

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REPORT**

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject:  <b>LAY PERSONS INVOLVEMENT IN INSPECTION</b>
FROM: Jim Dickie, Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 22 August 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: Dennis O'Donnell	
REF: DOD/LB I:\REG_INSP\REG\CCTEREPS\SWCAUG2000a.lwp	

**1 CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The report outlines findings into the use of lay persons on inspection from North Lanarkshire based research, undertaken by Glasgow University. Findings from the perspective of all relevant people - service users and managers, lay people and inspectors - were generally positive. Consensus was that lay persons brought an added dimension to the inspection process and allowed improved attention to be given to obtaining service users views. The report also highlights operational and reporting improvements that can be made. Research findings allied to operational experience, underpins a request that Committee approve the continued use of lay persons on inspection, albeit with some revision of arrangements.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In early 1998 the Advisory Committee on Inspection developed proposals for the inclusion of lay persons on inspection.
- 2.2 Lay persons were defined as "individuals who have experience of using residential or day services or who have an interest in specific client groups using the services subject to inspection".
- 2.3 It was envisaged that the main role for lay persons would be to focus on obtaining the residents' perspective of the services provided.
- 2.4 In August 1998 the Social Work (Planning and Administration) Sub Committee approved, in principle, a proposal for establishing a pilot project to recruit lay persons for inspections of residential services.
- 2.5 Six lay persons were initially recruited and, during the period 1 April 1999 - 31 March 2000, lay persons were included on 44 inspections across all client sectors.

### 3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Prior to this initiative by North Lanarkshire Council the use of lay persons on inspection was largely untested in Scotland. On that basis Committee agreed that Glasgow University should undertake research to establish whether lay persons brought added value to the inspection process and, in particular, give specific regard to whether their inclusion achieved the objectives of:

- ◆ ensuring the openness and transparency of the inspection process;
- ◆ improving the level of user contact in inspections;
- ◆ increasing the balance given to users views and issues during inspection and reflecting these in inspection reports.

3.2 A summary of the conclusions and recommendations from the research carried out by Glasgow University is provided as Appendix One. The full report can be made available on request and a copy has been placed in the Members' Library.

3.3 Research findings indicated that lay persons made a positive contribution to the inspection process and significantly increased levels of contact with service users. The researcher found little change to inspection report content arising from lay persons involvement.

3.4 Recommendations arising from the research include:

- ◆ providing lay persons with more information about establishments and giving clearer reporting guidance;
- ◆ providing lay persons with specific training in report writing;
- ◆ giving future consideration to involving service users as lay persons.

3.5 Inspectors experiences of working alongside lay persons on inspection were positive. Lay persons were regarded by Inspectors to have made a positive contribution to inspections, conducted themselves appropriately, focused on service users and adhered to reporting arrangements. Overall the inclusion of lay persons was considered worthwhile.

3.6 Inspectors comments highlighted that:

- ◆ inclusion of lay persons created some additional planning and organisational workload;
- ◆ an initial agreement about use of lay persons on announced inspections only, adversely effected the balance between announced/unannounced inspections;
- ◆ an initial agreement, intended to maintain "layness" limited the training and development opportunities provided to lay persons;
- ◆ inclusion of lay persons was difficult to achieve in inspections of small establishments.

#### **4 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE USE OF LAY PERSONS**

- 4.1 On considering representations from lay persons the Advisory Committee on Inspection formed a view that the continued use of lay persons on inspections was desirable. Also, that learning from experience and research should be taken into account when planning future arrangements.
- 4.2 The four lay persons currently appointed are prepared to continue for a further period of one year.
- 4.3 Proposals for future use of lay persons are currently being devised and include:
- ◆ using lay persons on inspection of day services;
  - ◆ increasing the number of lay persons, through recruitment of service users;
  - ◆ increasing training for lay persons and providing additional guidance to them;
  - ◆ revising feedback and reporting processes.

#### **5 COST IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Remuneration for lay persons is £25 per inspection plus travel costs, set at current car mileage rates paid by the Council.
- 5.2 The estimated additional cost to the Department, including training and recruitment is £2500 annually.
- 5.3 If the proposal is supported by Committee additional resources would be identified from the Modernising Community Care budget.

