



General Functions Committee. Adults

Date: 14.1.09

Subject: Restructure of Adult Social Services

<p>The Joint Trade Unions have requested on a number of occasions for the right to speak to their reports brought before members of the General Functions Committee. We believe this would enable members of the Committee to make better informed decisions.</p>

Recommendations:

- 1.1 Continue the consultations between staff, management and trade unions. The role profiles and grades have yet to be agreed. The concept of "Trusted Assessor" which is on all frontline role profiles (non-professionally qualified staff, OTs and social workers) is currently not popular with staff and will need further negotiation and debate.
- 1.2 Failure to agree a grade which overlaps with the social workers for the non-professionally qualified staff could result in a dispute with the council. Agree an overlapping Grade with social workers for non-professionally qualified staff.
- 1.3 Following implementation of the restructure the staffing levels in the respective teams should be kept under review

and changes should be made reflecting unanticipated pressures on the teams.

- 1.4 An audit should be carried out of known disabled employees and work should be carried out in conjunction with the unions to advise, inform and work with disabled employees to make sure their needs are taken into consideration when transferring people into their new teams with new team managers.

Background:

- 2.1 A lot of progress has been made with an intense period of negotiations and consultations involving all staff contributing to the improvement on the role profiles. There is still some way to go to be able to agree the role profiles.
- 2.2 The concept of “trusted assessor” is new to most staff. It would mean that OTs perform a certain level of work carried out by social work staff and social work staff would carry out a certain level of work carried out by OTs. People are concerned professional boundaries will be blurred and this will expose them to taking on responsibilities not normally associated with their line of work. High profile cases in the media have contributed to the increased nervousness amongst staff working in Social Services taking on more responsibility than they are able to deal with. Furthermore Social Services staff feel pulled in two directions. On the one hand the Government is emphasising the need for professionals to specialise and be expert in particular fields. On the other an individual worker should aim to resolve all issues raised by people using our services. This is leading to colleagues using the phrase, “Jack of all trades, master of none”. On this issue there is a long way to go to achieve agreement and no guarantee there will be agreement.
- 2.3 At the CJNCC 7.10.08 a failure to agree was noted over the issue of Community Care Officers and their current grade. These are non-professionally qualified staff who carry out almost all of the duties of professionally qualified

staff. They are prepared to take industrial action to have the grade which recognises the value of their work. This matter is now being dealt with by our Regional Office. There is no question the same strength of feeling exists amongst all non-professionally qualified staff and furthermore all staff grades are appalled at what they see as an injustice to their colleagues. If the proposed grade for the Assessment and Enablement Officers does not overlap with the grades of the professionally qualified staff (social workers and OTs) there will be a real risk of an industrial dispute.

- 2.4 The senior management team has acknowledged the need to keep the staffing levels under review.
- 2.5 The senior management team has acknowledged the need to work on a plan to ensure disabled staff members are adequately supported in the transition to the new structure.