

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Joint Regulation Work involving North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council Social Work Departments and Lanarkshire Health Board.
FROM: Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 2 March 1999	
REPORT AUTHOR: D O'Donnell	
REF: DOD/LK	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of an initiative between the Social Work Departments of North and South Lanarkshire Councils and Lanarkshire Health Board to develop more effective joint working arrangements in the regulation of residential care establishments and nursing homes.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scottish Office Guidance SWSG 7/96 entitled "Local Inspection of Residential and Day Services" emphasised the potential in joint inspection arrangements being developed between Social Work Departments and Health Boards in order to draw on the skills and different contributions each agency can make to the services registered by the other.
- 2.2 Scottish Office Circular SWSG 11/98, "Community Care: Registration of Residential and Other Establishments for Adults and Children", signalled a series of legislative and policy intentions and forewarned that future regulatory arrangements would be established which will be independent of local authorities and Health Boards.
- 2.3 The Government has stated its commitment to an independent system of regulation, and has set this out in the English White Paper "Modernising Social Work," which also includes proposals for the regulation of home care. The White Paper for Scotland is expected in mid March 1999.
- 2.4 Past joint initiatives in regulating nursing home and residential care sectors have been limited but always sought to include both North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Councils, these being the main interested authorities within the Lanarkshire Health Board area.
- 2.5 Whilst all three agencies concerned have very similar responsibilities in respect of nursing and residential establishments, there exist significant differences in the legislation, resourcing and operational processes involved.

3 JOINT WORK INITIATIVE

3.1 Within the context of the above, a meeting of senior staff of North and South Lanarkshire Councils and Lanarkshire Health Board set up a small working group, chaired by the Head of Social Work Services, North Lanarkshire Council, to consider how joint working might be improved in the short to medium term pending the outcome of the Scottish White Paper through the Scottish Parliament.

3.2 Areas for consideration included:

- ◆ maximising the resources available for regulation;
- ◆ developing and demonstrating a clearer joint approach to regulatory work to providers, service users and the public;
- ◆ better utilising the respective specialist skills available within all three agencies in the inspection of residential and nursing homes, and
- ◆ improved and more frequent communication between the Board and authorities where standards within establishments cause concern.

4 PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 An initial audit of roles, responsibilities and resources across all three agencies has been carried out, together with an examination of joint models in operation elsewhere in Scotland.

4.2 The working group will conclude its work in March 1999 when a meeting has been arranged to present its findings to senior staff of the three agencies.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to note:

- (i) that this initiative has been undertaken,
- (ii) that the Director of Social Work will report back on the outcome of this initiative at an early date.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
17 February 1999

For further information on this report please contact Dennis O'Donnell, Principal Officer (Registration/Inspection)
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