

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD**

**9 MARCH 2010**

**SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

**UPDATE**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Board notes the progress of the Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel.

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORT**

3. The Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel last met on 25 February 2010, where it received its final evidence in respect of the panel's review of the Blue Badge Parking Scheme in Middlesbrough.
4. The meeting focussed on the assessment process for applicants who apply for a blue badge under the discretionary criteria. In terms of the current arrangements the Panel had previously heard that in Middlesbrough the applicant's GP is written to as part of the assessment process and asked for a medical opinion. However, in other areas of the UK an independent occupational therapist / physiotherapist is used to help determine an individual's eligibility.
5. The Panel was therefore keen to hear Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust's (PCT) view on how medical assessments for blue badges are commissioned in Middlesbrough and whether the current model offers the most consistent and cost effective option. Sue Greaves, Assistant Director of Primary and Community Care was in attendance to present this information.

6. The Panel was advised that the average cost of a GP medical assessment for a blue badge application was £22.24 in 2008/09 and £24.66 in 2009/2010. In terms of the numbers of applications not being supported by the GP, the PCT expressed the view that a figure of less than 10 in 2007/08, when approximately 1,408 assessments were undertaken at a cost of £15,000-£20,000 was surprising.
7. The PCT had been asked its view on the possibility of funding the appointment of an independent medical assessor to undertake assessments, as opposed to seeking the medical opinion of the applicant's GP. Given the evidence received the PCT expressed the view that there was merit in a joint piece of work being undertaken with the Council and that the PCT would be willing to explore the possibility of alternative assessment models.
8. The panel has now completed its evidence gathering in respect of the Blue Badge Parking Scheme and will finalise its draft final report at the next meeting, prior to submitting the report to OSB.
9. The meeting on 25 February 2010 also provided the panel with background information in relation to its new scrutiny topic of Personal Budgets. Tony Parkinson, Head of Planning & Performance was in attendance at the meeting and the panel was presented with a comprehensive overview of the topic. The draft terms of reference for the panel's review of Personal Budgets will be submitted for consideration at the next meeting.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10. No background papers were used in preparing this report.

**Councillor P. Purvis**  
**Chair, Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel**

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