

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

I read in the Mercury that Cllr Vi Dempster was at a conference in Eastbourne last week.

Can you confirm if this was the case and if yes, what conference it was and what costs were incurred inc. accommodation, travel, subsistence etc and anything else the Council paid for, and also if any of the expenses were paid for by another organisation / sponsor or if the Council paid for everything.

Did any officer attend with Cllr Dempster and what costs were incurred for them too please.

ANSWER:

We can confirm that Councillor Vi Dempster attended the National Children and Adult Services Conference 2012 in Eastbourne. This is an annual event sponsored by the Local Government Association. The conference gives lead members and senior officers the chance to hear from key government ministers, to share current thinking and challenges with colleagues from other local authorities and to learn about innovative work going on in the field of children's and adult services.

Councillors and senior officers from local authorities across the country attend the event, as well as key personnel in relevant organisations such as Age UK, Action for Children, NSPCC and the Alzheimer's Society.

As well as Councillor Vi Dempster, Leicester sent two other delegates to the three-day conference Rachel Dickinson, Strategic Director for Children's Services and Deb Watson, Acting Strategic Director of Adults, Health and Housing (and Joint Director of Public Health and Health Improvement with NHS Leicester City), who attended for part of the event only due to other commitments.

Given the wide ranging reforms underway in both adult and children's services and in the context of a very difficult financial outlook, this national conference is critical for directors and lead members to share their experience and expertise in tackling the challenges that lie ahead.

Speakers this year included Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, Edward Timpson, Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, and David Laws, Minister of State for Schools. Other speakers were Debbie Jones, President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and Sarah Pickup, President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

This is seen as an important event for people working in these fields. It enables them to keep up with their roles and responsibilities, share imaginative ideas and innovative solutions to problems, and hear what's coming up in terms of national policy changes directly from key ministers.

The costs excluding VAT are set out below:

	Conference fee	Accommodation	Travel
Cllr Vi Dempster	£450	£240 (3 nights)	£198
Rachel Dickinson	£450	£240 (3 nights)	£196
Deb Watson	£250	£55 (1 night)	£66

As a joint appointment with the NHS, costs relating to Deb Watson's attendance on this occasion were paid for by the NHS, not Leicester City Council. The costs for Councillor Dempster and Rachel Dickinson were paid for by Leicester City Council, so the total cost met by the council was £1,774

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Wycliffe House

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Wilmslow SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 700

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

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