

Report

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To:	Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum
Date:	26 October 2010
Prepared by:	Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

Subject:	Social Work Resources Service Review - Reception Services
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the paper is to:-

- ◆ provide the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum with a summary of the review findings in respect of Reception Services delivered by Social Work Resources

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that option 1 recommendation from the review be approved, this is to retain the current model of service delivery which is cost effective and flexible, meeting the needs of the service;
- (2) that the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum note and approve the recommendations contained within the service review improvement plan; and
- (3) that this report is presented to the Social Work Resources Committee on 8 December 2010 for consideration.

3. Background

3.1. A review of Reception Services was necessary to clarify its current function and determine the most appropriate way of delivering the service given the increasing focus on integrated and partnership working within community care and children's services as well as taking account of workloads when dealing with child and adult protection.

3.2. Some concerns had been highlighted regarding the service and the service review was asked to explore:-

- ◆ the degree of autonomy amongst both unqualified and basic grade staff
- ◆ screening and decision making
- ◆ the negotiation of transfers to different parts of the resource
- ◆ whether or not the current process of dealing with domestic violence referral from the Police was effective and efficient

4. Definition of the Service

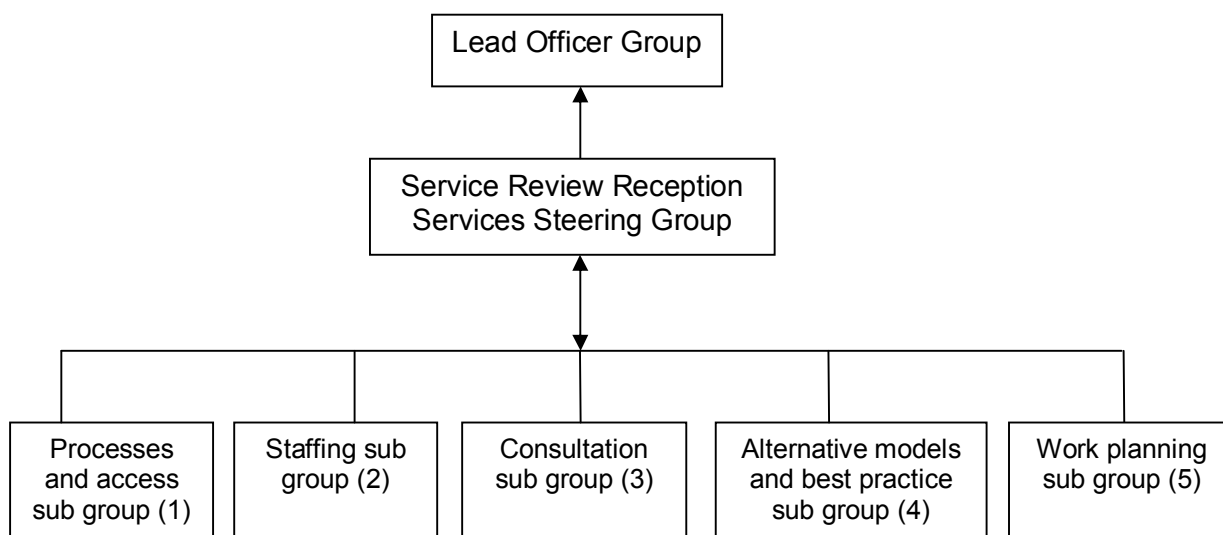
- 4.1. The Social Work Reception Teams are the first point of contact to access Social Work Resources in South Lanarkshire. The role of the teams is to try and identify the type of help or advice that is needed. Where possible the reception teams will deal with the presenting issue. However, if it is felt a more specialist service is required the case is referred to the specialist care team. There are six reception teams which are based in each of the local offices, Rutherglen, East Kilbride, Blantyre, Hamilton, Larkhall and Clydesdale.
- 4.2. Each team is comprised of one social worker and two social work assistants. The team is managed by a team leader who jointly manages the criminal justice team. The function of the team is to screen all new referrals to the Resource.

