

**FALKIRK COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT ON THE
ROLE OF THE CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER**

Revised 2013

1. Legal Context

Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 requires the local authority to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer. The qualifications which apply to this post are governed by the qualifications of Chief Social Work Officers (Scotland) Regulations 1996.

2. National Guidance

National guidance on the role of the Chief Social Work Officer was published in February 2009. This policy reflects the published national guidance.

3. Appointment of the Chief Social Work Officer and Deputies

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer will be fulfilled by the Director of Social Work Services. The appointment process for this and any subsequent position will take account of the need to include an independent, professional perspective on candidate's suitability to undertake the role of Chief Social Work Officer.
- 3.2 The Director of Social Work Services will designate a suitably qualified senior manager who can deputise during any periods of absence and will advise the Chief Executive of these details.
- 3.3 In the absence of the Director of Social Work Services, the responsibilities of the Chief Social Work Officer falls to the designated Depute.

4. Responsibility of the Chief Social Work Officer

The Chief Social Work Officer will;

- promote values and standards of professional practice and provide a clear statement of expectation of Social Services workers and employers.
- ensure that these values and standards are communicated on a regular basis, adhered to and reviewed periodically.
- work with Human Resources to ensure that all Social Services workers meet the requirements of the SSSC Code of Practice and that all registered workers meet the requirements of their regulatory body.

- support and advise Managers in maintaining and developing high standards of practice and supervision.
- ensure that only registered social workers undertake those functions reserved in legislation or are accountable for those functions described in Guidance.
- ensure that there are effective governance arrangements for the management of the complex balance of need, risk and civil liberties, in accordance with professional standards. Where the Council's corporate policy on risk does not reflect this balance, the CSWO is required to bring this to the attention of the Chief Executive and to contribute to the development of appropriate governance arrangements.
- ensure appropriate advice is provided on corporate workforce and planning and quality assurance, including safe recruitment practice, probation/mentoring arrangements, managing poor performance and promoting continuous learning and development for staff.
- actively promote continuous improvement, raising standards and evidence-informed good practice, including the development of person-centred services that are focussed on the needs of the service user.
- oversee the quality of practice learning experiences of social work students and effective workplace assessment arrangements, in accordance with SSSC Code of Practice for Employers of Social Service workers.
- ensure that appropriate systems are in place both to promote good practice and to identify and address weak and poor practice.

The CSWO should work with Managers to ensure these systems are effective and, where this is not the case, the CSWO has the responsibility for bringing this to the attention of the Chief Executive and contributing to the development or improvement of such systems.

- ensure that significant case reviews are undertaken into all critical incidents either resulting in – or which may have resulted in – death or serious harm.
- take final decisions on behalf of the local authority in relation to a range of Social Work matters, including adoption, secure accommodation, guardianship and other statutory decisions required from time to time.
- contribute to reports to the Chief Executive and Elected Members – providing independent comment where necessary – on the findings of relevant performance reports setting out:
 - implications for the local authority, for services, for service users and carers, for individual teams/members of staff/Partners as appropriate implications for delivery of national and local outcomes;
 - proposals for remedial action;
 - means for sharing good practice and learning;

- monitoring and reporting arrangements for identified improvement activity.
- report to the local authority on any other Social Work related issues
- prepare an annual report to the local authority on all of the statutory, governance and leadership functions of the role.

5. Accountability of the Chief Social Work Officer

As Director of Social Work Services, the Chief Social Work Officer has overall line management responsibility for Social Work Services, which ensures clear lines of accountability. The Chief Social Work Officer, in turn, is accountable to the Chief Executive and Elected Members.

6. Access Arrangements

- 6.1 As Director of Social Work Services, the Chief Social Work Officer will influence corporate issues through membership of the Corporate Management Team.
- 6.2 As Director of Social Work Services, the Chief Social Work Officer will provide reports to Elected Members on matters relating to the delivery of Social Work Services. Reports will highlight any areas where the advice of the Chief Social Work Officer may be in conflict with other aspects of Council policy.

7. Review of Policy

- 7.1 This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, as part of the Chief Social Work Officer annual report to the Local Authority.

March 2010