

HOUSING AND SOCIAL WORK

SERVICE PLAN

2008 - 2011

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1 INTRODUCTION

The vision for the Council and the service

This plan sets out how we will contribute to the Council's strategic vision through the delivery of housing and social work services. The Council's vision is:

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through...

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by...

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

Service Vision

In 2007, the Housing and Social Work service agreed the following vision statement that complements the Council's vision:

Housing, Supporting and Caring - the very best of Scotland

1.2 What the service does

Housing and Social Work has two main functions. It ensures access to affordable, high quality homes for people, and it provides care and support for the most vulnerable people in our society

Responsibility for service provision is organised as follows:

- Community Care (Older People)
- Community Care (Learning Disability, Mental Health, Substance Misuse)
- Children and Families
- Criminal Justice
- Housing
- Support Services

Although responsibility for service delivery is organised in this way, there are networks and formal and informal arrangements for cross service working that ensure effective service provision for the many people whose complex needs

cross these boundaries. These networks exist within the Council and are increasingly the norm in working practice between the Council, other public sector providers and the voluntary sector.

1.3 The Purpose of the Plan

This plan contributes to the Council's suite of plans that demonstrate its commitment to the residents of Aberdeenshire. The Aberdeenshire Community Plan, which is the overarching plan, is organised in five community planning themes. These are Community Wellbeing, Lifelong Learning, Jobs and the Economy, Sustainable Environment, and Developing our Partnerships. Housing and Social Work contributes to all of these themes but has the greatest impact on improving community wellbeing. In 2007, the Council agreed a set of strategic priorities that also includes Community Wellbeing and two other themes to which Housing and Social Work makes a significant contribution, namely Developing our Partnerships, and Corporate Improvement.

Much of the information in this plan is collated from the many strategies and plans that direct the work of the service. These take account of the views of service users, carers and other stakeholders through consultation.

There is an action plan to accompany this document that describes, under the core activities of Housing and Social Work, the major developments planned, the resources associated with these, targets year on year and how these will be measured.

1.4 The Planning Context

Housing and social work services are provided in a challenging environment, where public expectations of the quality of care and support that will be available for vulnerable people are quite rightly high, and where service development and delivery has to be achieved through a clear understanding of local needs and national priorities. It is essential to balance effectively the competing demands for limited resources. The current challenges for the service include

- the provision of quality housing and care services in the context of an aging population
- developing effective partnership arrangements to deliver integrated responsive services
- implementing the requirements arising from the 21st century review of social work
- meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and maintaining a robust housing business plan
- making improvements to services agreed following audit and inspection

During 2007-08, the Scottish Government agreed a concordat with local authorities. This set out how national and local government would work together to achieve 15 national outcomes. Each local authority has set out in a strategic outcomes agreement how it intends to contribute to each of these outcomes.

Future planning arrangements for housing and social work services will require to be made in the context of this agreement.

2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE

2.1 Strategic Priorities

The work of the Housing and Social Work service makes an important contribution to the following strategic priorities.

Community Wellbeing

- Enhancing community safety
- Delivering services for children, young people and adults
- Delivering health and care
- Providing quality housing services
- Community engagement
- Promoting inclusiveness

Lifelong learning

- Improving early years opportunities,
- Improving achievement for all
- Improving access to leisure and cultural activities

Sustainable Environment

- Achieving sustainable communities

Developing Our Partnerships

- Developing community planning
- Working in partnership
- Exploring the potential for shared services

Corporate Improvement

- Efficiency
- Better outcomes for service users
- Customer service
- Communication
- Managing resources

2.2 Core Activities

The core activities of the service are as follows:-

1. Supporting children in need and their families in order to prevent where possible family breakdown and to promote life chances
2. Ensuring children looked after by the authority are provided with safe and effective care for the duration of childhood and are provided with maximum life chances (stability, education, health, social care) into young adulthood

3. Ensuring children are protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect
4. Ensuring children and families with specific needs arising from disability or a health condition have their assessed needs adequately met and reviewed
5. To provide statutory services to the Children's Hearings system
6. Providing statutory services to Court
7. Providing statutory supervision as a result of court disposal
8. Providing statutory and non-statutory support to young offenders/potential offenders
9. Meeting affordable housing needs effectively and efficiently
10. Managing the stock of housing property, maintaining and improving its condition
11. Identifying and assessing the housing situation of people who present as homeless and where applicable providing suitable temporary accommodation or enabling access to permanent accommodation
12. Time taken by the Council to re-let properties
13. Managing council housing rent including collection and arrears management
14. Identifying adults eligible for support, assessing their needs consistently and reviewing care packages to ensure continued appropriateness and effectiveness
15. Planning, commissioning/purchasing and monitoring appropriate and effective care packages which respect dignity and enable individuals to live safely within the community
16. Enabling, where possible, those individuals assessed as requiring social care support who are of working age to have their capacity to take up, remain in or return to employment maximised
17. Working in partnership with NHS and others to avoid unnecessary hospital admission and delayed/inappropriate discharge
18. Supporting informal carers who provide regular and substantial care enabling them to continue to care for as long as they/the cared for person wish and where appropriate maximising their capacity to take up/remain in or return to employment

2.3 Working in Partnership

Partnership working, both formal and informal, is important to the delivery of all Council services. Some of the formal partnership arrangements that are in place are required by the Scottish Government to further the implementation of national policies for the delivery of local services. There are many more, less formal, examples of successful partnership and joint working with other council services, particularly Education, Learning and Leisure, with Community Planning partners such as NHS Grampian and Grampian Police, and with the voluntary sector.

