

I. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Modernising Social Work Services in Scotland

A government white paper that sets out proposals for achieving social work provision that is responsive to individual needs, is reliable, is delivered promptly and efficiently.

The paper indicates that social service standards need to improve, acknowledges that the social work task is difficult and requires a confident and competent staff to deliver effective services. The paper also recognises the need for social work to work closely with other agencies in order to deliver services which are economic, efficient and effective.

Modernising Community Care

An action plan which proposes changes to the way in which community services are delivered. The main aims are to achieve better and faster results for service users, streamlining of management with resources being transferred to front-line services, and more effective partnerships between agencies delivering services. The report also proposes that health and social work services should work together in the community.

Our National Health. A Plan for Action. A Plan for Change

This plan published in December 2000, sets out the governments priorities for improving health and delivering a modern health service. The plan sets out a programme of reform to deliver services to communities across Scotland.

The report identifies a number of priorities which include improving access to services, setting national standards and working in partnership with staff and providing better care for young and old people.

Sensing Progress

A social work inspectorate report which reported on services to visually and hearing impaired throughout Scotland. The report made several recommendations to improve standards, multi agency service provision, improvement of assessment arrangements, sensory awareness training for all levels of staff, and the importance of effective joint working between social work and health with both departments clearly understanding each others responsibilities and tasks.

Hearing Aid Provision and Best Practice

Information on Scottish Executive Report on Health Service Provision - Best Practice indicates best practice issues on hearing aid provision and partnership working.

2. LOCAL CONTEXT

Sensory Impaired Best Value Service Review

This review was produced during 2000. The review identified some areas where gaps in service could be identified which included waiting times, the need to provide better and more meaningful statistics.

Recommendations from the report included, involving service users in consultation, better access to information and continuing development of services between health colleagues and other departments of the council.

Vision 20/20

The plan describes South Ayrshire Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for all who live, work or visit the area. The plan outlines the need for South Ayrshire to be safe, have a strong economy, a caring community that supports those in need and seek to overcome disadvantage.

Community Services Assessment and Care Management Policy

This policy was developed from a project initiated by a Senior Social Worker led team to address the recommendations in Modernising Community Care.

The report explored and made recommendations which resulted in the Community Services Assessment and Care Management Policy which included empowering service users, consulting with service users, identifying clear standards, development of policy and procedures streamlining assessment forms and paperwork.

Ayrshire Paediatric Hearing Assessment Group

National Deaf Children's Society published guidelines last October recommending that an Audiology Working Group should be set up by April 2001. A working group pan Ayrshire has been formed and South Ayrshire will have social work representation. Membership of the group will be Health, Education, Social Work and parent representatives.

3. ACTION PLAN FROM LAST COMMUNITY CARE PLAN

Improve Information Systems to People with Sensory Impairment

The position of Information Officer at the Disability Resource Centre is currently vacant due to resource restrictions, however some improvements have been made over the last Community Care Plan e.g. links with other agencies and developing an information library.

Develop Services For People with Dual Sensory Impairment

All service users referred to the Sensory Impairment Team are automatically assessed for dual sensory needs. Discussion has taken place with health colleagues to identify referral/assessment procedures for people with a dual sensory impairment.

Set Up a Register of Hearing Impaired Service Users and Improve and Modify Visually Impaired Register

A Hearing Impaired Register is in place and the Visually Impaired Register has been transformed and updated to a more modern database.

Set Up Tape Service Equipment for Visually Impaired

Tape recording and duplicating equipment is in place and the Sensory Impaired Team are developing information systems in tape form.

Develop Services in Partnership with Health Colleagues

An awareness training programme for health service colleagues has been developed and run jointly by Ayr Hospital and Sensory Impairment Team.

A consumer group of service users has been developed and is supported by both health and social work.

A Sensory Impairment Support Group has been formed and has been assisted to develop by both health social work.

Develop links to other sections of Social Work, Housing and Health and South Ayrshire Council Services

During the life of the plan a Disability Resource Centre Open Day for social work colleagues and other health and community colleagues was arranged to allow those attending to be more aware of DRC services to all disabled people resident in South Ayrshire.

Links have been formed with Welfare Rights Services to participate and assist with the sensory impairment issues in relation to benefit maximisation.

Links have been made with Corporate Service and Sensory Awareness Training is offered to all departments of the Council.

4. WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED DURING THE LIFE OF THE PLAN

Waiting time for Visually Impaired Registration has been significantly reduced, service users are normally registered and receive full assessment and follow up within a month.

A daily duty appointment system has been developed to allow quicker access to assessment/social work services for service users able to visit the Disability Resource Centre.

Four members of staff from the Disability Resource Centre received training and passed Stage I of Council for Advancement in Communication with Deaf People.

Partnership links have been formed with peripatetic education services for visually impaired and hearing impaired. Support has been given to a parent / children's group resident in South Ayrshire initiated by education and social work services.

5. WHAT REMAINS TO BE ACHIEVED ?

Further development of service user groups being consulted re service development, service requirements of children with hearing impairment needs to be explored and developed.

Information services need to be further developed-ideally a database of local information. People still can have difficulty accessing information on services available, especially from the voluntary sector.

Such information needs to be available in tape/Braille/video. Service users from rural areas have difficulty accessing some services than those living in town areas. This can be particularly difficult for visually impaired people who experience transport difficulties.

Recent plans for partnership working with health colleagues and social work have had to be deferred, further planning and consultation requires to be put in place to improve partnership working.

Hearing impaired partnership working between audiology and social work has continued to develop appropriately however lip-reading tuition is an integral part of the rehabilitation process and consideration and planning is needed to have permanent classes, appropriately funded.

6. ACTION PLAN FOR 2001-2004

- ***Explore opportunities for more integrated working for services delivered by both Local Authority Community Services and Acute Trust services in particular the immediate needs for newly registered visually impaired, and identifying funding for lip-reading classes and rehabilitation for hearing impaired.***
- ***To further develop the duty system in particular to the rural areas of South Ayrshire and to explore ways of delivering services more effectively in the rural areas, to link with DRC - Occupational Therapy Services to provide such services.***
- ***To continue to support local voluntary organisations, social groups who provide support and advice to people with a sensory impairment.***
- ***To provide an accessible CCTV reading system for visual impairment service users, allowing visually impaired people to deal with personal correspondence with open access and maintain their privacy and confidentiality.***
- ***To develop information services in Braille and tape format allowing visually impaired people equal access to information.***

- ***Relocation of the Disability Resource Centre to more appropriate premises could encourage better use of current facilities.***
- ***To explore the means of information available to British Sign Language users, possibly using video material/links to provide equal access.***

7. PRIORITIES IF ADDITIONAL FUNDING AVAILABLE

- ***Joint partnership working in providing lip-reading/rehabilitation for hearing impaired.***
- ***Development of guide / communicators for deaf / blind people.***
- ***Sign Language training for social work, housing and health staff, other council departments and individuals.***