

Overview of Developments and Recommendations for the Social Work Department

The City of Edinburgh Council

18 March 2004

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To summarise the main recommendations for consideration by the Council.
- 1.2 To report recent developments within the Social Work Department.

2. Summary

- 2.1 To list the main points of action and key recommendations in connection with improving social work practice and policy.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Elsewhere on the agenda there are key reports from various officers on protecting children, assessment of children, risk assessment and a quality assurance framework (including the setting up of a Standards Sub-Committee).
- 3.2 In summary form these are listed below.

Child Protection:

Internal reviews of child protection

New child protection assessment and risk assessment policy

Improvements to referral criteria

Co-location of agencies –improved communication

Introduction of specialist managers for Child Protection

Improvement of Practice:

Standardised assessment – extend framework shared with Health

Management of vacancy levels linked with risk assessment procedures

Enhanced supervision arrangements

Change of culture

Review of staffing in relation to findings of inquiries

Quality Systems:

Yearly external audit of Child Protection practice

Vacancy rates and unallocated cases reported regularly

Introduction of Standards Sub-Committee.

Introduction of Quality Assurance Team

Formulation of new quality framework and quality indicators.

- 3.3 The above list represents a series of important steps to build on and improve existing practice whilst at the same time recognising the recommendations of various reports, including the O'Brien Inquiry.

4.0 Information Systems

- 4.1 In addition to the list of policy and management changes suggested above, the Council, through the budget process, committed itself to the introduction of a new IT system which should improve information sharing and communication.

- 4.2.1 Work is also being undertaken on linking this system with those of health, education and the police although it has to be recognised that it is not an easy task and will need to include the introduction of new protocols for information sharing.

5.0 O'Brien Inquiry

- 5.1 The Chief Social Work Officer's report on Protecting Children in Edinburgh also gives an update on the implementation of the O'Brien Inquiry Action Plan.
- 5.2 This update also includes the main action from the Health Service and Police as well as the Social Work Department and has been agreed by the Overview Group, which includes all agencies, chaired by the Acting Director of Social Work.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 None directly in this report but the separate reports do indicate them individually.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The suite of reports to be considered by the Council include a frank assessment of the current position as well as new policy directions and management and practice developments.
- 7.2 The formalisation of quality assurance systems and the regular reporting to elected members of key information and assessments is key to the improvement of practice and inter-agency working.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that the City of Edinburgh Council:

- 8.1 Notes the report of the Acting Director of Social Work
- 8.2 Requests further 'overview' reports on a yearly basis.

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Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Background Papers	None