meeting needs and reducing long term harm	Satisfactory
Self-evaluation	Weak
Improvements in performance	Good

The following areas for improvement were identified by SCSWIS, and are priority areas of work for the child protection partnership for the next three years:

- Ensure that vulnerable children and families get the help they need quickly.
- Make it easier for people to report concerns about children and ensure that staff respond to these concerns without delay.
- Improve the help and support for children to recover from abuse and neglect.
- Develop and put in place effective ways of reviewing the quality of services to improve key processes and outcomes for children.

The number of children on the Child Protection Register in Aberdeen City has been falling since September 2009. This figure has now stabilised with an average of 97 children on the Child

Protection Register in the city from April 2010-March 2011. This reflects the robust arrangements in place for reviewing children who need protection.

Over 80% of the children on the Child Protection Register were of primary school age. The main categories of registration were emotional abuse and neglect. These figures reflect the impact of domestic abuse, and parental drug and alcohol use which often place younger children at increased risk of harm. Over the next year, the Child Protection Sub-Committee is focusing on improving the recognition and support to children who are at risk of harm through neglect to try to reduce the impact on children.

6.2.6 Adult Protection

Adult protection work is managed through the Council's Adult Protection Unit (APU). This unit is staffed by a co-ordinator who manages the work of the unit alongside an administrator, trainer and IT specialist. The unit is responsible for adult protection within Aberdeen City, triages and screens all adult protection referrals, and provides professional, technical and administrative support to all staff members who discharge the Council's duties under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

The following statistics from June 2010 to May 2011 illustrate the varied nature of the adult protection work undertaken within Aberdeen City:

- 972 separate referrals for adults thought to be at risk were received during this period.

Of those referrals:

- 248 were for citizens over the age of 65
- 136 were for citizens with physical disabilities or health problems
- 147 were for citizens with mental health problems
- 95 were for citizens possessing a learning disability
- 346 were for multiple other groups (criminal justice, carers, etc)

After screening by the APU, 303 of these referrals were deemed to require further inquiry under the auspices of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act.

Grampian Police were the largest source of referrals (submitting 63% of the total reports to the APU). Various other bodies provided the remainder of the referrals – with social care and wellbeing staff, the care commission, NHS Grampian, and private and voluntary sector care homes being the next biggest referrers.

The types of harm reported were multi-faceted, including: financial abuse; neglect; sexual abuse; physical abuse, psychological abuse and self harming behaviour.

Oversight of adult protection work within Aberdeen is provided by a fully constituted and operational Adult Protection Committee. This is a multi-agency committee with an independent chair, Mo (Maureen) Ramsay. As there are Grampian wide policies and procedures for adult support and protection, the three local authorities collaborated to appoint a single chair for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Adult Protection Committees. Policies and procedures are fully in place and operational, to comply with the appropriate legislation.

Related to this, the Grampian Interagency Policy and Procedure for the Support and Protection of Adults at Risk of Harm was recently reviewed and revised. This procedure is the main guidance for operational staff in implementing provisions of the adult protection legislation. Additionally, it also provides localised guidance to NHS Grampian, Grampian Police, and the private and voluntary sector in regards to discharging duties and responsibilities under the law. The recent review is a significant revision of the procedures used, and reflects the accumulated experience and knowledge that has developed in Grampian in the 3 years following the implementation of adult protection legislation. Officers from Aberdeen City directly contributed to the revised policy, and feedback was sought from all relevant stakeholders (including Aberdeen City Council frontline staff). The revised policy is due to be presented to all three Adult Protection Committees within Grampian for agreement – and, (if approved), will then be rolled out for use by operational staff thereafter.

The Council now has around 108 Council Officers who have been trained to a level that allows them to carry out adult protection investigations and discharge specific legislative functions laid out in adult protection legislation.

A continual rolling programme of training is in place to ensure a continued available supply of Council Officers within Aberdeen City Council – thereby allowing the Council to meet its legislative responsibilities. To continue to ensure high quality practice, electronic testing and certification of Council Officers skills and knowledge is currently being developed with an aim to implement before the end of 2011.