In 2008, a corporate register of partnerships was created from information provided by the lead service for each partnership. The register holds a central record of each partnership of which the Council is a member. Its purpose is to ensure that partnerships conform to the partnership and joint working policy. It also forms the basis for the three-yearly review of each partnership. The current list of registered partnerships that Housing and Social Work leads or is the lead partner for the Council, and the remits of these partnerships, are as follows:

1. Aberdeenshire Community Health Partnership
Planning, designing and monitoring the delivery of jointly-resourced health services
2. Aberdeenshire Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Partnership
Setting strategic direction for domestic abuse services at Aberdeenshire multi agency level, promoting multi agency working, and strategic monitoring and coordination of the work of the Domestic Abuse Project for reporting to Scottish Government
3. Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Action Team
Drugs and alcohol strategy, policies, resources and performance management
4. The Grampian Data Sharing Partnership
Planning for electronic data sharing for social care, education, protection and health services within national policy priorities and frameworks, implementing national data and technical standards, connecting to a national data sharing infrastructure, monitoring and reporting on activity
5. North East of Scotland Child Protection Committee
Strategic direction, policy and practice in child protection

During 2008-09, four new strategic partnerships will be formed with responsibility for planning housing and social work services. These partnerships will cover children's services, health and social care, local housing provision, and criminal justice. The intention is to simplify and enable joint planning and joint resourcing arrangements.

2.4 Developing the Plan

This plan, which has been developed from a number of sources, is based on policy decisions that are made nationally and locally. Many actions are in response to local priorities, which may reflect particular needs related to the level of deprivation in the area, or to needs that have been recently identified as a result of the increasing population, including immigration. The plan takes into account the wide range of information available to the service from many sources of assessment that indicate what needs to be improved. In all that the service does, it seeks to use the most up to date evidence and to learn and apply knowledge and understanding about what works locally and from best practice elsewhere.

Other plans, such as the Joint Older People's Action Plan 2007-2012, the Integrated Children's Services Plan, the Drugs and Alcohol Strategy, the Carers' Strategy and the Local Housing Strategy described below, provide more detailed information about services for people with specific needs. In turn, these documents guide the work of specialist teams.

The Local Housing Strategy defines the key objectives for the Housing Service. These take into account national priorities and local circumstances and show how the Council and its partners intend to work together to provide accessible high quality housing. The strategy takes into account the housing needs of people who may be vulnerable or disabled, and demonstrates the Council's commitment to supporting sustainable and inclusive communities. It is available on the Council's website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Although external regulation and inspection does not determine policy and strategic direction, it has a strong impact on housing and social work, helping to drive the improvements that contribute to better outcomes for people who use services. The Scottish Housing Regulator has replaced Communities Scotland as the lead authority for the regulation and inspection of Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities. Aberdeenshire Council's housing service will be inspected in 2008. This inspection will cover housing management, repairs and maintenance, and services for homeless people, as well as overarching issues such as the quality of leadership and strategic direction, efficiency and value for money, equalities, and the influence of the customer on service delivery. The regulator's report will contain recommendations that will inform future versions of this plan.

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) carried out an inspection in 2007. The inspectors concluded:

"The social work service in Aberdeenshire is achieving good outcomes for most people who use services. It is well regarded by many people who use services and by people in other agencies. The social work service plays an important role in many local communities. It has a stable, committed and competent workforce which is well managed and supported with good training opportunities.

Social work staff work well with staff from other services and agencies to provide good quality services. Front line staff and managers have been actively involved

in making improvements in some areas. Resources are well managed overall and vulnerable people are appropriately safeguarded. In many cases, good outcomes are achieved by working in partnership with people who use services but more could be done to strengthen partnerships with carers. The social work service has encouraged local developments, and in doing so has managed to provide services which respond to local needs. Managers now need to make sure that services provide equally good outcomes for people, wherever they live”.

Areas for improvement were identified as:

“Ensuring staff have manageable workloads and that the work they do is appropriately recorded, improving ways of supporting carers and involving them in planning services, ensuring that plans are linked to key priorities, that resources are identified to carry them, out and that progress can be measured, establishing a performance management system for all areas of service, and resolving the gap between the level of service provision and available resources”.

Specific areas of social work that were recently inspected include the work of the Northern Community Justice Authority, the substance misuse service, and child protection.

The publication in 2006 of the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review Reform recommended a new direction for social work. The review group made 13 recommendations concerned with building capacity to deliver personalised services, building the capacity of the workforce and building capacity for sustainable change in services that are continuing to influence social work in Aberdeenshire.

The Council is a partner in the Grampian Data Sharing Partnership which involves five public sector agencies within Grampian. The Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council, is committed to meeting the two data sharing priorities determined by the Scottish Government for delivery in 2008/2009 which are electronic single shared assessment and child protection messaging.

Of the many sources of information that the Council collects and uses to inform development and improvement, important ones include developing and sustaining proactive working relationships with the Scottish Government to keep abreast of new legislation and policy. Within the Council, there is an annual self assessment using the Aberdeenshire Improvement Model, which is supported by a broad range of performance information. Employees provide important information through the Employee Development and Review Scheme, and the focus is firmly on the needs and wishes of service users through analysis of the compliments, comments and complaints database, and systematic consultation and implementation of findings.

3 SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007-2008

3.1 Community Care

Context

Community Care is the largest area of service in Housing and Social Work and is subject to a wide range of national policies and local strategies, covering all community care groups. The main community care policy on joint working between councils and the NHS is called Joint Future. Work to align service planning and delivery, including shared arrangements for staff support, resources, assessment and reporting of performance is largely complete. Joint Future now focuses on outcomes, summarised as better and faster results for people using community care services.

