

**SOCIAL SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE  
8 SEPTEMBER 1998**

Present: Councillors Angell (Chairman), Barnard, Bayle, Mrs Clifford,  
Miss Haydon, McCormack, Mrs Shillcock, Mrs Sutcliffe and Worrall

**7. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 26 May 1998 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**8. Longcare Inquiry Report (Item 1)**

The Sub Committee considered a report detailing the background to the Independent Inquiry that reported in June 1998 into care provided by Longcare Limited of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. The Inquiry looked at the specific issue of Buckinghamshire County Council's decision not to cancel Longcare's registration, at the effectiveness and reliability of the County Council's regulation of residential care for People with Learning Disabilities and the adequacy of current services for people with Learning Disabilities in Buckinghamshire.

The Director of Social Services & Housing advised the Sub-Committee that he was confident that the procedures that existed in this Council were such that the problems and procedural failings identified by the inquiry were unlikely to occur in Bracknell. He stated that, if matters of concern were raised, he was confident that they would be taken seriously and that prompt and decisive action would be taken. He added, however, that the Department would not be complacent, as there was always room for improvement.

The Director answered a number of questions arising from the report on issues relating to registration and monitoring. He indicated that it was hoped forthcoming legislation would make it a requirement for a prospective homeowner to prove their fitness to run such a home, rather than for the local authority to prove that they were not fit, as was the current position under existing legislation.

**RESOLVED:** that:

- 1 That the suggested legislative changes identified in the report be supported.
- 2 That the processes and procedures already in place in Bracknell Forest Borough Council's Social Services & Housing Department be noted and supported.
- 3 That the processes and procedures already operated by the West Berkshire Inspection Unit be noted with a view to ensuring through the monitoring process that the necessary developments take place as detailed in 4.9.2.

9. **Registration and Inspection of Childminders – Position in Bracknell Forest Borough (Item 2)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report advising it, in the light of the recent case in Norfolk, of this Council's procedures for the Registration and Inspection of child-minders.

The Director of Social Services & Housing answered a number of questions arising from the report. Amongst the points made was the fact that nannies were not subject to the same legislation as childminders and that the difference between the two was that childminders had their own premises whilst nannies worked in their employers' home. He also indicated that cases of deregistration were very rare as the rigorous procedures leading to registration tended to filter out those people who were unsuitable.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the Sub-Committee notes that the procedures relating to the Registration and Inspection of child-minders are being fully implemented; and,
- 2 That the implications identified in the conclusions outlined in the report be included in the Registration and Inspection Programme.

10. **Delivery of Respite Care Services to Disabled Children and the Families (Item 3)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the review of the delivery of respite care services for disabled children and their families.

The Sub-Committee recognised that any change to existing procedures could only be undertaken after proper consideration of all the issues and stressed therefore that, at this stage, approval was only being given to explore the issue more fully with a view to considering costed proposals in due course.

**RESOLVED:** That the officers be authorised to develop costed proposals with a view to reporting back to the Sub-Committee at a later meeting.

11. **Payment of Legal Fees for Adoption Applications (Item 4)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report seeking approval for the payment of the legal fees of prospective adoptive parents of children being placed for adoption by Bracknell Forest Borough Council Adoption Agency.

The Sub-Committee was advised that contested cases where costs could be in the region of £2000-£10,000 were very rare and unlikely to occur in Bracknell more than once every 2-3 years.

**RESOLVED:**

That the policy relating to the payment of legal fees for adoption applications outlined in the report be endorsed.

12. **Direct Payments Scheme (Item 5)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report advising it of the implications of the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996 and inviting it to consider options for its implementation locally.

The Sub-Committee recognised that there were a number of issues that would need to be considered in detail arising from this legislation, and indicated therefore that it would wish to consider all the relevant issues in due course before any action was taken.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1 That the proposal to establish a Working Group involving both Officers and Service Users with the remit to explore options for the development of a pilot project be approved; and,
- 2 That the Working Group report back to the Sub-Committee on its findings for a decision on whether to proceed with a pilot project.

13. **Joint Agreement with Berkshire Health Authority (Item 6)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to endorse the proposed agreements with the Berkshire Health Authority regarding joint funding arrangements.

**RESOLVED:** That the agreements with Berkshire Health Authority concerning joint funding arrangements be endorsed prior to their ratification by the Joint Consultative Committee.

14. **Items for Information**

The Sub-Committee received and noted the following information item:

- Registration and Inspection of Residential Care Homes in Bracknell Forest (Item 7)

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 9.15 pm.

**CHAIRMAN**