

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: DRAFT NATIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS FOR MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER SERVICES
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 5 OCTOBER 2004	Ref: MW/EN	

### 1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

To advise Committee of the contents of the "Draft National Service Standards for Mental Health Officer Services" which the Scottish Executive issued for comment in August 2004.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The changing nature of legislation and services relating to mental health and learning disability in Scotland pose significant challenges to local authorities. In particular, these challenges focus on the capacity and capability of current Mental Health Officer (MHO) services in Scotland.
- 2.2. In 2001 the Scottish Executive published its policy statement, Reviewing Mental Health Law, setting out proposals for the development of the new Mental Health Bill. The policy intimated the intention to develop national standards for the provision of mental health officer services to respond to new organisational and professional demands, which would follow from the introduction of the new Mental Health (Care and Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.
- 2.3. Social Work Services Inspectorate commissioned the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health to undertake comprehensive national research into mental health officer services. This research confirmed significant variability in both the level and quality of MHO service provision across the country. A multi agency reference group was subsequently formed to develop standards, which have been distributed for consultation.
- 2.4. The introduction of, and the possible implications of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 have been reported to previous committees.

### 3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1. The Draft National Service Standards for MHO Services is part of a range of guidance and information made available by the Scottish Executive to ensure local authority MHO services are able to meet the demands placed on them by existing and new legislation.

3.2. There are seven standards supported by comprehensive criteria and these are as follows:

- (i) Responsive Services
- (ii) Referral, Assessment and Admission Procedures
- (iii) Care Planning and Care Management
- (iv) Inter/intra-Agency Collaboration and Co-operation
- (v) Equitable Provision and Anti-Discriminatory Practice
- (vi) Staff Training and Development
- (vii) Organisation and Management

### **North Lanarkshire/s Position**

3.3. The first three standards (i) (ii) (iii) substantially relate to the importance of sharing information with people who use services and their carers and the need for robust allocation, assessment and care management systems to be in place. There is currently a working group reviewing assessment and care management practice within social work. This will establish models for assessment and care management practice and set practice standards.

3.4. The next two standards (iv) (v) highlight the importance of joint working to ensure a co-ordinated approach to implementing mental health legislation and resourcing need. North Lanarkshire's new Mental Health Act Implementation Group, which has representation from a wide range of agencies, service users and their carers, was established in March 2004. This group is charged with the responsibility of taking forward joint implementation of the Act in April 2005. An Action Plan, as required by the Scottish Executive, has been devised. Inter / intra agency co-operation and collaboration is included within this. Similarly service provision within the plan is based on non discriminatory practice and equitable distribution of resources.

3.5. The last two standards (vi) (viii) highlight the responsibility of local authorities to provide appropriate opportunities for continued professional development and proper managerial, administrative and technical support which will enable MHOs to implement the Act. Within North Lanarkshire an audit of MHO services is currently being undertaken to review the design of MHO Services. This work will be informed by the Draft Service Standards guidance.

3.6. The Draft Service Standards for MHO Services provides a comprehensive standards framework for MHO Services. This offers an opportunity to measure the performance of existing services against set criteria. At the same time the proposals fit well within ongoing review mechanisms and will be incorporated within them.

## **4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implications**

4.1. The Scottish Executive has completed an assessment of the mental health needs of communities in Scotland (Mental Health Assessment Project). The report concludes that all local authorities will require additional MHOs in order to respond to the demands of the new Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. This information will be included into the current audit of MHO Services, whose findings will be presented to committee at a future date.

4.2. The Scottish Executive has identified additional funding for Local Authorities to assist with the implementation of the new Act. Over the three year period 2003 – 2006, funding will increase annually from £1.2 million, to £12.5 and then £13 million. Additionally Health authorities have been provided with funding. In Lanarkshire Health received a non-recurring payment of £409,000 for 2004 – 05. It is not yet known what new funds will be available for 2005/06.

4.3. North Lanarkshire Council has 26 accredited Mental Health Officers. Mental Health Officers are qualified Social Workers who undertake a period of post qualifying accredited training. The national shortage of suitability qualified Social Workers will have an impact on the availability of Social Workers to undertake Mental Health Officer training.

4.4. North Lanarkshire Council awards Mental Health Officers senior practitioner status which has a salary award of Principle Officer grade 2 (£25,527-£27,873) Some Local Authorities are awarding a higher salary which will have recruitment implications for the Council.

## 5. Recommendations

5.1. Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the contents of this report
- (ii) request that the Director of Social Work provides a final report to Committee on the audit of MHO services in North Lanarkshire.



**Director of Social Work**  
**8 September 2004**

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