ABSTRACT

This report informs Committee of the production of the Clients’ Rights Service Annual Report for the period 2007-08. A copy of the final draft of the Annual Report is appended to this committee report.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

i) notes the contents of the Clients’ Rights Service annual report 2007-08;
ii) instructs the Director of Social Work and Health to monitor any trends reported;
iii) approves the publication and distribution of the annual report.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Clients’ Rights Service (CRS or the service) has been in existence in Angus since 1996. During the past twelve years the service has provided information advice and support to over 2000 people including service users and professionals regarding rights issues.

The CRS deals with people and their families in contact with social work where they are concerned that their rights may have been ignored or where they are dissatisfied with current services, with the absence of services, or with the treatment they have received.

The Clients’ Rights Officer has to carefully assess and investigate issues, relying on recognised social and health interventions and current directives and council policies to address the particular problems brought to its attention and from recommendations for responses to clients or their representatives.

During the reporting period the CRS helped seek resolution to stage 1 complaints as well as to other concerns brought to its attention by social work and health clients and other interested parties. During these contacts negotiations took place with professionals at all levels within and outside the council. The provision of information, advice, representation and mediation in increasingly sensitive situations has become a feature of the Clients’ Rights Service.

The CRS also provides information and training on rights issues to individuals and groups interested in rights and responsibilities, and also to those whose responsibilities require an awareness of individuals’ rights to facilitate their effective engagement with the public. The work of the CRS involves knowledge and understanding of social work theory, practice and relevant legislation. The
international protocols that inform the work undertaken by the CRS are, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights as well as other associated UN Conventions and European Directives.

Over the past year the CRS has also contributed to a number of local and national strategies, consultations and inspections relating to the rights of vulnerable people.


The service also supported accommodated children to participate in the 18th Birthday Celebrations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child held at the Scottish Parliament on 20 November 2007.

3 CLIENTS’ RIGHTS SERVICE: ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

Appended to this committee report is a copy of the Clients’ Rights Service annual report for 2007/2008. The annual report provides a breakdown and description of the nature of the referrals to, and contact with, the CRS. In addition to outlining the direct referrals to the service the annual report also describes the other component parts of the CRS.

Key facts contained within the report as compared with 2006-2007 level of activity:

- 141 referrals dealt with – an increase of 11%
- 47 of the 49 complaints received by the service were resolved at Stage 1 of the statutory complaints procedure
- 5 – 14 days response to referrals, meeting Council standards targets for CRS by 100%
- 30% increase in those referrals from relatives, friends and other professionals
- Referrals in respect to children under 12 years increased by 15%
- Referrals in respect to adults aged 56 years and over increased by 100%
- The majority of adults who contacted the service did so from their own home
- The majority of children who contacted the service did so from their own home, relatives’ homes and from residential and secure accommodation services
- Information, advice, support, representation, mediation and negotiation were used to secure positive outcomes
- 58 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child information packs were issued to children aged 8 years and over, an increase of 18%
- 432 “Human Rights Quick and Check Guides” have now been issued in total to staff across the public and voluntary sector, this includes 55 in the past year
- The CRS has been a member of the global Children’s Rights Information Network (CRIN) since 1996. This Network disseminates information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child

4 CONCLUSION

During the last twelve years, Angus Council Social Work and Health has demonstrated a commitment to a culture of rights and has supported this commitment by making available to all service users, and professionals, a dedicated service that promotes and protects clients’ rights and responsibilities.
5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report. The cost of producing the annual report will be contained within the department’s revenue budget.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

R Peat
Director of Social Work and Health

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.