



Committee and date

Audit Committee

7 December 2009

9.15am

Item No

4

Public

NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE (NFI) 2008/2009 – UPDATE ON BLUE BADGES

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Summary

At the last Audit Committee, Members requested that further information be provided on Blue Badges deceased matches, in terms of the number of investigations and what steps could be taken to recover Blue Badges for deceased holders from the next of kin.

Recommendation

- A. Members are asked to note the content of this update report and initiatives being proposed.

Report

Background

1. It was confirmed by the Blue Badge Service Co-ordinator that this Authority issues about 5,000 badges per year and there are approximately 1,000 deceased badge holders per year.
2. As a result of the National Fraud Initiative, 521 matches were investigated. Of these matches, 1 was identified as a mismatch and 83 were confirmed as deceased badge holders for whom we were not aware of the death.
3. Members also requested that we consider what could be done to recover Blue Badges. As a result of this request, it has been agreed that the Registrars Service procedures will prompt for the Blue Badge to be returned when the death is registered with the Registrars Office. This will be effective from the 1st November 2009 and will be incorporated in the future into the 'Tell Us Once Initiative'.

4. This will be facilitated by a new line on the Registrars' web page which will request the return of the Blue Badge as a new requirement. This request will also be added to new publications and will be done verbally when the appointment to registrar the death is made. Blue Badges will then be crossed through to prevent re-use and returned to the Blue Badge Team for destruction and to update the record.
5. In addition, the current statistical information report from CareFirst is to be enhanced to include, where held, next of kin details. This will allow the Blue Badge Team to write to the next of kin as soon as possible in order to try and recover the Blue Badge. Naturally, this will be undertaken in the most sympathetic manner possible.
6. Furthermore, the Welfare & Income Team has included a question on their Visiting Officer's checklist to prompt whether a Blue Badge is in issue and prompt its return.
7. Hopefully the implementation of the initiatives identified above will allow us to recover most of the Blue Badges from deceased persons next of kin as quickly as possible and prevent their unauthorised or fraudulent use.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

N/A

Risk Management Appraisal

A failure to investigate the NFI matches efficiently and effectively could lead to frauds not being identified promptly.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

N/A

Cabinet Member

Keith Barrow, Leader of the Council (Brian Williams, Chairman of Audit Committee)

Local Member

All

Appendices

None