

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE

REPORT ON: STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF DAYCARE FOR UNDER 8'S

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 331-2000

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek the Social Work Committee's approval to implement revised standards for daycare for under 8's in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

- 2.1 Instructs the Director of Social Work to implement the standards for the registration and inspection of daycare provision for under 8's including childminding, playgroups, out of school care and nurseries.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of producing the daycare standards is estimated at being £1300 and will be met from the Social Work Department's revenue budget 2000/01.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

The standards are consistent with the principles and values expressed in the Agenda 21 programme.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The standards are designed to ensure that the best interests of children and their parents or carers are taken into account in the provision of daycare services.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1 Local authorities have duties to regulate and review local daycare services for children under 8 years, both in domestic and non-domestic settings. They are required to maintain a register of daycare providers and childminders. Registration is a means of ensuring that all services reach acceptable minimum standards and that children receive satisfactory care and protection in these settings.

- 6.2 The local authority is also required to inspect domestic premises used by registered childminders and registered non-domestic premises in which daycare for children under 8 years is provided. These facilities must be inspected at least once every year.

- 6.3 Dundee City Council's daycare standards for children under 8 years have been informed principally by the Children Act 1989. This remains the primary legislation in regard to registration and inspection of day care.

- 6.4 In addition to the legislative framework, the principles upon which the standards are based are derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention sets out, in a number of statements, the rights which all children should have.

6.5 In order to reflect current thinking and the importance of continuous improvement in ensuring good quality daycare, it was decided to update our current standards. To assist in this task, a working group was established which included a range of daycare providers and representative organisations.

6.6 Following two periods of consultation with daycare service providers and all relevant agencies, the Early Years Registration and Inspection Team carried out a series of trial inspections against the draft standards.

The outcomes of both the consultation and the trial inspections have now been incorporated in the final documents. Copies are available in the Members' lounge.

6.7 A decision has been made that we will introduce an open reporting system whereby inspection reports will be made available on request. These will be in an accessible format and will allow parents to make choices when considering day care provision

7.0 FORMAT OF STANDARDS

7.1 The draft standards, which were presented to Committee in January 2000, proposed to define three levels of achievement; i) Requirements of Registration ii) Good Practice Level and iii) Best or Commendable Practice Level.

However, following the consultation process, it became clear that two levels were sufficient and, therefore, the final document focuses on i) Requirements of Registration and ii) Good Practice Standards.

7.2 In setting these standards, the aim is to provide a safe stimulating and caring environment for children who are users of daycare services. It was encouraging to note from the comments received that providers welcomed the fact that the standards are based on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and also that they specified outcomes which children and their parents can expect from the care that they receive.

8.0 REVIEW

8.1 It is the intention that the Daycare Standards will be subject to a monitoring and review system. We will consult with child care partners as to how the review, which is planned for early 2001, will be carried out.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The standards have been subject to consultation with daycare service providers and relevant agencies.

9.2 This report has been subject to consultation with the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department and the Director of Education.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

11.0 SIGNATURE

Director of Social Work

Date