

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Social Work Sub Committee (Operations and Services)		Subject: Review of the development of Mental Health Officer services provided by North Lanarkshire Social Work Department.
From: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work		
Date: 16 December 1996	Ref: JD/HK	

1.0 Purpose

This report outlines a response to the Social Work Services Inspectorate Guidance on Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984 - Mental Health Officers - New Directions by the Secretary of State.

- 1.1 This paper also follows up the comments on the guidance provided by the authority as presented to the Social Work Committee on 20 September 1996.
- 1.2 The SWSI require this authority's response to the following by 31 December 1996:
 - (i) plans for MHO training, referring to any agreement for joint training with other social work authorities;
 - (ii) numbers of MHOs and comment on how they are managed, organised and deployed, referring to any agreement for joint working with other social work authorities;
 - (iii) description of the relationship between MHO services and other aspects of social care for people with a mental illness, in particular, the Care Programme Approach.

2.0 Plans for Mental Health Officer Training

- 2.1 Plans for MHO training must take account of new requirements placed on local authorities and MHOs, notably:
 - (i) The Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Act 1995 which introduces Community Care Orders and the extended role of MHOs as After Care Officers.
 - (ii) The Care-Programme Approach for people with a serious mental illness.
 - (iii) Supervision and Treatment Orders introduced by the Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995.
- 2.2 MHO training as well as taking account of these new requirements must also respond to changing need and development within the authority. This will be discussed in the following sections.

- 2.3 The Social Work Department had originally hoped to apply to the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work for accreditation to provide its own MHO training course. The department's need for new MHOs is currently no more than five per year and therefore to ensure the viability of any course it would require to sell places to neighbouring authorities. Recent soundings have indicated that such demand would be very limited.
- 2.4 As a result the Council will have to purchase places on other training courses, principally those provided by the West of Scotland Consortium hosted by Glasgow City Council.
- 2.5 The cost to the Council of the training offered by the Consortium is approximately £600 per person. This cost can be met from the department's training budget.
- 3.0 Numbers, management, organisations and deployment of MHOs
- 3.1 In this authority there are 35 Mental Health Officers. These MHOs are deployed throughout the authority area and are accessed through the local area teams. This provides a local response to need.
- 3.2 A development plan is being considered by the authority in relation to the deployment and operation of MHOs. The intention of this plan is to introduce weighted caseloads for MHOs to ensure they are working predominantly with individuals with serious mental illness and meeting the new requirements as highlighted earlier. This will also have the advantage of ensuring that MHOs are fully utilised and that their skills are fully developed.
- 3.3 A MHO support group is in place. This provides MHOs with the means to receive information, discuss difficult cases and develop their skills. This group meets every six weeks.
- 4.0 Relationship between MHO Services and other aspects of social care, in particular, the Care Programme Approach.
- 4.1 MHO services have to be meshed sufficiently with the social care provision as highlighted earlier. In relation to:
- (i) The Care Programme Approach.
- The MHO will adopt the role of Care Programme Co-ordinator, prepare an assessment of need and a care plan, and manage the care provided for the individual.
- (ii) Community Care Orders
- The MHO will have the extended role of After Care Officer and co-ordinate the care plan, applying the Care Programme Approach as indicated in the guidance introduced in the new Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Act 1995.
- (iii) Supervision and Treatment Order
- The MHO will act as Supervising Officer preparing a report for the court as required by legislation and applying the Care Programme Approach as required by the guidance introduced in the new Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995.

(iv) Mental Disorder

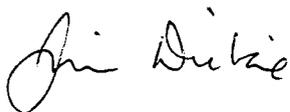
The MHO will adopt the role of Assessor and Care Co-ordinator in relation to those individuals who have a serious mental disorder and complex needs.

- 4.2 All of this will require MHOs to develop links and to work collaboratively with health service personnel. Additional inservice training will also have to be provided in order to implement this development fully.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked:

- (i) To note the terms of this report.
- (ii) To approve the general approach which is being developed locally in relation to Mental Health Officer Services, to be updated in a future report.



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Director of Social Work
December, 1996

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