

Report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 7th October 2004

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Social Services, since my last report to Council.

2. Information and Advice

2.1 Supporting People Inspection

- 2.1.1 The Audit Commission is inspecting all the Local Authorities who lead on the implementation of the Supporting People programme. In County Council areas, this is always the County Council.

- 2.1.2 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has oversight of the Supporting People programme and as Administering Authority for Supporting People, the authority works within a commissioning partnership bringing together the seven District Councils, seven Primary Care Trusts and the Probation Service in Nottinghamshire.

- 2.1.3 The Audit Commission recognised the quality of what the authority have been doing in Nottinghamshire and they value the partnership approach which has been development here. They also commended the quality of the supporting people team and the understanding they have developed with provider services. I would like to congratulate the supporting people team on the recognition that they have attained, under the leadership of Ruth Rigby, the project manager.

- 2.14 The outcome of the Nottinghamshire Supporting People Inspection was that the local programme is providing a good service with promising prospects for improvement.

- 2.15 I believe this is a well deserved judgement and I am delighted to see it recognised. This outcome puts Nottinghamshire right near the top of Local Authorities and in amongst the best two-tier areas.

2.2 Commission for Social Care Inspection Annual Inspection for Nottinghamshire County Council Fostering Service

2.2.1 The inspection of the fostering service took place on 26th January, 2004 (a copy of the Inspection report has been circulated to members separately).

2.2.2 The previous inspection identified, out of 32 standards, 20 were not met or only partially met. An action plan was devised to address these and a great deal of activity focused on the inspection in 2004.

2.2.3 In this year's inspection out of 32 standards, only **4** were not met. These were:

- policy on foster panels needed updating
- schedule 1 in recruitment process not met. This relates to copies of qualification and proof of identify held on personnel files
- updating the policy and procedure guide to reflect the role and function of foster panels
- standard of accommodation for the 2 teams.

All these standards have now been met.

2.2.4 In addition there were 5 areas of practice highlighted as 'good practice'. These were:

1. 'The service manager is clear about her responsibilities and accountability within the service. Staff commented on her approachability and effective and efficient leadership.'
2. 'Approval training gives prospective foster carers a good quality holistic view on how to positively care and meet the needs of young people.'
3. 'Young people's views are taken into account. 100% of the questionnaires returned indicated that they feel foster carers listened to them.'
4. 'Foster carers told inspectors that the provision for short breaks for disabled children was "brilliant". Inspectors found carers and children's files for this service to be of a very high standard.'
5. 'Foster carers felt supported by their supervising social workers who went over and beyond the call of duty.'

2.2.5 The Inspectors said that the fostering service has clearly worked hard to address any requirements from the last inspection.

2.3 Pyramid Products Factory Fire, Mansfield – 24th August, 2004

2.3.1 At just before 1 p.m. on Tuesday 24th August 2004 it became clear to the emergency services that there was a need to activate the civil emergency planning procedures around the area of the Pyramid Products factory in Mansfield. Within two hours the plan was fully in place; Mansfield Leisure

Centre was set up as the designated evacuation point for people who had to be moved from their homes.

- 2.3.2 Departmental officers formed part of the chain of command and co-ordinated activity within the rest centre, involving 40 personnel from statutory and voluntary agencies. A number of staff readily responded to the request for volunteers to perform various duties at the rest centre during the incident. A second group of staff were also placed on standby in case the incident continued through the night. There was excellent support from all staff at the Social Services Mansfield locality, Meadow House.
- 2.3.3 One hundred+ people were evacuated; 77 provided with support and services at the rest centre; and eventually only three people actually need overnight provision due to risk around their homes. The meals at home service provided food during the evening and the operation was efficiently completed by 10 p.m. that same night.
- 2.3.4 This event was debriefed on 8th September 2004. It was felt to have been managed very well by the local authority, particularly the operation of the rest centre. There were some improvements identified in the communication and tactical control procedures by the emergency services, and in the information links between EMAS and the healthcare trusts. These are being considered by the relevant agencies.

2.4 Visit by Dame Denise Platt

- 2.4.1 Staff and service users got the opportunity to meet with Dame Denise Platt, Chairperson of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) when she visited the Mansfield area.
- 2.4.2 Dame Platt, who is well known for championing social care services, was in Nottinghamshire to learn more about the Social Services Department's latest achievements and to give her support.
- 2.4.3 Her day began at Meadow House, where she was given a tour of the new flexible working areas, followed by a demonstration of Framework-i's computerised information system. She then met with staff manning a range of different services.
- 2.4.4 The afternoon included visits to Sure Start, Ravensdale and Maun View's residential and day centre for older people.
- 2.4.5 Dame Denise Platt has subsequently written to the Department to say "very many thanks for arranging the visit to your County It was very enjoyable. It was good to see so many things, which had come to fruition since my last visit. Many of the plans you had are now services that are really doing well."

COUNCILLOR DICK ANTHONY
Cabinet Member for Social Services

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