

**SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of some Government announcements with important implications for Milton Keynes and to report on local issues including the performance of some key services.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 This report summarises:

- (a) National Issues;
- (b) Local Developments; and
- (c) Performance Assessment: Spring 2000. The local social care key performance indicators as of 1 March 2000.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (a) consider the recent developments summarised in the report; and
- (b) comment on local performance information.

#### 4. **Background**

- 4.1 This is the regular report which the designated Director of Social Services provides covering strategic issues, matters of particular concern and policy, performance monitoring and review information relating to the Council's Social Services functions. It seeks to cover some national issues of relevance to the Council as well as some matters specific to Milton Keynes.
- 4.2 Some of the proposals included in the **Social Services White Paper "Modernising Social Services"**, published in November 1998 are being implemented through the Quality Protects and Performance Assessment Framework Programmes, although some changes will require primary legislation.
- 4.3 The main national development since the last Committee meeting has been the publication of "Lost in Care", the Waterhouse Report into abuse at children's homes and placements in North Wales between 1974 and 1990. A report on this has been presented to the meeting of the Children's and Youth Committee held on 14 March 2000.

#### 5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 As it is not long since the last Social Services Issues report, there is only a limited amount to report.

##### **Local Developments**

- 5.2 The work on **Better Care Higher Standards** continues. This is a charter for people aged 18 and over with long term care needs and is a joint initiative between Health, Housing and Social Care.
- 5.3 The local response to the National Charter will include information on:
- (a) Who to contact;
  - (b) Values of the services;
  - (c) Services available locally from Health, housing and social care;
  - (d) What assistance individuals can have;
  - (e) Assessments;
  - (f) Standards of provision;
  - (g) Direct payments;
  - (h) Charging arrangements; and
  - (i) How to complain.

- 5.4 The local charter will be published in June 2000.
- 5.5 The work on developing **Services for people with Learning Disabilities** continues.
- 5.6 Following a review involving a large number of users, carers and a range of agencies, the outcomes were reported at a recent event "Towards a Brighter Future", attended by over a hundred people.
- 5.7 This also marked the launch of our local Quality Network. The group of participants will work together to improve outcomes for our service users.
- 5.8 There will be another event in June to report on progress.
- 5.9 **Mental Health** is a particularly high profile service area at present.
- 5.10 The local Joint Investment Plan (JIP) has been produced in response to the Government's National Service Framework (NSF) and the need for a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) for adult mental health services. This work will draw on the recently completed Sainsbury's Centre locality mental health services profile.
- 5.11 Initiatives will include the provision of 24 hour community support through an integrated health and social care team and additional accommodation in conjunction with housing associations.

#### **Performance Assessment Spring 2000**

- 5.12 Performance monitoring continues. Milton Keynes was visited by the Social Services Inspectorate (and a representative of the NHS Regional Office) on 1 March 2000.

The areas covered were:

- (a) Joint Investment Plans, Health Improvement Programme and National Priority Guidance 2000/01
- (b) Review of Autumn Position Statement
  - (i) Quality Protects
  - (ii) Mental Health
  - (iii) Drug and Alcohol Services
  - (iv) Prevention and Carers' Grants
  - (v) Regulation
- (c) Winter Pressures
- (d) Efficiency Gains/Best Value
- (e) Performance Indicators

- 5.13 Officers also took the opportunity during the visit to raise concerns such as the shortage of qualified social workers and other key groups of staff and to discuss workforce planning initiatives.
- 5.14 At the time of writing, the draft feedback letter on the visit had not been received.
- 5.15 A response on the Quality Protects Management Action Plan is expected by mid April.
- 5.16 Information on **Local Social Care Key Performance Indicators** continues to be produced on a monthly basis and circulated to all Members of the Council.
- 5.17 The headline information as of 1 March 2000 has already been circulated.
- 5.18 The main points were:
- (a) **The number of children on the Child Protection Register remains at 2.8 per 000 population under 18 children.** The range for all Unitary Authorities is 1.0 – 7.1 per 000. **The self imposed target under quality protects of 2.8 per 000 has been achieved two years ahead of target.**
  - (b) There continues to be **no unallocated child protection cases.**
  - (c) The rate of **Looked after Children** per 000 population under **18 has risen slightly to 5.5 per 000.** The range for unitary authorities is between 2.6 and 11.2. The national target is 4.6 per 000 by March 2002.
  - (d) The number of unallocated children **Looked After cases has been maintained at nil.**
  - (e) There has been a **steady increase in the number of people over 65 requiring support at home in recent months.** Home Care Co-ordinators in some areas have had difficulty in meeting these new requests. An **increase in purchasing alternative provision** from Crossroads and the independent sector has resulted. There were **31 people supported** in this way at **1 May 1999.** This compares with **70 at 1 March 2000.** These agencies are also now reporting difficulties in responding to new referrals.
  - (f) The number of **older people awaiting residential care placements has fallen to 21.** Of these, 6 are awaiting funding agreements, 15 are awaiting vacancies in specific establishments. **22 people have either moved to residential care homes or had funding allocated for placements during February 2000.**
  - (g) There are **currently 18 people awaiting nursing home placements, a decrease of one since 1 February 2000.** Of these, **7 are awaiting funding decisions, 11 are awaiting vacancies in specific homes.**

**21 people have either moved to nursing homes or had funding allocated during February 2000.**

5.19 The content of future performance reports is soon to be revised following the discussions with Members.

**6. Implications**

6.1 Environmental

None.

6.2 Equalities

Equalities must have a central place in the delivery of quality services.

6.3 Financial

Officers are seeking to achieve the maximum benefit from the new Quality Protects and Modernisation Grants.

6.4 Legal

Some of the White Paper proposals will require primary legislation.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Some additional staff are being employed funded by the new grants.

**7. Conclusions**

7.1 Milton Keynes Council has continued to give high priority to the implementation of the modernisation agenda and to the development of responsive effective services.

Background Papers: Monthly key statistics as of 1 March 2000