More wide scale training has also taken place of staff in Social Care and Wellbeing, NHS Grampian, Grampian Police and other partner agencies, at levels appropriate to staff involvement in adult protection work. Work also continues to establish links with the private and voluntary sector to offer support in regards to their continued development in relation to adult protection responsibilities.

Presently, only a small number of adult protection referrals (1.5%) come from the local community (rather than professionals and organisations). To promote adult protection amongst citizens, a national awareness campaign about Adult Support and Protection commenced in August 2011, with TV ads raising awareness of harm and abuse. The Adult Protection Unit has already received reports about possible harm to Aberdeen citizens through this publicity campaign. Locally, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils also intend to launch a publicity drive in October 2011 which will focus on financial abuse. Open days, social networking and school competitions will be used to raise awareness amongst all sections of society about harm and where to report concerns.

6.2.7 Redesign of Learning Disability services

Learning Disability services are undergoing a radical transformation which, consistent with the directions indicated within the Scottish Government's Self Directed Support Bill, which becomes law in 2013, will create greater stability, greater choice and greater empowerment for individuals and their families/ carers. The key elements of this redesign are:

- Historically, Direct Payments although welcomed in principle by many people, have struggled to have the uptake desired because of the complications and demands of the administration required of families to manage the process. To address this we are examining alternative vehicles for personal brokerage, as well as introducing 'Personal Budgets' which are budgets directed by the individual (or family) but without the administrative burden.
- There are currently in excess of 160 people (the majority of whom have a Learning Disability) who choose to 'self direct' their support via a Direct Payment.

A further 82 individuals benefit from the control of a Personal Budget to allow choice in their day opportunities. At present this latter figure represents the largest number of individual with their own budget in Scotland. Moreover, this figure is set to rise dramatically as we refine the Resource Allocation System (RAS) and let people know what their allocation is and allow them to choose how that money can be best spent to support them to achieve their agreed personal outcomes.

- As a result of these changes service users will become fully involved in the planning and running of their own support services, with greater opportunities for social inclusion and with less reliance on residential care.
- To underpin these changes, staff within Learning Disability Services have been involved in a series of training events to equip them to

carry out person centred planning with service users as a means of carrying out more inclusive assessments and to turn those plans and assessments into support plans to achieve agreed outcomes.

- A key component of the changes is the engagement with service users and their families. There has been, and will remain, a full commitment to positive engagement with those most concerned with the changes at every stage in the process.
- The establishment of the 'Info Hub' in the town centre has had a significant impact in the accessibility of support, advice and information available to families and carers.
- Tangible results of the review can be seen by the recent closure of one large residential care home and the planned closure of another next year. Residents have moved on to more appropriate services.

6.3 Professional Advice to Council

6.3.1 The Corporate Role of the CSWO

The corporate role of the CSWO is clearly stated within the Governance statement and as a 'proper officer' of the Council along with the S95 officer.

The overall objective of the CSWO is to ensure the provision of effective, professional advice to local authorities – Elected Members and officers – in the authority's provision of social work services. The post should also assist authorities in understanding the complexities of social work service delivery and the key role social work plays in contributing to the achievements of national outcomes, local outcomes, overall performance improvement and the management of corporate risk.

6.3.2 Five year Corporate Business Plan and Priority Based Budgeting

The CSWO has fully contributed to the corporate budget setting exercise using the Priority Based Budgeting method (PBB). Professional advice has been provided on transformation, efficiency and reduce options in order to achieve a balanced budget whilst minimizing risk to our most vulnerable citizens.

Specific professional advice has also been given on the production of a business case for the production of a Local Authority Trading Company. A separate committee report on the detail of this business case was approved by Full Council in June this year.

6.4 Partnership Working

6.4.1 Integrated Strategic Management Team (ISMT)

The Team is jointly chaired by the General Manager of the Community Health Partnership and the CSWO and comprises senior managers from the NHS and the Council.

