

DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM

THURSDAY, 10TH APRIL, 2003

SOCIAL SERVICES JOINT REVIEW

Each Council responsible for the delivery of social services is currently subject to a Joint Review of its services once every 5 years. The forthcoming Joint Review will be the first Luton will have received, and comes at the end of the 5 year cycle of reviews. It is important to recognise that the Joint Review is not an inspection of the social services department. It is an inspection of how the Council meet the needs of vulnerable people.

The Joint Review Team comprises members of the Audit Commission (responsible for promoting the best use of public money and reporting on efficiency and effectiveness of public services) and the Social Services Inspectorate of the Department of Health (SSI) (responsible for policy formulation and reporting on the effectiveness of services).

The Review Framework

- 1) The purpose of the Joint review is:
 - to provide an independent, public evaluation on how well people are served by their social services authority;
 - to promote change and development and share good practice; and
 - to challenge councils on their performance and identify areas of concern.
- 2) Joint Reviews provide a means by which citizens, in particular vulnerable members of the community, can be better informed and assured of the quality of services

available to them, thereby promoting social inclusion and citizenship.

3) The aims for Reviews are:

- to improve services for individuals;
- to enable the Authority to shape better services;
- to promote better standards and improve the management of practice; and
- to secure better value for money.

4) Reviews are guided by eight key principles:

- user focus
- partnership
- inclusion
- evidence based
- consistency
- corporacy
- development
- openness

Judging Performance

5) Evidence is collected and performance assessed using four key areas:

- Are services focused on meeting individuals' needs?
- Can the authority shape better services for the future?
- Is performance effectively managed?
- Are resources managed to maximise best value?

6) Evidence from these four key areas enables the Joint Review Team to make a judgement on the current

performance and future prospects for the Authority's social services. In reaching this judgement, the review encompasses more general questions about the Authority, including:

- Clear corporate leadership
- Creating a long-term agenda
- Business planning approach
- Innovative culture

7) The judgement indicates the overall conclusions about:

- How well an Authority is performing currently, and therefore the extent to which it is meeting people's needs well; and
- How well it is placed to improve.

The Position Statement

8) The Position Statement is a primary source of information and is the Authority's own analysis of its position in relation to the four key areas mentioned above. The Position Statement should aim to provide:

- Evidence based answers to questions intended to identify achievements and areas to develop in the four key areas;
- Contextual information about local needs and priorities and the ways in which these link with achievements and areas to develop; and
- Developing priorities arising from this - as seen by the authority prior to the Review.