There are four national outcomes for community care, namely

- improved health
- improved wellbeing
- improved social inclusion
- improved independence and responsibility

New performance arrangements are now being developed. Local information will be reported nationally under six themes, which are user satisfaction, faster access, support for carers, quality of assessment and care planning, identifying those at risk, and moving services closer to users/patients. Information about how well the service performs against 25 local improvement targets will be collected and reported.

Joint Working and Joint Future

- As part of its commitment to improving services, Aberdeenshire Council uses a tool called Kaizen. This is a set of tried and tested techniques that result in real and sustainable improvement in processes. A Kaizen on Strategic Planning recommended the replacement of strategic groups with Strategic Outcomes Groups for each of the community care client groups, reporting to a Health and Social Care Strategic Partnership.
- Joint management structures are under review.
- A joint commissioning strategy is being developed
- Aberdeenshire Social Work is testing a national benchmarking tool for older people's services
- Aberdeenshire Council hosts the Grampian Data Sharing Partnership, which exists to develop the electronic sharing of the single shared assessment between NHS Grampian and Social Work
- A new version of the single shared assessment has been developed to achieve compliance with national data standards. This will be implemented as part of the data sharing work. Progress is being made in developing an electronic single shared assessment through the Grampian data sharing partnership.
- A report on the enhancement of the health and community care teams for older people was completed in December 2007 and is being considered

- Anticipatory care plans and registers of people at risk of hospital admission are in development with health and community care teams
- Care team assistants are supporting core team members in health and community care teams in south Aberdeenshire
- Aberdeenshire Social Work is an early implementer for the national outcomes framework for community care, now developed locally as the single outcome agreement. Social Work is developing a performance management framework in partnership with the Aberdeenshire CHP
- Local Improvement Targets for 2007/2008 have been agreed.

Older People

Following a review of strategic planning, the Aberdeenshire Older People's Management Team, which was the joint body responsible for the strategic and operational development of older people's services in NHS Grampian and the Council, will be replaced by a new body. In August 2008 the Older People's Strategic Outcomes Group will set strategic and operational priorities for services. Membership of this group will include senior officers in NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Council who are responsible for delivering and planning services for older people. The group will report to the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Strategic Partnership.

- The Aberdeenshire care homes review is being implemented
- The Old Mart Community Resource Centre at Maud is under development and will enable the co-location of health and social work staff
- Extra care housing is being developed at Mintlaw
- Community hospital beds in Stonehaven have been re-provisioned as care home beds
- A review of sheltered housing provision is underway
- A review of home care has begun
- Consultation on the older peoples housing strategy is complete
- A model of care to enhance services in very sheltered housing is being developed

People with Dementia

A strategy for dementia services will be produced in 2008.

Aberdeenshire Telecare Project

“Telecare” is a term that describes a range of devices and services that harness developing technology to enable people to live with greater independence and safety in their own homes. This includes user-activated alarms that send alerts to a control centre, sensors to monitor the home environment, e.g. smoke, flood, and movement sensors, technology that assists people in the activities of daily living, and technology that, via broadband connections, allows for remote interaction between patient/client and health/care provider. Funding from the Scottish Government’s National Telecare Development Fund was obtained for 2007-2008. In partnership with The Robert Gordon University, a project officer was appointed to develop the use of telecare.

- Complex telecare packages were installed for tenants of a sheltered housing complex in Inverurie and for people with complex needs living in mainstream housing across Aberdeenshire.
- Facilitation of a telehealth pilot in Stonehaven
- Telecare support was provided for people with learning disabilities in supported accommodation in Inverurie
- Additional funding for telecare has been secured for 2008-2009, and an evaluation report will be published at the end of August 2008.
- A Project Manager is to be appointed by late summer 2008 to develop the mainstreaming of the provision of telecare for community care client groups

Physical Disability and Long-term Illness

- Following the Kaizen event on strategic planning, a group has been identified to form the core of the strategic outcomes group for physical disability. The group is currently working on identifying the strategic priorities for the next few years
- Research has been undertaken into the housing and support needs of people with physical disabilities and sensory impairment
- A Strategic Development Officer (Particular Needs) was appointed within the Housing service and an action plan from the above research is being compiled
- The Aberdeenshire Disabled Persons’ Housing Service provides a range of information and advice for disabled people who either live in Aberdeenshire or want to move here. The organisation tries to find housing solutions for disabled people
- Care and repair, a housing maintenance service, continues to operate successfully throughout Aberdeenshire.
- Four disability access panels have been established and are active in advising on planning applications and contributing to the development of strategy and policy in Aberdeenshire
- Aberdeenshire Council developed a Disability Equality Scheme with significant involvement from disabled people

- A number of organisations have been supported through funding from the voluntary organisations budget to provide specialist services for disabled people
- The social work and rehabilitation service for people with visual impairments is now provided directly by Aberdeenshire Council

Acquired Brain Injury

- A managed care network for brain injury in Grampian was established in April 2008 to identify and implement the priorities for service provision
- Aberdeenshire Council and the main local voluntary organisation providing services for people with acquired brain injury have worked together to ensure that services are available to meet needs.

Occupational Therapy

- Funding has been secured for a joint equipment store for Aberdeenshire and a project manager is in post. Work will be completed by summer 2009.

