

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 28 FEB 2002	Ref: JS	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of steps taken to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers and occupational therapists within the Social Work Department.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It was previously reported to Committee, following the Member / Officer Consultation Exercise into the recruitment and retention of social workers that measures would be brought forward to a future Committee.
- 2.2 The earlier report noted the particular shortage, in Scotland, of these staff groups.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposals to improve recruitment and retention introduce the concept of Senior Practitioners, to provide social workers and occupational therapists to pursue a career as practitioners.
- 3.2 Those appointed as Senior Practitioners will progress to a higher grade (PO2) with additional responsibilities to act as mentors for inexperienced staff and contribute to the recruitment and training programmes for the Social Work Department.
- 3.3 The right to award of the higher grade will be subject to annual review.
- 3.4 The full details of criteria for selection, process of selection, reward, additional responsibilities and review are contained in the Appendix to this report.

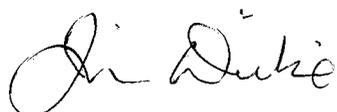
4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial cost to the Social Work Department will depend on the numbers of social workers and occupational therapists who take advantage of the scheme. The cost can be met within Social Work budgets.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the proposals will have a significant and positive effect on recruitment.
- 4.3 There are no legal or policy implications.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 Committee is asked to:

- Approve the scheme proposed to introduce Senior Practitioners within the Social Work Department.
- Remit this report to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee for its consideration.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
February 5th 2002

*For further information on this report please contact J Scott, Manager of Resources and Information
(TEL: 01698 332065)*

Appendix 1

Process for Approval of Senior Practitioners

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper puts forward proposals for the implementation of a scheme for recognition and reward for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, through the creation of posts of Senior Practitioner.
- 1.2 The scheme will apply to staff in posts designated as Social Worker or Occupational Therapist.

2. Proposals – Recognition and Reward

- 2.1 Various criteria for reward / recognition of individual effort were considered, ranging from length of service to completion of post qualification training courses and contribution to the Department.
- 2.2 The most suitable form of reward was generally accepted as financial, plus the enhanced status of personal recognition within the Department. Financial reward has to be seen to be the equivalent of Senior Social Worker grade in the previous structure - PO2 - to be recognised as providing a real alternative career choice for Social Workers.
- 2.3 Social Workers who have been approved for additional reward should be called Social Work Senior Practitioners.
- 2.4 Occupational Therapists who have been approved for additional reward should be called Occupational Therapist Senior Practitioners.

3. Criteria

- 3.1 The criteria for recognition is based on a balance of experience, evidence of continuous learning, ability to communicate, and contribution to the Department.
- 3.2 Length of Service alone, and / or completion of post qualification training are, in themselves, insufficient to warrant extra reward. The completion of post qualification training is already recognised through the Department's award ceremonies, and the Council is considering methods of recognising long service.
- 3.3 To be meaningful, recognition linked to financial reward should relate to the additional contribution made, by the individual, to the services provided by the Department.

Social Workers require to meet all of the following 4 criteria to merit additional reward.

Occupational Therapists require to meet criteria 1, 3, and 4. There is currently no available PQ Framework for Occupational Therapists as there is for Social Workers. Instead it is anticipated that Occupational Therapists will be expected to complete a suitable range of post qualification in-service training to meet criteria 2. This range of courses is being defined.

1) 3 years post qualification experience.

2) By completion of any one of the following post qualification training. Relevant training will include those courses which can be related to the competency framework and have a direct correlation to the task of Social Workers. The training courses listed below have the benefit that they are all subject to the competency framework and, with the exception of the Diploma in Drug and Alcohol Studies, are accredited

to the PQ Framework :

- The PQ Award
- Mental Health Officer
- Practice Teaching
- Certificate in Child Protection
- Diploma in Drug and Alcohol Studies

Other training may be added to this list or considered by the Senior Practitioner Panel (see Section 4) if considered directly relevant to the social work task.

- 3) Evidence of consistent use of this training in own practice and the promotion of the service.
- 4) Evidence of a positive attitude to the Social Work task, to the provision of support to colleagues, and to the development of teamwork.

4. Process

- 4.1 Social Workers or Occupational Therapists may apply for recognition as Senior Practitioners when they consider, in discussion with their line manager that they meet all of the 4 criteria noted above.
- 4.2 New entrants to the employment of the Council who have the relevant experience and post qualification training may apply to be considered as Senior Practitioners when a sufficient period has elapsed to demonstrate that they meet the other criteria identified in 2.3 above.
- 4.3 The application for recognition should be supported by a reference from the Operational Manager or relevant HQ Manager, based on the criteria listed above. Use of the reference form and assessment tool, attached as appendices, will promote consistency of assessment.
- 4.4 The application and line manager reference will be considered by a Senior Practitioners Panel, drawn from Operational and Human Resource staff, within the Department. The Panel will ensure consistency of approach.
- 4.5 The Council's procedures for resolution of disagreement will be available to applicants.

5. Post Recognition

- 5.1 It is anticipated that staff approved as Senior Practitioners will continue to contribute to the work of the Department, making use of the skills and experience they have developed.
- 5.2 There will be 6 main areas in which this experience will further develop both the individuals involved and the organisation itself. These are, as required, to :
 - Provide formal mentoring for new qualified and unqualified fieldwork staff.
 - Contribute to the delivery of the Training Programme of the Department.
 - Contribute to the Recruitment Programme of the Department. This will include contact with colleges and universities which run training courses for Social Workers, support at recruitment fairs, and any other promotional activity which supports recruitment.
 - Contribute to policy and practice development through involvement in Departmental workgroups or project teams, or lead on areas of expertise with specified staff.
 - Demonstrate ongoing use of post qualification learning.
 - Sustained effort to support the service priorities.
- 5.3 Recognition as a Senior Practitioner should not be regarded as automatic or permanent, but as an additional reward made for contribution to the Department. This recognition should be reviewed on a yearly basis by

the Senior Practitioner Panel, or reconsidered immediately in the context of any disciplinary action taken in relation to the Senior Practitioner concerned. Any reconsideration of status will be based on the merits of the individual case.

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