The major responsibility of the team this year has been to drive forward the objectives within the change fund for reshaping older people's care. For Aberdeen this amounts to £2.7m and will act as a catalyst to shift resources from the acute sector to community based supports for older people with a view to helping them to stay as independent for as long as possible. This work will be reflected in the production of a Joint Commissioning Strategy. Detailed updates on the use of the change fund have been approved by the Social Care and Wellbeing Committee and the Community Health Partnership Committee earlier this year.

6.4.2 Integrated Children's Services Partnership (ICSP)

The ICSP has made significant progress this year in implementing the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) policy framework. Specific progress includes:-

- Production of multi-agency practitioner guidance on the GIRFEC model for integrated working
- Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Development of an outcomes framework for measuring the impact of services on the lives of children and families.

6.4.3 Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

The fundamental purpose of MAPPA is public safety and the reduction of serious harm. The protection of children, adults at risk of harm and others is paramount. Like other effective multi-agency processes, the MAPPA offers the potential for a co-ordinated approach to the management of offenders in the community who pose a risk of serious harm.

The Grampian MAPPA Coordinator (from December 2011 chaired by Aberdeen City Council) coordinates the inter-agency response to public protection in respect of Registered Sex Offenders. MAPPA is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding between the responsible authorities (Police, SPS, CJSW, NHS) and duty to co-operate agencies and is accompanied by a Data Sharing Protocol

to meet the requirements of the Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005.

In Aberdeen good joint working arrangements exist between Criminal Justice Social Work and Grampian Police who undertake joint Risk Assessments, home visits and other interviews to ensure that Registered Sex Offenders are monitored and managed effectively. Regular MAPPA meetings are held with CJSW, Police, NHS, SPS, Children's Services and other agencies to share information, re-assess risk and ensure that Risk Management plans are in place and constantly under review.

The NCJA MAPPA Coordinators prepare an annual report for the Scottish Government's national MAPPA report.

In last years CSWO report we indicated that a self-evaluation process would be introduced to support the service development action plan which came from the outcome of the SWIA inspection process. This self-evaluation process is now embedded within the service. *(Some info on what it is telling us about standards of practice)*

6.4.4 Criminal Justice Authority

Since the last CSWO report the Criminal Justice and Licencing (Scotland) Act 2010 has come into force and with that the introduction of Community Payback Orders (CPO's). These orders replaced Probation, Community Service and Supervised Attendance Orders.

Since the introduction of CPO's in December 2010, there has been the incremental replacement of previous sentencing with the new Orders. Initial indications are that the imposition of CPO's are broadly commensurate with the overall numbers of previous Orders.

However, there are some indications of an increase in imposition of an 'unpaid work' (previously Community Service) component in a wider range of Orders than anticipated. The Scottish Government are currently examining sentencing trends and local data has been fed into this process.

In order to improve the time taken for completion of unpaid work components – which had previously been below the national average – the service has established an improvement programme, which includes the repair of the damaged Workshop roof to allow greater use of the building; the introduction of an outdoor workshop at Stewart Park; and the addressing of issues relating to early compliance of those placed on Orders.

The early impact of this programme (the workshop repair has not yet been completed) has seen a significant improvement in the time taken to complete Orders to date.

6.5 Summary on Statutory Complaints

The recording, investigation and response to complaints made against Aberdeen City Council's Social Care and Wellbeing Service is primarily defined by SWSG Circular 5/1996, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and The Social Work (Representations Procedure) (Scotland) Directions 1996.

These lay out the methods and timescales for responding to complaints made orally, by e-mail, by telephone or in writing: by or on behalf of:

- a. A person for whom the local authority provides a service, either directly or indirectly;
- b. A person whose request for a service has been refused by the authority and/or;
- c. Other persons whose need or possible need for a service, which the local authority has the power to provide, has come to the authority's attention.

The guidance places a duty on local authorities to publish the results of complaints, to demonstrate that complaints are dealt with seriously and fairly.

This report considers Stage Two complaints under the guidance, which are statutory complaints made by or in respect of a 'qualifying individual' or someone acting on behalf of the individual. There are Complaints that are registered by the complaints section, as reported here, are those where the requirement is for a formal investigation and a full written response under the procedure. This report does not cover informal reports considered and investigated by the Social Care and Wellbeing Service. This report also covers Stage Three complaints, which are statutory complaints where the complainant is not satisfied with the response they have received and which they have requested be examined by the Complaints Review Committee.