Learning disabilities

Work continues on implementing both the national strategy, The Same as You, and Aberdeenshire's local strategy for people with learning disabilities. Aberdeenshire Council social work acknowledge the challenge of delivering a quality service set against increasing demand and finite budgets, and will continue to seek ways of developing and improving services across Aberdeenshire for people with learning disabilities

- The new supported living service in Peterhead is now fully operational
- A Team Manager for the Adult Placement Scheme was appointed and Adult Placement Scheme carers recruited
- Training for Adult Placement Scheme approval panel completed
- First Adult Placement Scheme carers appointed
- The review of skill mix in the north community care learning disability team is complete
- The north community care team was reconfigured to include local area co-ordinators posts
- Children with disability team and adult with learning disability service now fully integrated
- Education service autism guidelines were produced and agreed by cross service group
- An autism spectrum disorder strategy was revised following commissioned research results, and a SMART action plan was developed
- A new resource has been developed for people with complex needs in Ellon and Stonehaven
- The strategic and management group continue to oversee the implementation of the Partnership in Practice Agreement

Mental Health

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 was implemented in October 2005. It introduced significant changes, including a revised role for Mental Health Officers and new arrangements for the compulsory care and treatment of people with mental disorders in hospital and in the community. The Aberdeenshire Mental Health Partnership, which includes Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian, service users and carers, has responsibility for local planning.

The national delivery plan, produced in 2007, recognised the importance of effective treatment and care for people with severe and enduring mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and dementia. It also acknowledged that less severe mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress affect far more people, and that prevention and effective treatment needs to have a higher priority than has previously been the case. The plan describes 14 national priorities including, for example, improving the physical health of people with mental health problems, early detection and intervention in self harm, suicide prevention, and increasing the availability of psychological therapies.

- Mindspace, which is a project using visual arts activities to enhance the wellbeing of people with stress and anxiety problems, has appointed an artist to work with patients of the Inverurie Medical Group and people who use mental health day services
- Trained peer support workers are being appointed to work as members of multidisciplinary mental health teams
- The Aberdeenshire signposting project, which links people with mild to moderate mental health problems with non-medical sources of support in their community, has referred people to over 80 organisations
- Service users are being trained and supported to help them to take a meaningful role in planning services and contributing to service evaluation
- Training for frontline staff working in the public sector and voluntary services on suicide risk assessment and prevention is continuing, with a target of 50% of staff being trained by 2010
- Primary care services for people with depression have been extended, and work to increase the availability of evidence-based psychological therapies is continuing

Substance Misuse

Following the SWIA multi agency inspection of substance misuse services in Grampian in 2007, an action plan has been drafted to address the recommendations. Inspectors found that there was increased access to services, people were experiencing health and lifestyle gains from their engagement with services, and the positive impact of the employment development workers had exceeded expectations. One of the principal recommendations for service development in Aberdeenshire was that work should continue to develop services in the south and central area of the county to the standard of those in the north, based on identified need.

- A new Aberdeenshire ADAT Strategy for 2009-2011 'Routes to Recovery' will be launched October 2008. The strategic intention of the plan is as follows:
 "Our vision is of a healthier and safer Aberdeenshire, free from harm due to alcohol and other drugs, where those in difficulty can access support to regain control over and live as meaningful and satisfying a life as possible as a valued member of society; and people are equipped to avoid suffering such difficulties in the first place".
- The vision will be achieved through the following strategic goals:
 Services will focus on supporting recovery
 People will be equipped to avoid harm
 Efforts to stabilise chaotic lives and minimise harm will continue
 Outcomes for children will be improved
 Outcomes in the key areas of family and support relationships will be improved
 Mental wellbeing outcomes will be improved
 Outcomes in the key areas of housing and employability will be improved
 Access to treatment and support will be improved
 Communities will be protected from criminal and antisocial behaviour
 A broader range of mainstream community services will offer support
 Service users and their families will be involved
 Services will be commissioned on the basis of identified need
 We will be accountable for money spent and the quality of services provided
 The sustained effort and collective resources of the Aberdeenshire community will be harnessed to implement the strategy

Domestic Abuse

- A team of six specialist social workers and family support staff has been established, providing a service to adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- Aberdeenshire Council is leading on work, in conjunction with other public and voluntary bodies across Grampian, to develop and deliver awareness and response training to professionals and others. To date over 300 people have received training and further funding is now available from the Scottish Government to continue and develop this programme
- A perpetrators program, designed to change the behaviour and mind set of repeat domestic abuse offenders, has been piloted in north Aberdeenshire. Initial evaluation indicates positive outcomes and this programme will be rolled out further
- The service continues to support the voluntary sector to offer a high quality of supported refuge accommodation to women and children who are unable to remain safely in their own homes. Where the perpetrator is no longer resident in the family home, social work, housing, and police work cooperatively to risk assess and provide appropriate security measures to keep individuals and families safe
- A multi agency partnership group continue to meet regularly to set strategic direction for this work and are now beginning to address wider

'violence against women' issues in line with Scottish Government and local priorities

Carers

- Work to achieve the Local Improvement Target regarding the number of completed carers' assessments is continuing. Information on the right to a carer's assessment is now more widely available
- Short breaks and respite care are available and are provided within the Council's eligibility criteria
- Carers' Strategy funding is available for organisations to provide direct carers' support and respite care. There will be a review of the use of the carers' strategy funding during 2008
- A carers' web site has been developed and will go live during 2008

3.2 Children's Services

Context

Children's services work with partners to take forward the concordat and the single outcome agreement in relation to children, young people and their families. The concordat between the Scottish Government and the Council sets out 15 national outcomes. Of these, there are three outcomes that are specifically relevant to children and young people:

Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

We have improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk

A national programme, Getting it Right for Every Child, underpins the development of services to children and guides the strategic approach to improving the wellbeing of all Scotland's children. Getting it Right for Every Child is about building solutions with and around children and families and enabling children to get the help they need when they need it. For children's services this means working together to make things better. More detailed information is available in the Integrated Children's Service Plan on the Council's website www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced a new statutory framework and duties for providing support for children and young people who require additional help with their learning and was implemented in November 2005. The Act aims to ensure that all children and young people are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards achieving their full potential. It also promotes collaborative working among all those supporting children and young people.

