

Central Dudley Area Committee 7th June 2011

**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 2010/11**

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 2010/11 and to inform Committee about actions taken in response to Member comments.
2. To seek nominations from the Committee for Members to carry out visits to Social Care establishments during 2011/12.

Background

3. Each Area Committee nominates pairs of Members who are willing to undertake visits to Adult and Children's Social Care establishments. A list of residential and day care establishments for adults and children across the Borough is attached as Appendix 1.
4. 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
5. The visits also assist Members in fulfilling their role as Corporate Parents of Looked After Children.
6. All Members participating in the rota of visits must have received training in the role and satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau clearance.
7. Training to assist the process for 2011/12 will be arranged and provided to Members.

8. The rota process and the delivery of training is managed within the Policy, Performance & Resources Unit 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 Protocol is attached as appendix 2.
9. Staff of the Policy, Performance & Resources Unit provide Members with
 - a copy of the Protocol for Members and Officers
 - a schedule of visits to be undertaken during the period
 - a reminder of scheduled visits to establishments
 - 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.
10. 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 of the Central Dudley Area Committee and the response provided by the relevant Assistant Director.
11. Examples of issues arising and specific action taken in response to Members comments:- Please refer to appendix 3 for full details
 - There were nine individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2010 and April 2011. Two out of the nine visits took place; notice was given that the other visits could not be covered because of sickness to Members or other unforeseen circumstances. Despite efforts to do so it was not possible to make alternative arrangements to allow these visits to take place. Consideration is being given to ways of assisting Members to complete visits when difficulties arise.
 - The message from the visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
 - Members commented positively on the range of activities available for the young people at **Maitland Road**. Members were especially pleased with the fund raising activities of the young people there.

Members raised queries about litter from nearby shop blowing onto the homes grounds and support offered to the young people when moving into adulthood.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their visit and positive comments.

Discussions are ongoing with the local store to address the problem of litter.

- Members commented positively on the running of **St James' Road** and the relationships between resident and staff. Members commented on the professionalism of the staff and the range of activities available for residents. Members commented positively on condition of home following refurbishment 3-4 years ago.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their visit and positive comments

Finance

12. There are no immediate financial implications from this report. The programme of Member visits can continue to be provided from within existing resource allocation.
13. 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

14. Members' visits to Social Care establishments assist in meeting some of the relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 and the Care Standards Act 2000.

Equality Impact

15. 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

16. That Members consider and comment on the information contained in this report and attachments.

17. That Members make further nominations from Committee for Members' participation in the rota for the year 2011-2012.



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