

Date: Wednesday 3 March 2004

Venue: Committee Room, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Adult Placement Schemes (Wales) : Regulations and National Minimum Standards

1. This paper provides an opportunity for the Committee to consider the draft Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Adult Placement Schemes (Wales).

Summary

2. I propose that Adult Placement Schemes should be required to register and be inspected by Care Standards Inspectorate Wales and comply with the regulatory and national minimum standards requirements.

Background

3. Adult Placements offer vulnerable people aged 18 and over an alternative and flexible form of accommodation and support – an opportunity to live and stay in an ordinary domestic setting as part of an adult placement carer's family. In Wales, the main take-up of adult placements is people with a learning disability. An adult placement scheme is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting adult placement carers, for taking referrals and placing service users with adult placement carers; and for supporting and monitoring the placement. A scheme can be managed by a local authority or independent (profit making or non-profit making) agency. In Wales there are presently some 13 schemes with around 300 placements - all managed by local authorities

4. Currently the operation of local authority adult placement schemes are covered by policy and practice

guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in August 2002 under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970.

5. The Regulations and National Minimum Standards now proposed were subject to pre-consultation discussions with the National Association of Adult Placement Schemes Wales (NAAPS). A 12 week public consultation on the draft regulations and standards was undertaken between 17 June 2003 and 9 September 2003. As part of this process, a consultation meeting organised by NAAPS and attended by Assembly policy officials and Care Standards Inspectorate Wales was held in August 2003 that was attended by local authority adult placement schemes representatives and adult placement carers. 14 consultation responses were received including 9 from local authorities. Although generally supportive of the proposals there were suggested changes related to particular wording of some of the draft regulations and standards.

Purpose

6. The main features of the proposed regulations are to:

- provide for the National Assembly for Wales to register persons providing schemes and to inspect such scheme premises;
- require each scheme to have a statement of purpose and a guide to the scheme;
- make provision about the fitness of persons providing or managing the scheme;
- make provision about the making of placements and adult placement agreements including the fitness and training of adult placement carers;
- make provision for the general conduct of the scheme; and
- make provision about the fitness of scheme workers and their training

Consideration

7. The introduction of Regulations and National Minimum Standards along the proposed lines would deliver the effective protection and quality standards for some of the most vulnerable people in Wales.

8. If the Regulations are not made then any independent agency managed Schemes that may emerge in Wales would not be required to comply with any statutory requirements or standards.

Financial Implications

9. At present, local authorities and adult placement carers are the only Sectors that may be financially affected by these changes as no independent agency presently manages any schemes in Wales. Many of the regulatory and national minimum standards requirements proposed are reflected in the existing Section 7 Policy and Practice Guidance. The consultation responses on the draft regulations and national minimum standards did not identify any significant additional costs of implementation.

Timetable for Implementation

10. Following the Committee's consideration of the Regulations and National Minimum Standards my intention is that the Regulations should proceed under the Standard Procedure to Plenary. The regulations are due to go to Plenary on 5 May 2004.

Action

11. The Committee is invited to:

i) discuss this paper and the draft Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Adult Placement Schemes in Wales; ii) note the intention to proceed with the draft Regulations under the Standard Procedure to Plenary.

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