- Six new family centres have been opened in Stonehaven, Portlethen, Kintore, Turriff, Banchory and Huntly

- The integrated assessment framework to underpin multi-agency services to children has been rolled out throughout the north of Aberdeenshire and will be rolled out to the rest of Aberdeenshire by the autumn of 2008.
- Aberdeenshire received a positive inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education into services to protect children.
- Getting Our Priorities Right is embedded in adult services throughout Aberdeenshire. This ensures the needs of children are considered when there are substance misuse issues.
- An action research programme in one academy resulted in an academic study on the emotional wellbeing of children in secondary school and also an intervention of a peer listening scheme. The training of young people as peer listeners has now been mainstreamed in the education service and the scheme is currently being rolled out to another two academies.
- Development of automated electronic child protection messaging between partner agencies is underway through the Grampian data sharing partnership
- Implementation of revised fostering payments scheme to support Foster Carers and improve recruitment and retention.

Youth Justice

The Youth Justice Strategy Group is currently reviewing Aberdeenshire's Youth Justice Strategy and Action Plan. This review focuses on the Scottish Government's document 'Reducing Offending by Young People – A Framework for Action' (2008). Aberdeenshire continues to have low numbers of persistent offenders and young people presenting with anti-social behaviour. This is a positive outcome of the strong partnerships that exist with key agencies and organisations who work to promote youth justice and reduce anti-social behaviour.

- A youth justice practitioner's forum was established in 2007, which provides practitioners from a variety of organisations e.g. Fire and Rescue, Grampian Police, Social Work, Voluntary Sector, Housing and Health with a forum to share good practice as well as to look at challenges that face practitioners in striving to work in a multi-agency way.

3.3 Criminal Justice Social Work

Context

The Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 established eight Community Justice Authorities in Scotland, including the Northern Community Justice Authority (Northern CJA). Membership of the Northern CJA includes one Councillor from each of the seven constituent local authorities: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland, Moray, Orkney and Shetland Councils. There is representation from other statutory partners including health boards, Procurators Fiscal, the Scottish Courts Service, the Police and Prison services and support services. Members provide the political and strategic oversight for the CJA, which meets quarterly in open meetings. The remit of the Northern CJA is to enable to create a more coherent system of

offender management in order to reduce reoffending. The Northern CJA also has responsibility for the criminal justice social work budget

The Northern CJA's aims are to contribute to reducing re-offending and to increase community safety and public protection. The key objectives in support of these aims are to:

Promote the consistent and effective assessment and management of high-risk offenders

Employ an evidence-based approach to service development and resource allocation

Contribute to a culture of learning and development amongst partners

Promote access to quality services

Establish strategic and local links with other planning processes

Establish performance framework and quality assurance systems

Implement the Northern CJA communication strategy

Set priorities for further integration and development of services.

The partnership faces a number of challenges in achieving these aims. It works in an increasingly political and public climate, with constraints on funding the service. The geography and rural nature of much of the north of Scotland frames the decisions that are made, staff recruitment and retention continues to be an issue, and there are continual challenges around meeting public expectations about community safety and protection of the public.

Aberdeenshire Criminal Justice Social Work has:

- committed resources to a group work programme aimed at effective engagement with offenders
- participated in training for and worked towards the introduction of the Community Sex Offenders Programme
- actively participated in the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) process since its implementation in 2007 and been closely involved in the delivery of MAPPA awareness training.

Further information about the work of the Northern Community Justice Authority can be found on its website at www.northerncja.org.uk

3.4 Housing

Context

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 required local authorities to produce a comprehensive local housing strategy based on their assessments of housing needs and conditions in their area. The strategy is produced and reviewed on a 5-year cycle in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and with tenants and communities. The Scottish Government has set out three housing priorities to be taken forward through local housing strategies.

These are:

- Tackling homelessness.
- Promoting the comprehensive renewal of social rented housing through community ownership and empowering tenants.

- Reducing the number of households in Scotland that live in fuel poverty.

Aberdeenshire's local housing strategy 2004 - 2009 reflects these priorities in both the objectives for the strategy and the options for achieving these, demonstrating how these priorities are to be tackled at a local level. The vision of the Aberdeenshire local housing strategy is:

To work in partnership to ensure every household in Aberdeenshire has

- **access to housing**
 - **of good quality**
 - **which meets a required particular need**
 - **in a sustainable and inclusive community**
- Our tenants are satisfied with the service they receive. The 2006 Tenants Survey indicated that 86% of tenants are satisfied with their home and 67% of tenants said their rent charge represents good value for money. Actions identified from the survey were implemented in 2007. A further survey will be taking place in 2008 to assess the impact of these changes
 - More disabled and older people remaining in their homes for longer through additional resources secured via private sector housing grant. 216 care & repair grants were awarded in 2007/08
 - For those in housing need, increased housing options are available through the delivery of the local housing strategy
 - A web-based common housing register is being developed in partnership with The Moray Council and local registered social landlords. We are discussing with Aberdeen City Council how we can coordinate activity
 - Following the stock control Kaizen, annual efficiencies to the value of £57,096 have been achieved
 - A Kaizen event on the sales of council houses has reduced the average time taken to process house sales and increased the volume of sales completed with 26 weeks