#### **6 CONCLUSION**

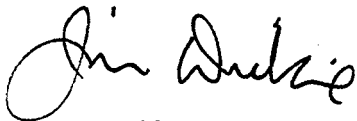
- 6.1 In implementing the use of lay persons on inspection North Lanarkshire Council was at the forefront of developing and improving inspection processes in ways which were transparent and accountable. These are firm indications that such initiatives will be reflected in changes to regulation proposed by the Scottish Executive from April 2002.
- 6.2 It is proposed that a similar level of use of lay persons on inspection continues in the coming 12 months, with modifications made in light of experience and research findings.

#### **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the continuance of the use of lay persons on inspection, and

- (ii) endorse proposed changes to arrangements for the use of lay persons on inspection.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**10 August 2000**

*For further information on this report please contact, Dennis O'Donnell, Principal Officer (Registration and Inspection) (TEL: 01698 332058)*

## Evaluation of lay persons involvement in Inspection - June 2000

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### *Conclusions*

Almost all of those interviewed considered the scheme worthwhile and of direct benefit to service users with particular emphasis placed on the empowering nature of the role of the lay person.

How effective overall has the scheme been in meeting the broad expectations expressed at the beginning of the 12 month period?

- **Improving the level of user contact in inspections** - evidence from all those interviewed suggests that users had significantly more contact with lay persons than they would have had with inspectors. In none of the inspections where lay persons were involved was there any suggestion that users found it difficult, uncomfortable or inappropriate to engage with the lay person.
- **Ensuring the openness of the inspection procedure** - again there is clear evidence that the knowledge base of the lay persons involved in the scheme has increased throughout the year. At the beginning of the scheme none of the lay persons had a clear idea of what was involved in inspection. They now have considerable knowledge of the process of inspection and the standards that service users can expect. In addition by advertising widely and involving a considerable number of people in the recruitment process information about the inspection procedure has been widely disseminated throughout the North Lanarkshire Council area.
- **Increasing the balance given to users views and issues in reports** - there is less clarity over the success of this expectation. This is particularly true because of the way in which lay persons reports were

incorporated into the final inspection reports. Issues raised by lay persons on behalf of service users were incorporated in the final reports of inspections where they were involved. However it cannot be said that there appeared to be any increase in the balance of this information within the reports of inspections where lay persons were involved compared to those where they were not.

Overall then, the objective of improving the level of user contact in inspections appears to have been successful. The length of time lay persons are able to devote to spending with service users would not be achievable for inspectors who have broader obligations. In addition the benefit for service users is not confined to just having someone spend more time with them. Staff within the unit also report that being listened to enables service users to feel valued and empowered.

As there was no specific remit to evaluate the cost of the scheme to the department this has not been a consideration in compiling this report. However comments were received that the remuneration available for lay persons participation in inspection in no way relates to the amount of time involved. This may be an issue for consideration in planning any future recruitment drive.

### *Recommendations*

As there will be considerable changes to the way registration and inspection is carried out within the next year, it would seem inappropriate to suggest sweeping changes to the existing scheme at present. Therefore in taking into account the preferences of all those involved, the majority view would appear to be that extending the scheme for a further 12 months with the existing lay persons would have significant merit. This would allow for a consolidation of the existing system as well as putting into place any agreed changes from the recommendations below. All of the lay persons expressed a willingness to carry on for a further 12 month period.

The recommendations for the continuation of the lay person scheme for a further period are detailed below:

- provision of a detailed job specification for the role of lay person
- clearer guidance to units on how they should prepare users for lay persons visits
- production of written guidelines, possibly with a word limit, for lay persons reports
- guidance on the length of time that lay persons should spend in units
- information on likely time involvement should be provided in recruitment information pack
- time for inspectors and lay persons to meet prior to their first inspections (perhaps during the training session)
- consideration should be given to the provision of some written information on models of service provision, which might be encountered
- future recruitment should be more tightly focussed on the authorities geographical area and service users