

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Social Justice Committee: 12 April 2006

Subject: Continuing Professional Development Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide members with an update regarding the development of a policy for Continuing Professional Development within the Department of Social Work Services. A draft of the Continuing Professional Development Policy is attached as an Appendix to the report.

2. Background

- 2.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all employees is a principle of good practice for social services departments. As the Scottish Executive's 'National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland' states:

"Developing the workforce is critical to ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time." (Scottish Executive, 2005)

- 2.2 As a learning organisation we have in place systems mechanisms and processes that we use to continually enhance our performance, to achieve sustainable objectives with our customers and staff. We view Continuing Professional development as a key aspect of the ongoing improvement in our services and this policy is intended to outline our overall approach to CPD and to delineate the roles and responsibilities of those involved.
- 2.3 The Council already has in place a policy on professional development and Planning (PDP). This new Policy on CPD is aligned to the requirements of the PDP and ties this to the particular needs of Social Workers and the Social Service workforce generally.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 National Strategies for social work such as the recent Changing Lives Report place a heavy emphasis on the training and development of the Social Services Workforce. Additionally the development of policy on CPD needs to be seen in the context of the Codes of Practice for employers and employees laid down by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the registration of the social services workforce and the Post-Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) requirements which accompany registration.

- 3.2 The Code of Practice for Social Service Workers states that employees must:

- Be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills;
- Undertake relevant training to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.

3.3 The Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service Workers states that employers must:

- Provide training and development opportunities to enable social service workers to strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge;
- Provide induction, training and development opportunities to help social service workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities;
- Contribute to the provision of social care and social work education and training, including effective workplace assessment and practice learning;
- Support staff in posts subject to registration to meet the SSSC's eligibility criteria for registration and its requirements for continuing professional development

3.4 Whilst it is clear from the SSSC Codes of Practice and registration requirements that CPD is ultimately the responsibility of the employee, it is also clear that the employer has a responsibility to support its staff in relation to CPD. The dividing lines between these responsibilities need to be drawn in relation to a number of different areas.

3.5 Our policy sets out how we will meet our CPD responsibilities to Social Workers as an employer and what will be expected to be the individual responsibility of the employee.

3.6 The draft policy is attached as Appendix 1. This policy applies only to Social Workers at this stage. A revised policy covering all Social Care employees will be developed and reported to a future Committee.

3.7 This policy ties-in with the Council's policy on Professional Development and Planning.

3.8 The implementation of this policy will be assisted by the development of a new web-based system called Care Knowledge, which has been developed by OLM Systems as a powerful database of Social Care information at both national and local levels.

4. Personnel Implications

4.1 The policy will support employees in fulfilling their responsibilities to undertake CPD work. It is envisaged that this will have positive implications for our workforce and that employees will feel supported by the Council.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications, as the CPD will be undertaken from within existing resources. Not all CPD involves financial cost and it is envisaged that there will be minimal cost implications in implementing this policy.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Council as employers of Social Workers has a responsibility to support such employees in meeting their responsibilities as outlined by the SSSC.
- 6.2 This policy illustrates to employees the Council's commitment to them and to supporting them to meet their CPD responsibilities.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that members note the contents of the report and policy and the implementation of CPD for Social Workers.

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Background Papers:

Wards Affected: All