



Social Services News

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When will it happen?

The Joint Review will take place in the autumn. Our Position Statement has to be ready by 1 October 2001. This means the draft Position Statement will be out for consultation in June.

The Joint Review Team will begin their field work in November and report back their findings.

Buckinghamshire Social Services will be reviewed alongside eight authorities in England and two in Wales.

What is Joint Review?

Joint Reviews provide a thorough external review of Social Services throughout England and Wales. They are carried out jointly by the Social Services Inspectorate and the Audit Commission.

Joint Reviews concentrate on four major themes

- ◆ Meeting Individuals' Needs
- ◆ Shaping Services
- ◆ Managing Performance
- ◆ Managing Resources

What will the Review Team want to know?

The Joint Review covers how councils organise and deliver services to meet the needs of vulnerable people in their communities. The complete programme (now in its fifth year) will deliver an independent assessment of how well the public is served by social services in each council in England and Wales.

Before the Joint Review Team start their fieldwork, they examine a great deal of information about Buckinghamshire

- ◆ Department of Health statistics and Performance Indicators
- ◆ CIPFA statistics
- ◆ Results of a user survey
- ◆ 80 client files
- ◆ The Position Statement, ie a report prepared by staff on the department

When they come, the Joint Review team talk to users, carers, partner organisations etc, to get their perceptions of our services before talking to staff.

Then they talk to a wide range of staff and with elected members.

The review is looking at practice, and this includes the understanding and application of assessment, care planning and review, use of eligibility criteria, analysis and decision making.

What does it mean to me?

The Joint Review will impact on a large number of people in many different ways.

For example

- ◆ Senior managers – will be expected to show a strong strategic lead which feeds through to and is informed by practice
- ◆ Social workers/care managers/operational managers – practice may be observed, files analysed, some people will be interviewed and so will their clients
- ◆ Finance/administration – methods and systems may be examined

What does it mean to me? – *continued*

- ◆ Users and carers – will be asked for their views through questionnaires, discussion forums and individual interviews
- ◆ Corporate support services – will be interviewed and examined to see how effective their support is
- ◆ Councillors – will be interviewed and Cabinet members will be expected to show an active and enabling role
- ◆ Partner agencies – will be questioned as to their views of social services and their own role in joint working

The Joint Review is an opportunity for us to gain recognition for what we are doing well and to take advantage of some free high-level consultancy.

Authorities who have received favourable reviews have found it boosts staff morale and encourages bids for funding for service developments both from within the council and from government initiatives.

How can I find out more?

On the Internet

- ◆ A brief description of what the Joint Review is and the programme of associated events
- ◆ A summary of key messages from the last Joint Review Team Annual Report

On the Intranet

- ◆ A summary of the District Audit Survey of staff assessment of the department in relation to the key areas examined by the Joint Review
- ◆ Feedback from consultation meetings undertaken with staff, users and carers in February

For further information on this and other aspects of the Joint Review publications please contact
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