

Brierley Hill Area Committee 1st July, 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 2009/10 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 2009/10.

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 Brierley Hill 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 six individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between October 2009 and April 2010. All of the visits took place and we are grateful to the members for this.
- A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
- New Bradley Hall: Members commented that the quality of care offered to the residents was excellent and that everyone seemed to be happy and contented. