ABSTRACT

This report advises members of the Social Work and Health Committee of the production of the Social Work and Health Public Information Annual Report. The annual report gives details of the progress made in the area of public information and makes recommendations for the continued improvement of this service. A copy 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 content of the Public Information Annual Report;

ii) approves the future recommendations detailed in the annual report.

2 INTRODUCTION

Good public information about social work services is an essential part of social work service provision. It helps to empower service users and carers to make choices about services. The provision, design and accessibility of information are an integral part of the planning and delivery of our services. The Public Information Annual Report details the work that has been undertaken within Social Work and Health in the area of public information during 2007-2008. It also details plans for the future development of public information.

3 PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

Public information is the means by which we make the citizens of Angus, our customers, aware of the support and services that we provide. Information can be provided in many ways and it is important to recognise that while leaflets are a fundamental and necessary means of providing information they have their limitations. The printed word is not accessible to some people with a visual impairment, learning disabilities or literacy problems. In addition individuals whose first language is not English can experience difficulties when accessing information about services.

The Public Information Annual Report 2007-2008 provides details of the variety of methods used by Social Work and Health to inform the public and highlights the main ways in which the public in Angus access information about our services.

As indicated throughout the annual report the uptake of public information remains high. However, requests for alternative formats still remains low in comparison to the overall uptake of leaflets even though the increase in the number of migrant workers in Angus is producing more requests for information in other languages. Work to identify the information needs of these and other hard to reach and/or vulnerable
individuals and groups is ongoing. This has been assisted by developing links with the Development Officer (European Communities).

In order to ensure that the information we provide to service users is in a way that they can understand a question was added to a recent customer satisfaction survey to establish their views. 2,500 people from the 2,841 who responded to the survey agreed that the information we provided is in a way they can understand.

Leaflets and booklets remain popular sources of information for people with 11,750 leaflets in total, across all service areas, being uplifted or distributed during 2007-2008. Other well used methods of accessing social work information are personal face to face contact and the telephone. The use of ACCESSLine and the ACCESS Offices has remained consistent. The total number of calls taken by ACCESS Line during 2007-2008 was 4,244 an increase of 804 calls from the previous year. The use of ACCESS Offices to source information about social work services has risen significantly this year from 720 in 2006-2007 to 1,851 in 2007-2008, an increase of 1,131.

Electronic information, via the Angus Council web-site, continues to be accessed on a regular basis. When comparing the total number of "hits" on the information pages in the 2007-2008 period, the overall figure was 7,082 compared with 4,610 in 2006-2007 an increase of 2,472.

4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In order to continue to meet our statutory requirements and to ensure the continual improvement of public information the annual report identifies the following future developments:

- The production of a customer care strategy for Social Work and Health that incorporates public information.
- Further develop links with the NHS Tayside Public Patient Partnership group. This will improve consultation mechanisms across agencies.
- Work in partnership with staff from Consumer Protection to explore the use of alternative networks for the dissemination of information for older people.
- To continue to develop the range of public information available via the Angus.gov, Angus Ahead and other websites such as the Angus Gold and Disabledgo websites. This will provide alternative ways to access information about social work services.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly out of this report.

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.
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.