5. Review process

5.1. The scope of this review covered the following areas:-

- ◆ review the effectiveness of Reception Services within South Lanarkshire Council in responding to and processing frontline enquiries
- ◆ review the current staffing structure in relation to grades, skill mix, numbers and distribution
- ◆ clarify the remit/define the role of Reception Services and consider progress on partnership working
- ◆ review link activity with Q&A, Money Matters and the Emergency Social Work Service (ESWS)
- ◆ explore and consider other models of service delivery

5.2. The following structure was devised to progress the work of the review:-

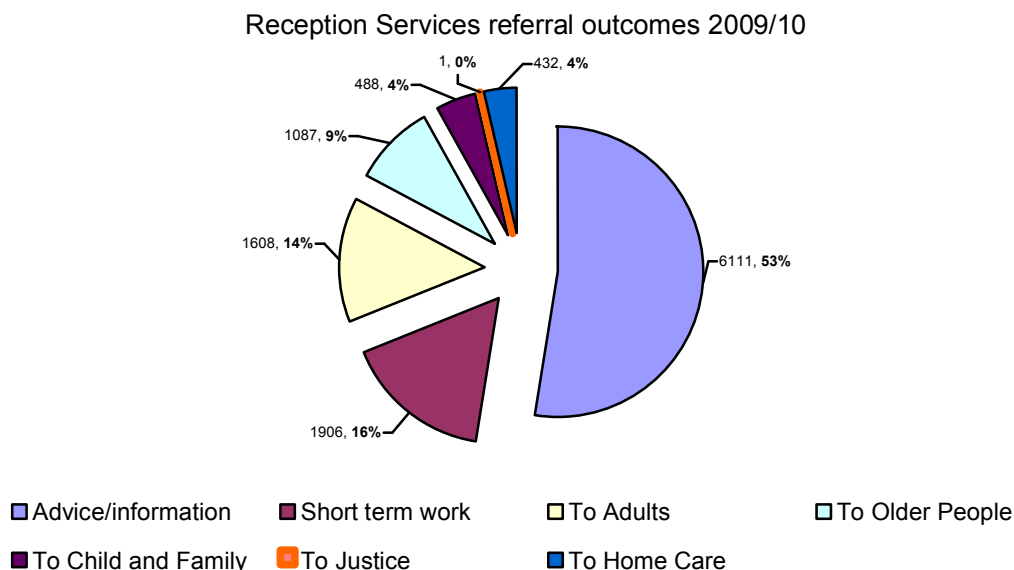


5.3. Additional membership of each group consisted of representation from social workers, social work assistants, admin staff, community mental health teams, specialist teams, I.T., NHS, Education, Housing, Emergency Social Work Service, trade unions and Q&A.

6. Service profile

6.1. A significant volume of referrals pass through Reception Services of which more than 50% require general advice and information.

