

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Children's Services Committee: 16 August 2006

Subject: Performance Improvement Actions For Children's Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs Committee of actions taken to address the performance of Social Work in the submission of Social Background Reports (SBRs) to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and on the proportion of children and young people made the subject of a supervision order who are seen within fifteen working days.
- 1.2** It also updates committee on performance during 2005/2006 and April to June 2006.

2. Background

- 2.1** At a meeting of the Children's Services Committee on 18 January 2006 the committee recommended that actions, which had been put in place to improve the performance on the above two statutory Performance Indicators, should be monitored in order to establish whether an improvement in performance had been achieved.
- 2.2** The Committee also instructed the Acting Director of Social Work Services to contact Inverclyde Social Work Department in order to benchmark processes and performance on the level of reports provided within agreed timescales.
- 2.3** A further report to committee on 17 May, 2006 detailed current performance and the actions which had been initiated.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The issues identified as affecting performance in these indicators were the volume of report requests and supervision orders made and recruitment and retention issues within Social Work Services for Children and Families.
- 3.2** A series of actions were initiated:
- revised recording and administrative procedures;
 - two dedicated posts to progress the provision of reports;
 - secure email links to the Reporter's Office.
- 3.3** The above actions have led to improved performance in the provision of reports on time.

2004-05
21%

2005-06
32%

April-June 2006
35%

- 3.4** While the information on SBRs for 2004/05 was extracted from the Social Work Information system, the 2005/2006 Audit Scotland Annual Performance review was taken from the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration information system and it was apparent that there were discrepancies between this data and that held on the Social Work Information system. Our monitoring systems indicate 40% of reports were submitted on time in 2005/06. Work is underway to identify where discrepancies are occurring.
- 3.5** The proportion of Children and Young People seen within 15 working days has fluctuated over the year and currently shows no improvement.

2004/05
68%

2005/2006
63%

April - June 2006
47%

- 3.6** An initial audit of case files carried out in line with National Standards for Social Work within the Children's Hearing System has indicated that the recording of this area of work is inconsistent across the department. Part of the audit involved sampling case records of Children and Young People made subject to a supervision order during the reporting year. The audit showed that all children and young people had an allocated worker and care plan as required by National Standards and that 75% had been seen well within the 15 working day period.

4. Further actions taken

- 4.1** As well as the measures detailed above, Managers within Children's Services began a series of benchmarking exercises with Children's Services in Inverclyde Council.
- 4.2** The initial comparative analysis of business processes indicates that although our performance has been affected by an increase in complex cases, staffing levels and turnover, there is a lack of clarity and consistency in both standards and recording processes.
- 4.3** These issues are being tackled by the Child Care Information Group which progresses the policy and procedural actions needed to capture information in response to changing demands.
- 4.4** The procedures and standards for work within the Children's Hearing System will be completed by September and will be presented to the Children's Services Committee on 11 October, 2006.

5. Personnel

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues at present, however the outcome of the comparative business process analysis may identify concerns.

6. Finance

- 6.1** There are no financial issues at present however the outcome of the comparative business process analysis may identify additional costs.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** Committee is asked to note the content of the report and to request that the Acting Director of Social Work Services reports on progress to the Children's Services Committee on 11 October, 2006.

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Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All