

**Brierley Hill Area Committee 2nd July 2009**

**Joint Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services**

**Progress of Elected Member Visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments 2008/9**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide the Committee with information about the progress of visits to Adult and Children's social care establishments undertaken by Members during 2008/9.
2. To inform Committee about actions taken in response to Member visits and their comments.
3. To identify issues arising from Members visits and seek Members views.
4. That Members make further nominations from Committee for participation in the programme of visits for the year 2009-2010.

**Background**

5. Each Area Committee nominates pairs of Members to undertake visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments. A list of residential and day care establishments for adults and children is attached as Appendix 1.
6. The purpose of the visits is to assist Members in reviewing the residential and day care service delivery to Adults in establishments managed by the Directorate of Adult Community & Housing Services and to Children in establishments managed by the Directorate of Children's Services.
7. The visits also assist Members in fulfilling their role as Corporate Parents of Looked After Children.
8. All Members participating in the programme of visits must have received training in the role and satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau clearance.

9. Training to assist the process for 2009/10 will be arranged and provided to Members.
10. The process and the delivery of training is managed within the Policy, Performance & Resources Division of the Directorate of Adult, Community & Housing Services. Over a period of time Members have made suggestions to improve the process and these have been incorporated into the Protocol determining the responsibilities of Members and officers. The current protocol is attached as appendix 2.
11. Officers of the Policy and Performance Division provide Members with
  - a copy of the Protocol for Members and Officers
  - a schedule of visits to be undertaken during the period
  - reminders of scheduled visits
  - a proforma for completion at each visit
  - background information about each establishment, in terms of purpose and staffing
  - a copy of the comments made by Members on the previous visits.
12. Members completed proformas are sent to the relevant Assistant Director for comment and response. Appendix 3 provides details of the visits carried out by Members and the response provided by the relevant Assistant Director.

Summaries of issues arising and specific action taken in response to Members comments:- Please refer to appendix 3 for full details

- In total there were eight individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between October 2008 and April 2009; all of which were completed. Thank you to Members for carrying out the visits.
- Amblecote House: - Members submitted a detailed report and summary of this to the Assistant Director. Members were concerned by low staffing levels, caused by agency staff failing to turn up.

Areas of decoration were highlighted

Members felt the home to be very well run and residents were happy and comfortable.

- Lower Gornal Centre: - Members presented a detailed report and summary acknowledging that the centre is to be replaced by a new building, but asking for some improvements to be made to the current facility.

Members were very impressed with the running of the centre and the professionalism and caring nature of the staff.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their comments and updated them on the plans for a new building. The manager has already discussed some of the minor improvements with senior management.

- Stourbridge Centre: - Members prepared a detailed report and summary to the Assistant Director.

Members noted that the kitchen ceiling was in need of repair, but also that improvements and refurbishments were needed in a number of areas.

Members were very impressed by the centre, the management and the staff and believe that the service users are very comfortable and happy. Members drew particular attention to the “exceptional sensory room”

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive comments.

The kitchen ceiling has now been attended to.

- New Bradley Hall: - Members reported on the good quality of care provided by the home and the happiness of the residents. Members also passed on comments about improvements required and ground maintenance.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive comments. Members were assured maintenance work would be undertaken.

- Pavilion Day Centre: - Members commented on the friendliness of staff and the quality of the environment within the Centre. Members were also impressed by the level of activities and the good rapport between staff and service users. Some maintenance issues were identified i.e. extractor fan in kitchen and heating in toilet.

Concerns were also expressed about ongoing midday transport difficulties.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive report “that indicates that the centre continues to be well run and the staff continue to provide well for the service users in a way that reflects their individual needs”

Specific physical improvements have been noted, but these will need to be agreed by the Health Authority who also use the building.

Conflicting demands on transport were acknowledged, however, use of public transport is seen as beneficial for some service users in maintaining their independence.

- Maitland Road: - Members commented positively on attitude of staff and residents. Also on activities and facilities. Some past difficulties with local youths gravitating towards the home but this is being managed.

Concern also expressed about planned zebra crossing outside of home and the impact this will have.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their report. The impact of the zebra crossing on the home has been addressed; parking is now in place at the side of the building.

- Adshead Road: - Members spoke positively of the work being undertaken with residents at the time of the visit. Good staff morale and working relationships with young people in placement were observed. Comments were made re need for replacement garden fence and bathroom refurbishment.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their report and the positive comments that they had made.

Members were assured that monies have been identified for both the garden fence and bathroom work.

- 14 St James's Road: - Members reported positively on their visit, citing activities available to the young people and the work undertaken with the specialist fostering project. Members also commented on a good relationship with neighbouring houses and the Elderly Persons' Home next door. Members also commented on the good balance and range of meals available to young people.

Assistant Director's response is pending

## **Finance**

13. There are no immediate financial implications from this report. The programme of Member Visits can continue to be provided from within existing resource allocation.
14. On occasion, Member comments and recommendations will have additional cost implications. These are forwarded in the first instance to the Technical Support Services and where appropriate to the Property & Steering Capital Group for consideration.

## **Law**

15. Members' visits to Social Care establishments assist in meeting some of the relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 and the 1948 National Assistance Act.

## **Equality Impact**

16. The visits to establishments are intended to assist officers in ensuring that services are delivered in a fair, equitable and service user focused manner. The visits provide opportunities for Members to consult with a wide ranging group of people with varied needs, abilities, disabilities, age, gender and ethnicity.

## **Recommendations**

17. That Members consider and comment on the information contained in this report and attachments.
18. That Members make further nominations from Committee for participation in the rota for the year 2009-2010.



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