Figure 1

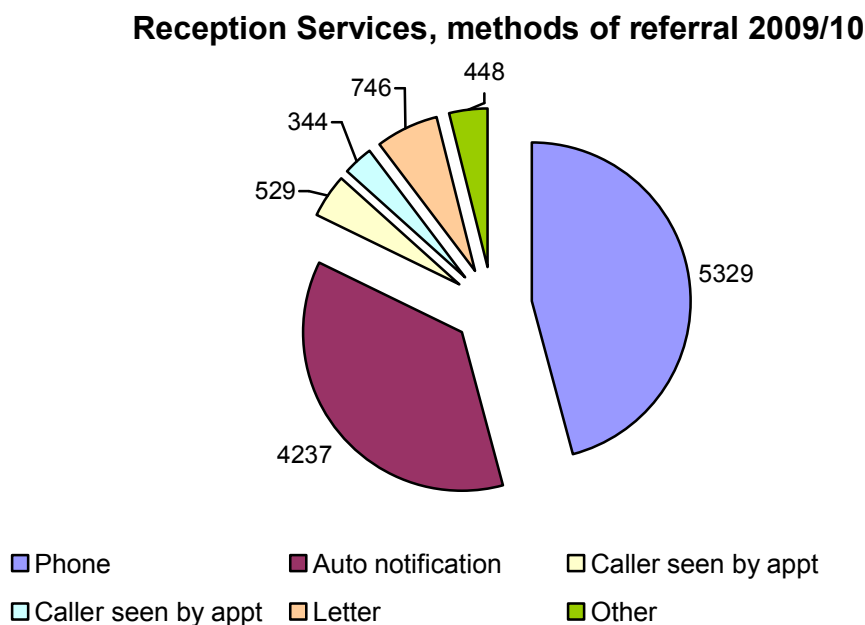


6.2. Figure 1 above makes reference to new referrals and does not account for additional allocations or blue badge applications, neither does it include referrals which go directly to specialist teams.

6.3. The screening role of Reception Services is of vital importance to specialist teams as indicated by figure 1, since it prevents a considerable amount of low level work being undertaken by specialist teams.

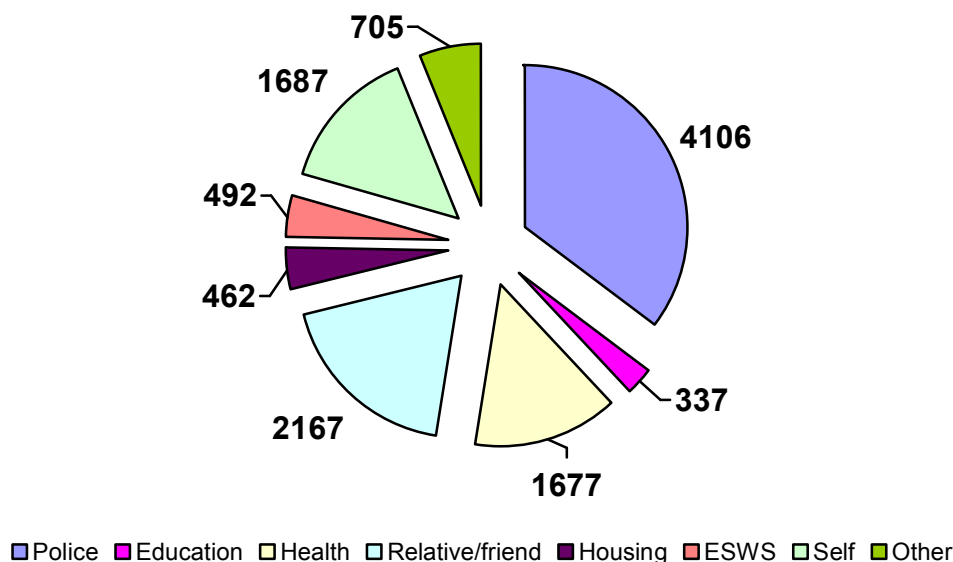
6.4. The main point of contact (figure 2) is by phone referral with office visits being less common. In the main, referrals come from third parties such as other agencies and relatives.

Figure 2



- 6.5. The largest number of referrals from any single body or group is from the police. These come via automatic notification relating to either domestic violence or vulnerable adult. This is followed by self referrals, and then referrals made by health. Health visitors are likely to refer children and GPs to refer adults and older people.
- 6.6. The least frequent referrer is housing services and these have a tendency to come to light when refurbishments are being carried out and vulnerable people come to the attention of housing service staff at that point.

Figure 3 Referrals Source



7. Benchmarking and consultation

- 7.1. Arrangements for Reception Services equivalents were looked at in seven other local authorities; Glasgow City council, South Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Fife Council, North Lanarkshire Council and Falkirk Council.
- 7.2. A variety of different styles of service delivery were employed ranging from a centralised admin team approach via a contact centre (Falkirk Council), to specialist teams (division of resources) within dedicated duty teams who dealt with enquiries, referrals etc. to a social work assistant only model (North Lanarkshire).
- 7.3. As part of the review process several consultation events took place with stakeholders, i.e. Council Resources (Social Work, Corporate, Housing and Technical, and Education) as well as with health partners.