Housing Support and Commissioning

Context

From April 2003 to March 2008, housing support was delivered through a national scheme called Supporting People. Supporting People was a policy and funding framework for people in supported accommodation or who were in receipt of floating housing support. Councils received annual funding for housing support services in the form of a ring-fenced grant. In 2008-09 the Supporting People grant was incorporated into the overall financial settlement to councils. Recent changes have led to improvements in the design and delivery of housing support as follows:

- Disaggregation of the Supporting People budget to appropriate social work and housing service managers, encouraging a more holistic view of service provision
- Creation of a commissioning team, which is helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for people in Aberdeenshire who are in need of care

and support services by commissioning high quality affordable services from the independent sector

- Identification of a 'housing support only' budget, to be managed by housing support assessment officers, which will provide assistance to vulnerable individuals living in their own homes, regardless of tenure, helping them to maintain independent living in the community and preventing the need for more intensive services

4 EXTERNAL FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE PLAN

4.1 Changing Demographics

The population of Aberdeenshire represents 4.6% of Scotland's total, standing at 236,260 (2006), a 1.2% rise since 2005 and a rise of over 50% since 1971. By 2031, the population is projected to increase by 19% (GROS 2008). The number of children is expected to remain stable and the working age population will increase by 8%. The greatest change is in the number of people of pensionable age. While this section of the population (currently 60 years for women and 65 years for men) is projected to increase across the whole of Scotland, Aberdeenshire has the largest projected increase of 76%

| % Change in population of older people from 2010 - 2024 | | | |
|---|-------|------|-------|
| Aberdeenshire | Age | 2010 | 2024 |
| South | 65-74 | 10.9 | 68.4 |
| | 75-84 | 7.5 | 92.6 |
| | 85 | 15.0 | 109.1 |
| Central | 65-74 | 10.5 | 64.6 |
| | 75-84 | 5.8 | 75.4 |
| | 85 | 13.7 | 94.6 |
| North | 65-74 | 8.5 | 48.2 |
| | 75-84 | 3.9 | 58.6 |
| | 85 | 12.0 | 80.2 |

Source: NHS Grampian - Aberdeenshire CHP Population History & Projections based on GRO 2004-based projections

These population changes will have important strategic implications for services. Demands on resources, particularly finance and on the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees, will be considerable. The housing and social work service will continue to work closely with partners, especially the NHS, to find shared solutions, and to work as efficiently as possible. Residents will be fully consulted and engaged in planning, not least to ensure that these plans are sustainable.

4.2 Shifting the Balance of Care

Community care policy has for many years focussed on ensuring that people receive the care they need in their own homes, or as near to their own community as possible. Recent work has identified that there are still considerable numbers of people who are being cared for in hospital settings when their needs could be better met in the community. The planned closure of long-stay hospital beds for frail older people, the closure of two local hospitals and a number of Council care homes and the provision of more homely accommodation and care for those with continuing care needs is underway. Making changes to traditional patterns of care requires careful consultation with all stakeholders. While these changes should foster many opportunities for greater social inclusion, there are cost implications in terms of time and money. The lead-in time for planning significant change, and the support required during and after implementation, is considerable. Changes to accommodation and care, for example for people with learning disabilities, have opened up new opportunities such as greater access to education, training and employment. These opportunities are being actively explored and new models of support are being put in place. Shifting the balance of care will therefore remain a priority for the service for some considerable time.

4.3 Focussing on preventative approaches

Housing and social work has always had a vital role to play in supporting the most vulnerable people in society and providing for their needs. While this continues to be at the centre of what the service does, there is increasing recognition that a greater emphasis on preventing problems, whether they are primarily to do with health, or related to acquired or lifelong disability, or whether they are intrinsic to communities, is now essential. So promoting independence, resilience and recovery is important to the future direction of the service and to the wellbeing of Aberdeenshire residents.

4.4 Risk management

Competent risk management is an essential element of effective work with vulnerable people of all ages. Public perceptions and tolerance of risk are changing, and the influence of the media is clear. The service works hard to gain the trust of residents and partners in service delivery through being open and honest about how the different kinds of risk are identified and managed.

4.5 Legislative and national policy changes

The Scottish Government has recently introduced a considerable number of pieces of legislation that apply to the service. Examples include Adoption and Children (Scotland), Adult Support and Protection (Scotland), a number of changes to criminal proceedings and procedures, and Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland). These and other pieces of legislation place continuing demands on the service to review, consider the implications for local policy, and if necessary amend what is planned.

The provision of sufficient high quality housing is a national issue. As an indication of the importance that the Scottish Government places on housing as a major contributor to a successful Scotland it has published a discussion paper on the future of housing policy in Scotland called Firm Foundations. It sets out wide-ranging proposals for housing. Its main points include:

- A proposal for a target of 35,000 new dwellings per annum by the middle of the next decade
- The provision of new/ more guidance on local housing strategies, housing needs assessment and housing market analysis
- Facilitating faster release of new land supply for the development of housing
- The (previously announced) abolition of Communities Scotland
- New methods of assistance for first time buyers,
- Increased use of the private rented sector to meet need and re-house homeless people
- Renewed emphasis on empty homes initiatives
- Radical (but not fully specified) changes to social rented sector subsidy, mechanisms, which will include lead developers
- A more active role for registered social landlords in the promotion of mixed communities, including enhanced provision of mid market rented accommodation
- Changes to 'right to buy'
- Support for local authorities as providers of new social rented accommodation

Under the new Rural Homes for Rent scheme, rural landowners across Scotland, including community buyout groups, will be able to apply for housing grants to help them build new affordable homes for rent on their land. The aim of the scheme is to deliver around 100 new affordable homes for rent by 2011

The inspection of the housing service will take place later in 2008. It will be based on information that the service provides in a pre-inspection submission document. The document will cover the local context, housing management, asset management and responsive repairs, and homelessness. The inspection team will use the submission, along with nationally available information, to assess service delivery outcomes and how well management systems support these outcomes. The final report will be publicly available.