This report does not detail enquiries about social work services raised and resolved through the Elected Member enquiry system.

In the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, there were 64 statutory complaints recorded. This compares with 128 for the period 2009/10 and 167 for the period 2008/09.

Of the 64 complaints 17 were upheld, 25 were partially upheld, 17 were not upheld, 4 were withdrawn by the complainant and 1 complaint is still seeking resolution.

The breakdown of the figures by client group for 2010/11 complaints is as follows: Children and Families 42; Adults (Community Care) 13; Criminal Justice 9.

The breakdown of complaint by type is as follows: Service Provision 14; Disputed Assessment / Decision 14; Staff Conduct 35; Finance 1.

Complaints are required to be acknowledged within 5 days and responded to within 28 days, where this response within 28 days is not possible a holding letter will be sent and a new timescale for response agreed.

For the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, 97% of complaints were acknowledged within the 5 day timescale and 66% were responded to within the 28 day deadline. The number of complaints being responded to within the 28 day timescale has improved from 56% in 2009/10.

Many factors influence the ability of the service to respond to a complaint within 28 days. The need to consult the complainant and/or employees and access relevant reports etc. can delay the investigation and, consequently, the outcome for the service user. In the case of the complaint which remains ongoing, this is due to the need to suspend the complaint to follow other procedures.

Where complainants are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right of appeal to an independent Complaints Review Committee. This Committee is administered by Aberdeen City Council's Corporate Governance Service.

For the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011 6 complainants took their cases to the Complaints Review Committee, this compares to 9 in 2009/10.. Of these 6 requests, 5 have been considered by the Committee and the recommendations of the CRC have been presented to the relevant Committee, in line with the Council's guidance. The remaining 1 has yet to be concluded.

From 1st April 2011, we have used careFirst Version 6 to record data relating to complaints, which allows for a more detailed analysis and ensures that complaint information is available for services.

This data will be used to inform services of areas where improvements in services could be made and will also improve the type of data reported to Elected Members.

6.6 Progress on actions set out in the previous annual report

- Contribute to the finalisation of regulations within the Children's Hearings Reform Bill in order to retain the discretion of the CSWO in secure care authorisations.

This has been achieved

- Increase the number of Mental Health Officers.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

- Embed the Continuous Learning Framework as the basis for staff development and review.

This has been achieved but further work is required to ensure full implementation

- Refresh employer and employee responsibilities under the SSSC code of practice.

There is a fully operational system in place for endorsing registration, re-registration and the completion of Continuous Professional Development requirements as part of SSSC registration requirements.

- Contribute to the finalisation of the 5 year Corporate Business Plan and Priority Based Budgeting and ensuring the interests of the most vulnerable members of the community are safeguarded in this process.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

- Further improve management and practice of child protection, adult protection and public protection and ensure these are captured within quarterly performance reports to SCWB Committee and/or sub Committees.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

- Deliver the objectives in the work plans of the Integrated Strategic Management Team with NHSG, the Integrated Children's Service Partnership and the CJA, as outlined in this report.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

- Deliver the objectives of the Third Sector Liaison Group as outlined in this report.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

- Continuously update the SCWB Community Engagement Strategy.

This has been achieved as detailed in this report

6.7 Summary of Actions to be progressed over next twelve months:-

- Ensure the Jointly Commissioned Substance Misuse services process is completed and implemented;

- Complete the changes indicated in the unpaid work programme for offenders to maximise the efficiency of the completion of unpaid hours demands;
- Ensure the progress achieved so far and momentum built up for redesigning Learning Disability services is maintained.
- Produce a joint commissioning strategy for older people's services with NHSG.
- Progress the implementation of a Local Authority Trading Company as detailed in this report.
- Ensure the action plan from the SCWIS inspection on multi-agency child protection services is implemented in full.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Changing Lives – 21st Century Review of Social Work (Feb 2006)