

still looking for legal guidance. Jill Pedley, Assistant Director of Social Services reported that there was a pilot in the Mansfield Primary Care Trust area on safeguarding children. It was felt that there was a need to receive feedback on this.

SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE STRATEGY SINCE 1998

Alison Shield, Service Head Children Looked After introduced the report which summarised the progress on the residential childcare strategy. She indicated that when it was clear that the Authority was not going to be successful in the planning enquiry to build a 12 bedded unit in Mansfield an alternative strategy was produced to provide smaller units. It was known that this would increase unit costs but there was political support and support from the joint review. She explained that the Department was managing with only 14 residential beds but that they had 500 children in care. The level of fostering had increased. She indicated that the costs for each unit were slightly different but were around £3,400 per week which compared favourably with independent sector rates. She added that all the inspections had been satisfactory and that many had given high praise.

In response to a question from Councillor Steve Carr, Alison Shield explained that the Department did not inspect residential homes. This was carried out by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. She added that all homes had to be inspected but the Department did make use of the independent sector but far less than they used to and they did so in a planned way. Councillor Lonergan commented that there used to be a lot of problems with residential childcare but that the situation had now been turned round. Councillor Cutts asked about the costs of placements in foster care and respite care for children with disabilities. Alison Shield agreed to provide a written response.

REIMBURSEMENTS AND DELAYED TRANSFERS OF CARE: FEBRUARY 2005 – JULY 2005

Jill Young, Service Manager – Adults in the Social Services Department introduced the report. She commented that there had been a big improvement and that Nottinghamshire was now the 6th shire county with regard to the average number of delayed transfers of care per 100,000 population aged 65 and over. She indicated that since February the Queen's Medical Centre and the City Hospital had been managed by the County's Social Services Department and they now only had one system to deal with. The Queen's Medical Centre had also got an improved IT system which had speeded up the process. Councillor Carroll commented that this was a good success story. Councillor Lonergan agreed that there had been a massive turn round from the last report and hoped that this continued.

Councillor Lally asked about the recruitment of care staff. Jo Lawson, Locality Manager – Adults indicated that a lot of time and energy had been invested in this but there was still hot spots. There had been improved performance of block contracts. In response to a question from Councillor Lonergan about the grants, Paul McKay, Assistant Director of Social Services agreed to clarify the financial situation.