The planning guidance SPP3 "Planning for Housing", revised by the Scottish Government in 2008, sets out Scottish Government policy on the identification of housing requirements, the provision of land for housing and the delivery of homes through the planning system. It will provide policy guidance on the identification of housing need and demand and allocation of a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures.

The Scottish Executive has introduced the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. To meet the standard a house must be compliant with the tolerable standard, free from serious disrepair, energy efficient, provided with modern facilities and services, and healthy, safe and secure. All landlords are required to meet the

Quality Standard by 2015. Aberdeenshire Council's response is set out in its Standard Delivery Plan 2005-2015.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

5.1 The performance management framework

The Council's performance management framework brings together the activities that contribute to continuous improvement. Links between this plan, which is one element of the framework, and the Council's strategic priorities have been highlighted. The plan is reviewed annually, with progress on the actions plan being reported to the Social Work and Housing Committee twice a year. The service uses all the elements of the performance management framework as follows:

- A cross section of staff carry out an annual assessment using the Aberdeenshire Improvement Model, which is the corporate EFQM-based approach
- Best Value reviews are carried out when specific criteria are triggered
- Peer reviews take place regularly, for example the recent peer review of tenant participation, and contribution to the national peer review of free personal care
- External audit and inspection includes, for example the SWIA inspection referred to elsewhere in this plan, and the child protection inspection. Progress is reported annually to Committee. An action plan that will be prepared to address the recommendations of the forthcoming housing inspection will be similarly reported
- Scrutiny and audit activities include the annual internal audit plan and the investigation that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee intends to carry out to identify whether the Council could supply more services like care homes and homecare in-house rather than being outsourced
- Kaizen events that are planned include the joint equipment store, the rollout of 5S, and the process for arranging bed and breakfast for homeless people
- Performance indicators are monitored and reported quarterly. Housing is a member of a national network for sharing and comparing performance-related housing information
- The Accounts Commission publishes nationally-comparable data relating to adult social work, children's services and housing
- Risk management arrangements include the corporate and service risk registers
- Stakeholder views, collected as part of tenants' participation work and through other service specific consultations, make an essential contribution to service planning and development
- The Council's employee development and review scheme provides eligible employees with an annual opportunity to review their work and training and development needs within a structured framework

Performance information is published in various media including the Council's website, through public performance reporting, in tenants' newsletters and on

display in main offices. Methods of providing feedback for those who use housing services have been recently introduced, including questionnaires and surveys.

5.2 Service Standards

Social Work

Service standards have been introduced as follows:

Social Work

- Home care assessments will be completed within 1 week
- Home care service will be provided within 2 weeks of referral
- Top priority referrals for occupational therapy services will be assessed within 2 weeks
- Occupational therapy equipment will be delivered within 2 weeks of assessment, unless requiring to be ordered specially
- Initial care management assessments will be made within 3 weeks of referral
- A care plan will be prepared within 1 week of the care management assessment and the package of care will begin within a further 2 weeks unless there is a waiting list for that service
- People placed on probation will be interviewed within 7 days of sentence
- People placed on Community Service Orders will begin their placement within 3 weeks of sentence

Housing

Building Maintenance

- Contract conditions set completion targets.
- Materials used comply with all BS standards set out in preliminaries.
- Workmanship complies with general standards set out in preambles.

Monitoring/Performance

- Performance on completion of work is monitored (controlled by confirmation data).
- Completion confirmation slip is signed and dated by the customer.

5.3 Improving processes

Kaizen Blitz, a process improvement tool, is well embedded in Housing and Social Work and is used regularly to improve critical business issues. In the last 18 months Kaizen has been developed further to include a model for addressing critical team issues and workplace organisation. To date Housing and Social Work has run 16 events of which eight are completed and eight being implemented.

Completed projects

- Building maintenance stock control
- Council houses sales
- Reports for looked after children

- Integration of service for people with learning disabilities
- Integrated assessment framework for children
- Home care paperwork
- Acceleration of the joint management of older people's service agenda
- Fostering schemes

Projects being implemented

- Provision of enhanced reception service for new referrals and queries using a screening tool
- Home care annual leave
- Commissioning care at home
- Criminal Justice Service user feedback and involvement
- Strategic planning in Housing & Social Work
- Housing voids
- Housing repairs to customer contact centre
- Office reorganisation at a large social work office in Peterhead

5.4 Consultation and learning from customer feedback

Social Work

Widespread public consultation is an important part of the planning process. Consultation may be through public meetings, road-shows, focus groups, local forums and by direct involvement on strategy and other working groups. Work is underway to identify more innovative ways of consultation, particularly with older people and people with learning disabilities. There is increasing recognition of the need to use modern technology particularly with hard to reach groups such as young people

A corporate consultation database is being designed with the primary intention of coordinating the various consultations that services carry out. The database will reduce duplication of work, ensuring that people are not consulted on the same or similar issues by different staff, and will promote sharing of information. A revised consultation toolkit is also being produced to promote best practice.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of focusing on the outcomes of services for people who use them and whether they are achieving better results. As a first step, a local improvement target has been set to monitor the level of satisfaction of users and carers with the services they receive as a result of single shared assessment. A simple postal questionnaire for self-completion is now in use for twice yearly surveys.

