
Report To: Community Health & Care Partnership Sub Committee **Date:** 24th April 2014

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Inverclyde Community Health & Care Partnership **Report No:** CHCP/26/2014/SMCA

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Subject: REDESIGN OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND STANDBY SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Sub-Committee of the progress of the redesign of the West of Scotland Standby Social Work Service.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee is also asked to consider the recommendations at Section 3 of the report on the future service model for Out of Hours Social Work Services.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The re-designed service, to be known as Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Service, commenced on 1st April 2014 and provides cover for the out-of-hours emergency statutory Social Work duties of the seven remaining Local Authorities in the previous West of Scotland area.
- 2.2 There is no current capacity within local services to cover our statutory Social Work duties on an out-of-hours emergency basis.
- 2.3 A broader review of local out-of-hours services across the Council and CHCP is about to commence and statutory Social Work duties will be considered as part of this review.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Service Level Agreement to contract Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Services to deliver statutory Social Work Services on behalf of Inverclyde Council is approved
- 3.2 That it be noted that an initial report on the wider review of out-of-hours services that is about to commence will be reported to the Corporate Director in July 2014.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Standby currently delivers emergency Out of Hours Social Work Services for 7 Scottish Local Authorities. This arrangement was put in place at local government re-organisation in 1996 when all of the West of Scotland Local Authorities agreed to contract Glasgow City Council to deliver this service on their behalf.
- 4.2 In April 2009 both North and South Lanarkshire withdrew from the contract. At the end of March 2012, North, South and East Ayrshire Local Authorities withdrew from the service. At the end of March 2013, Argyll and Bute Local Authority withdrew from the service.
- 4.3 The withdrawal of these Local Authorities effectively reduced the actual business of the service by 35%. Due to the fact that there had been no provision within the original contract for Local Authorities withdrawing from the service, the full financial impact, including staff redundancies, was absorbed by Glasgow City Council.
- 4.4 As a result, a review and redesign of the service became a priority for all the remaining Local Authorities in terms of the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the service.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 That consideration is given to contracting Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work Service to deliver full out-of-hours cover for the statutory Social Work responsibilities of Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde Community Health and Care Partnership.
- 5.2 Key efficiencies, changes and costs of the service to be delivered are outlined in sections 6 and 7.

6.0

6.1 Service Level Agreement:

Not surprisingly, there have been changes to the original service level agreement to reflect the changing picture of Social Work services and of Health and Social Care more generally. The contract period is fixed at 4 years, renewable for further periods of 4 years thereafter. The notice period for withdrawal at the end of the contract has been extended to 15 months to allow for detailed consideration and planning about the viability of the ongoing service. Withdrawal prior to the end of the contract period confers responsibility on the withdrawing Local Authority for all costs, expenses and outgoings properly reasonably incurred by the Lead Authority as a result of the withdrawal.

6.2 Staffing:

A review of staffing has identified the potential for efficiencies to be made during periods of lower demand for services, with a minimum staffing level applied and making use of call handling and "call-out" arrangements. In addition, vacancies for qualified social workers will be offered in future on a fixed term basis. This reduces the financial impact of redundancies should any of the remaining Local Authorities subsequently withdraw and in addition will provide a better skills/experience mix within the staff group, ensuring that practice reflects research and development in delivering more effective services.

6.3 Information Technology:

A revised Data Sharing Protocol has been developed in line with the statutory duties and best practice. IT systems are also being reviewed with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness.

6.4 Governance:

Although Glasgow City Council will continue to be the Lead Authority for the service, all of the Local Authorities are represented on the Joint Users Group. This meets on a regular basis and all aspects of the service are reported through this forum, including all management and financial information.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 7.1 There are changes to the financial framework for the service and as noted already, this reflects Glasgow City Council's experience of absorbing the costs of the withdrawal of the 6 Local Authorities, as well as the significant changes to the infrastructure that sits behind the delivery of the statutory Social Work services of today. Direct service costs will continue to be projected on the basis of usage levels and all ancillary costs are similarly apportioned on the basis of the usage level. A Contingency Fund of £200,000 has also been included to cover for unforeseen circumstances and any need to utilise this fund will be subject to notification to the Joint Users Group. As before the contributions of individual Local Authorities to this fund are proportionate to their service usage level, with Glasgow City Council bearing the most significant proportion.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs (2014 - 15 projection based on 2012 usage level)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A			£135,474		This represents an increase of approximately 32% on the previous service cost.

Legal

- 7.2 The Council's Legal section has been consulted throughout the process of the redesign.

Human Resources

- 7.3 No new implications.

Equalities

- 7.4 No new implications.

Repopulation

- 7.5 No new implications.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS :

8.1 Service Level Agreement and Financial Framework.