
Stourbridge Area Committee 28th June 2010

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 2009/10

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 October 2009 to March 2010 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 2010/11.

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 2010/11 will be arranged and provided to Members.

8. The rota process and the delivery of training is managed within the Policy & Performance 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 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 Stourbridge 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 eight individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2009 and April 2010. Unfortunately, only three out of the eight visits took place due to unforeseen difficulties for Members and due to ill health. Those establishments which did not receive a visit were: Amblecote House, 14 St James's Rd, Brettell Lane day Centre, Amblecote Centre, Adshead Road. Children's establishments are scheduled to receive two visits during the programme; 14 St James's Road and Adshead Road both received the "second" visit during the programme.
 - From each of the visits carried out the consistent message was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
 - Glebelands: Visit carried out by Cllr Mohammed Hanif and Cllr Colin Wilson. Members were able to meet several of the residents when making their visit. Members reported that there were good Community links for residents to enjoy as well as other activities within the home. Members commented that residents are happy and that there is a good relationship with staff. Members reported favourably on the stability of the staff group and the advantages that continuity of staff and residents brought to the home. Members reported that the physical condition of the home was kept to a very high standard.

Members expressed some concern that the administration of the home will change next year brings in an element of uncertainty.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive comments and said that these would be passed to the staff. The assistant Director advised that the Council's contract to deliver care to the residents expires in 2010 and that the Council is exploring the options for residents to remain at Glebelands as Housing Association tenants using personal budgets for their care needs.

- New Swinford Hall: Visit carried out by Cllr Mohammed Hanif and Cllr Colin Wilson. Members commented favourably on the range of activities and leisure opportunities available to the residents. Those residents whom they met were happy and enjoyed a good relationship with staff. Members commented favourably on the length of experience of many staff members and the advantages that this continuity offered the home. Members said that New Swinford Hall was "an excellent and well maintained facility".

The Assistant Director thanked the Members for their visit and their positive comments saying that their observations reflected the feedback received from residents many of whom have returned home following a short recuperative stay following discharge from Hospital. The Assistant Director advised that the continuity and high standard of work from the staff has been achieved through training to a high standard for many staff members. The Assistant director advised that she would pass the members comments back to the staff group and management.

- Stourbridge Centre: Visit carried out by Cllr Mohammed Hanif and Cllr Colin Wilson Members comment favourably on the range of activities both on site and community based that the centre offers and the way that this enables the facilities to be enjoyed by many service users. Members commented on the level of enthusiasm shown by staff members and also on their high level of training. Members reported a good relationship between staff and service users. Members advised that they believed the centre was in need of some decoration.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their favourable comments about the centre and noted their observations about decoration.

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 participation in the rota for the year 2010-2011.



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