Housing

Housing operates a customer satisfaction/complaints procedure on works carried out by both housing repairs and external contractors. Customer consultation on the design and operation of the satisfaction/complaints scheme has been integral to its development

Aberdeenshire Council has an approved strategy on tenant participation. Representatives from the tenant associations in Aberdeenshire and Housing Officers meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the development of the housing service. All Best Value reviews undertaken by the housing service have involved stakeholders, primarily tenants. Tenants are consulted on other changes to the housing service such as changes to the way rents are to be set. The housing service also has a series of tenant function groups, which enable tenant representatives to be consulted and have input not only to procedural changes in the housing service but also work involving policy implementation. These groups cover estates, housing options, repairs, finance and strategic development. It is intended to widen the way in which the service consults both tenants and other customers through the development of newsletters, public meetings and seminars and through surveys and consultative panels.

6. RESOURCES REQUIRED TO FULFIL THE PLAN

6.1 Employees

At 31 March 2008 Housing & Social Work employed 2,193 WTE staff (excluding relief staff). The Housing Service employed 193 staff based in Housing Area Offices, 130 in Housing Repairs and 130 in Sheltered Housing and Homeless Units. Within Social Work, 507 staff are based in offices; 291 in Residential Care; 279 in Day Care and 535 in Home Care. 128 Support Services and Information staff based in offices and other settings throughout Aberdeenshire make up the staffing complement.

Housing and Social Work prepares an annual training plan, as defined in the Council's Employee Development & Training Policy. Staff training requirements, including Induction, core competencies and continuing professional development are identified in the plan. Training needs are identified for individuals through EDRS and for teams or areas of service through annual training needs analysis.

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 requires employers to ensure that employees who provide a direct social care service are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Since 1 September 2005 all practicing Social Workers have been required to be register with the SSSC, and the registration of other care workers is currently being progressed. The Act also states that all Social Work Service employees and employers are expected to comply with a Code of Practice, which identifies the standards and conduct expected of them. Housing & Social Work will provide advice and support for employees to enable them to register and will support their continuing professional development to enable re-registration.

6.2 Finance

Social Work

The total net revenue budget for the duration of the plan is as follows:

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| 2008/09 | £105,379,000 |
| 2009/10 | £108,929,000 |
| 2010/11 | £112,508,000 |

The budget is allocated as follows: -

| Care Groups | £,000 | £,000 | £,000 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2008/2009 | 2009/2010 | 2010/2011 |
| Older People and Dementia | 54,560 | 55,943 | 57,366 |
| Physical Disability | 3,596 | 3,668 | 3,743 |
| Learning Disability | 31,119 | 31,913 | 32,727 |
| Mental Health | 4,184 | 4,289 | 4,397 |
| Drugs/Alcohol | 1,559 | 1,599 | 1,638 |
| Children | 24,700 | 25,810 | 26,881 |
| Criminal Justice | 2,708 | 2,772 | 2,836 |
| General Fieldwork and Administration | <u>8,279</u> | <u>8,471</u> | <u>8,667</u> |
| Gross Expenditure | 130,705 | 134,465 | 138,255 |
| Less: Income | <u>25,326</u> | <u>25,535</u> | <u>25,747</u> |
| Net Expenditure | <u>105,379</u> | <u>108,930</u> | <u>112,508</u> |

Housing

The Housing Revenue Account is “ring fenced” under the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 within Housing’s 30 year business plan. It accounts for all income and expenditure associated with the management of the stock. For 2008/09 budgeted income and expenditure are:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Total Income | 40,492,000 |
| Total Expenditure | 45,459,000 |
| 2008/09 Usage of balances | 4,967,000 |

The HRA is managed over a 30-year business plan model with any surplus being retained for planned future repairs and improvements.

Housing Repairs Budgeted Income for 2008/09 is £9,025,000

The Housing Service is also funded through the general fund for work, which is not directly related to the management of the Council's Housing Stock. This is financed through Government Grants and the Council Tax payer. A summary of General Fund Budgets for 2008/09 is shown below.

| Care Groups | £'000 2008/2009 | £'000 2009/2010 | £'000 2010/2011 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Affordable Housing | 116 | 116 | 116 |
| Homeless Persons | 2,975 | 2,975 | 2,975 |
| Improvement & Repair Grants | 472 | 472 | 472 |
| House Loans | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Traveling People | 29 | 29 | 29 |
| Rough Sleepers | 77 | 77 | 77 |
| Supporting People | <u>10,776</u> | <u>10,783</u> | <u>10,790</u> |
| Gross Expenditure | 14,445 | 14,452 | 14,459 |
| Less: Income | <u>2,725</u> | <u>2,726</u> | <u>2,727</u> |
| Net Expenditure | <u>11,720</u> | <u>11,726</u> | <u>11,732</u> |

General Fund Capital

The Housing and Social Work Service is allocated a share of the general fund capital allocation for Aberdeenshire Council of **£2,729,000** for 2008/09.

Housing Revenue Account (Capital)

Projected income for 2008/09 is £15,564,000. This income will be used to finance specific capital projects within Aberdeenshire. The projects are not included within the Service Plan but £776,000 of the expenditure will be on enabling/care in the community, approximately £13,293,000 being spent on stock improvement and the remaining £1,495,000 being spent on upgrading of roads and environmental work.