

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE – SOCIAL WORK SERVICES FOR THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY (SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE REPORT)
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 23 August 2001	Ref: MF/MM	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. To advise Committee of the first Annual Report prepared by the Chief Social Work Inspector for the Scottish Parliament covering the year 1999-2000, to advise of the findings of the Service Review in respect of North Lanarkshire Social Work Services and to homologate the attached response to the Scottish Executive, Social Work Services Inspectorate at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The Chief Social Work Inspector has written to the Chief Executive acknowledging receipt of the response and thanking the Authority for the excellent co-operation which has been shown throughout this exercise.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Social Work Committee of 6 June 2000 was advised of the proposed review of Social Work Services planned by the Scottish Executive in the report Scottish Executive Annual Report Visit to North Lanarkshire. A further report was considered by Social Work Committee of 22 August 2000 advising of the conclusion of the review and noting initial findings.
- 2.2. The report is the start of a yearly process of public reporting and comparing performance. Future reports will be prepared jointly with Audit Scotland, bringing together information on quality.
- 2.3. The report recognises the changing shape of Social Work Services, including different organisational and political arrangements for delivering Social Work Services.

## 3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

The final report is produced in two parts.

- A National overview - a strategic overview of Social Work Services across Scotland.
- A series of Service Reviews - this covers every Scottish authority's Social Work Services.

### 3.1. Overview Report

In general, the overview report examines the preparedness of Social Work Services for the 21st Century. Two points of significance from this report are noted below.

- The people who use Social Work Services and other professionals appear to think more highly of these services and of those who work in them than is often recognised.
  - Local Authorities face increasing problems recruiting and holding onto staff that will not be easily involved and must be tackled.
  - Copies of the Annual Report are available in the Members Library
- 3.2. The report notes that unless the serious problems faced in the recruitment and retention of staff is firmly and urgently addressed, locally and nationally, then the services will deteriorate. It continues 'for the many thousand who depend on them, and their families, that would be tragic'
- 3.3. The conclusions of the report recognise that whilst there are no straightforward solutions, key structures are being put in place by the Regulation of Care Bill. It is recognised that for the structures to work effectively will require the Council to tackle these working in close partnership with others. The issues will require continued attention at national and local level throughout the next decade.
- 3.4. Service Reviews
- The Service Reviews are essentially local reports which provide a description of each Local Authority and include sections on :
- Service examples
  - Facts and figures
  - Achievements
  - The Future
- 3.5. The aim is to work with Local Authorities and with colleagues in the Audit Scotland to build on these initial reviews in order to :
- Help each Local Authority manage their performance.
  - Encourage new ideas and development for examples of the best, and
  - Give a full statement on the performance of each authority available throughout the year and containing the most up to date information.
- 3.6. It is expected that the service reviews will be updated on the web during the year. During 2001-2002 the Inspectorate will be negotiating ways of working with Local Authorities and Audit Scotland as to how this may be carried out most effectively.

#### **4. FINDINGS OF NORTH LANARKSHIRE SERVICE REVIEW**

- 4.1. The Council had an opportunity to comment on the first draft of the report.
- 4.2. The findings of the final report are generally consistent with the initial findings of that reported to Committee of positive comment regarding the Council's Social Work Services recognising the need for continuous improvement and development.
- 4.3. In relation to Service examples a number of positive developments/services are noted in the report, including :
- The style of social and health assessment and service delivery available from the Merrystone Care Base.
  - The range of providers of supported living for people with a learning disability to enable them to be supported at home.

4.4. In relation to Facts and Figures the following examples are noted :

- More than 75% of Community Service Orders and 60% of Probation Orders are completed satisfactorily.
- The number of older service users with dementia have increased since 1996.
- The number of people with physical disabilities have increased substantially since 1996 and North Lanarkshire has the highest number of all Authorities.
- The number of children on the child protection register is low.

4.5. Achievements noted include :

- The high quality of work undertaken with sex offenders was noted in a Social Work Services Inspectorate report (previously reported to Committee).
- 140% increase in the number of children offered respite since the beginning of the Authority.
- Improved supply of quality information to staff enabling them to have access to up to date research information, best practice and Local and National guidance.

4.6. Observations from the Service Review on Future issues facing North Lanarkshire include :

- A need to review the current mix of services and how these can be developed in view of the growth in the older people population. The need to consider revised policy and financial priorities for community care across the area as a whole would be expected from the review.
- The work of the Bridging Teams should be evaluated urgently so that its best features can be applied more quickly to dealing with young offenders throughout the area.

## **5. NORTH LANARKSHIRE RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW**

5.1. North Lanarkshire welcomes the first annual report on Social Work Services. The Council welcomes scrutiny of its services, is committed to continuous improvement in the provision of high quality services whilst ensuring Best Value.

5.2. Since the review of North Lanarkshire services took place some twelve months ago, there have been a number of changes within the Council which will assist address matters raised in the report and help the Council address future service demands.

