

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Social Work Services

Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership: 22 November 2006

Subject: Consultation on Proposals to reduce the Frequency of Care Commission Inspection.

1. Purpose

1.1 The Care Commission has issued a consultation paper proposing a reduction in the minimum frequency of inspections for certain care services from 1 April 2007. They are also inviting comments on whether the minimum frequency for other care services should be reduced in future years.

1.2 The services included are:

- Daycare services for children (for services catering only for children aged 3 and over)
- Housing support services (provided by registered social landlords only)
- Nurse agencies and
- Childcare Agencies

1.3 A report on this subject was taken to the Social Justice Committee of 8 November 2006 for noting.

2. Background

2.1 The Care Commission is responsible for regulating a wide range of services defined in Section 2 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. The legislation lays out the minimum frequency of inspections which is 2 inspections per year in residential care services and at least 1 per year in other services.

2.2 In addition, the Care Commission and HMIE are required to collaborate on the inspection of child care provision which includes an educational element, and with other regulatory bodies such as Communities Scotland, and the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA).

2.3 The Care Commission recognises the burden placed on providers, and the financial implication both on the themselves and providers which has an effect on fees paid by providers.

2.4 Easing the current statutory arrangements would provide more scope for a flexible and proportionate approach to joint inspections.

2.5 The proposals have taken into consideration core elements such as the level of enforcement action, outstanding requirements and upheld or partially upheld complaints, as well as the characteristics of the service users in drawing up their proposals.

2.6 Their current proposal is to reduce the minimum frequency of inspection for day care services for children aged 3 and over to once a year. Childcare agencies and nurse agencies would reduce to once every 2 years, and Housing Support Services to once every 3 years.

3. Personnel Implications

3.1 There are no personnel implications, though the reduction in inspection frequency would mean less employee time was taken-up in such processes.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications, unless the proposed changes result in lower fees to providers and to the Council as a provider. This is not mentioned in the consultation.

5. Recommendations

5.1 We welcome the above proposals which will go some way to reducing the regulatory and financial burden on providers where services are performing well, and which will still allow the targeting of those services which require to improve.

5.2 A flexible approach based on an assessment of the performance of services, and that supports continuous improvement in care services through a transparent, proportionate, accountable, targeting and consistent approach to regulation is to be welcomed.

5.3 Members are asked to note the content of this report and endorse our agreement with the proposals.

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William W Clark
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Background papers: Consultation document – available from Mrs Beryl Middleton

Wards Affected: All