8. Option Appraisal

- 8.1. The review considered four models of service delivery:-
- ◆ Option 1 - retain the current service in its existing form
 - ◆ Option 2 - call centre model - all calls taken at central point which are then diverted to appropriate care teams, no level of intervention, advice or guidance given.
 - ◆ Option 3 - social work assistant model - teams staffed by para professionals who undertake initial assessment
 - ◆ Option 4 - specialist team model - the screening function undertaken by reception services is undertaken by each care team depending on the nature of the call.

9. Recommendations

9.1. The variations associated with the options looked at were:-

- ◆ Option 1 – has a skills mix of staff that are able to respond appropriately to enquiries. The model allows for skills to be deployed effectively and risk to be managed appropriately;
- ◆ Option 2 – no screening function applied, added layer to access the service, not responsive to customer need;
- ◆ Option 3 – para professionals unable to respond to child / adult protection investigations. Compromise joint screening of domestic abuse referrals with police;
- ◆ Option 4 – care teams inundated with low level enquiries, disproportionate number of enquiries for care teams to screen and prioritise.

9.2. Therefore in consideration of all options, Option 1 with revised procedural guidance is identified as the preferred option. This option recognises the strengths of the current model and allows for the retention of a localised service which customers are able to access.

9.3. In support of this option an Improvement Plan (Appendix 1) has been prepared, covering staff development and development procedures:-

- ◆ implementation of a training need analysis to ensure staff skills and training in each area fully equips them to deal with a range of issues including; Child protection, Adult protection, GIRFEC and domestic violence
- ◆ clear procedures/guidance in respect of the following areas are required:-
 - ◆ Response timescales
 - ◆ Depth and method of initial information gathering and sharing
 - ◆ Clear cut-off point to specialist teams
- ◆ working arrangements with Money Matters on welfare benefits and charging policy
- ◆ develop working protocols with re domestic abuse screening with police
- ◆ agree and implement protocols dealing with adult support and protection referrals

9.4. Procedures and guidance will also be established to enable staff in reception services to be flexible in providing cover throughout the localities should the need arise.

9.5. Finally, the Improvement Plan also includes a review of customer consultation guidance. This will assist with the aim of retaining Customer Service Excellence Award in order that the customer remains the focus of interventions.

10. Employee Implications

10.1. In light of the recommendation to retain the current model of service delivery there are no employee implications associated with this paper.

11. Financial Implications

11.1. There are no additional financial resources required, it is proposed the current model of service delivery is maintained whilst improvements are made to procedures to enhance the interface with other teams in the Resource.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore, no impact assessment is required.

Harry Stevenson
Executive Director (Social Work Resources)

28 September 2010

Links to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- ◆ Improve the lives of vulnerable young people and adults

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Appendix 1: Improvement Plan

Area for improvement	Action	Lead	Timescale	Progress
Staff Development	Implement training needs analysis with staff	Team Leaders	March 2011	
Development Procedures	Consult with Fieldwork Managers re clear procedures and guidance on depth and cut off points to specialist teams; response timescales, information gathering and sharing	Operations Manager	November 2010	
	Consolidate working arrangements with money matters	Operations Manager	March 2011	
	Continue to develop working protocols re domestic abuse screening with Police	Operations Manager	December 2010	
	Agree and implement protocol for dealing with Adult Support and Protection referrals	Operations Manager/Team Leader	December 2010	
	Establish procedures and guidance to enable reception services to be flexible in providing cover throughout the localities	Operations Manager	March 2011	
Customer Consultation	Review customer consultation guidance to maximise involvement of customers re: CSEA	Team Leader	October 2010	