- The recent restructuring of the Social Work Department will enable greater focus and differentiation across service provision and service development.
- Improvements in SWIS, the Departments management information system enables service pressures to be identified and services targeted for development e.g.. the proposed growth in the Home Care Service.
- A recruitment and retention strategy is being developed which will be incorporated within a wider Human Resource Strategy for the Council.
- The Council review of key areas of service will enable greater integrated provision and help promote social inclusion.
- Major service reviews have been concluded and implemented e.g.. Equipment and Adaptations and Home for the Future as examples.

5.3. The recognition given to the difficulties faced by Local Authorities in the Recruitment and Retention of social care staff both at a local and national level is welcomed. Unless this issue is addressed, Local Authority will be unable to deliver services. This is a national issue which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

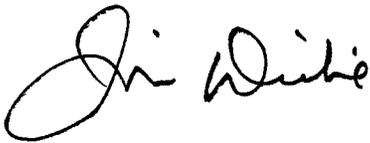
## 6. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to :

- (i) homologate the attached North Lanarkshire response to the Scottish Executive, Social Work Services Inspectorate;
- (ii) request the Director of Social Work to report future developments in respect of the Annual Review process to Committee;
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**18<sup>th</sup> July 2001**

*For further information on this report please contact Mary Fegan, Head of Social Work Services  
TEL: (01698 332001)*

PO Box 14  
Civic Centre  
Motherwell ML1 1TW

Contact: Mr Whitefield  
Our Ref: GW/AF  
Your Ref:  
Date: 18 June, 2001

Telephone: 01698 302452  
E-mail: Chief.Executive@northlan.gov.uk  
Fax: 01698 230265  
Web Site: www.northlan.gov.uk

Chief Executive  
Gavin Whitefield

Angus Skinner  
Chief Inspector  
Social Work Service Inspectorate  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

Dear Angus

### **Changing for the Future - Social Work Services for the 21st Century**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Report 2000-2001.

North Lanarkshire welcomes the first annual report on Social Work Services. The Council welcomes scrutiny of its services, is committed to continuous improvement in the provision of high quality services, whilst at the same time ensuring Best Value.

The Council had earlier opportunity to comment on the draft report of the Service Review of North Lanarkshire Social Work Services. It is important to note that the report provides selective examples of practice, developments and new initiatives within the Council. These however reflect the Councils commitment to modernising services.

Since the report was produced a number of significant developments have taken place within the Council which will promote improved and modernised social work services.

- The recent restructuring of the Social Work Department will enable greater focus and differentiation across service provision and service development.
- Improvements in SWIS, the Departments management information system enables service pressures to be identified and services targeted for development e.g. the proposed growth in the Home Care Service.
- A recruitment and retention strategy is being developed which will be incorporated within a wider Human Resource Strategy for the Council.
- The Councils review of key areas of service will enable greater integrated provision and help promote social inclusion.
- Major service reviews have been concluded and implemented e.g. Equipment and Adaptations and Home for the Future as examples.

In general terms the Council welcomes the Annual Report as a mechanism to promote quality Social Work Services to the public. Too often only deficiencies in service provision have been identified by the media. The report provides a wider context in which to consider positive achievements and areas for improvement.

The report provides a public opportunity to highlight/reflect on the significant changes affecting social work provision since Local Government re-organisation. Many authorities have introduced significant organisational changes with experienced staff lost to the service and new partnerships forged. All of this has taken place at a time of unprecedented policy developments including :

Mr Skinner, Social Work Service Inspectorate

18 June 2001

- The Learning Disability Review
- The Joint Futures Report
- The Millan Report
- A new strategic framework for developing Children's Services
- New Community Schools
- The Youth Crime Strategy
- The implications of the Adoption Review
- A Tough Option

to name a few.

Many of these changes are taking place at a time when serious difficulties are being experienced in the recruitment and retention of a range of social care staff. Although North Lanarkshire is introducing a number of initiatives to recruit and retain staff, the Council continues to experience a high number of vacancies which in the future may have serious implications for the Council in complying with its statutory duties.

This is not an issue unique to North Lanarkshire. It is important that this is considered a serious national issue which requires urgent action. The outcome of the McCrone report introduces significant differentials between the overall rewards of teachers and social workers. This is a major disincentive to recruitment on to social work courses.

North Lanarkshire has a good track record in working with partner Agencies, particularly Health. There is a drive to provide integrated services with a commitment to ensuring Best Value.

The Scottish Executive has introduced a number of new structures which will impact on service provision, the New Council and Regulation of Care as examples. To ensure full implementation of these Local Authorities will require to be properly resourced especially considering current recruitment difficulties.

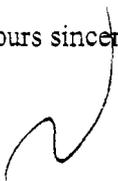
In order to measure performance progress it is important that there is common agreement to what is collected, standards to be set etc. North Lanarkshire has invested heavily in a modern management information system which should assist the provision of performance information. Such systems however require resources to maintain them.

Work is underway both with planning partners and internally within the Council to review and modernise services, including shifting the balance from Institutional to home based care. Statutory plans are being reviewed in full consultation with service users, within the Council a number of cross cutting reviews are being developed.

Finally, as advised, the Council welcomes the Annual Review of Social Work Services, but would be concerned if it was simply to produce league tables. The annual report provides opportunities to positively profile social work services. More importantly it provides an opportunity to review the resource requirements for authorities of the Governments modernising agenda for Social Work Services.

I trust the information is of assistance. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive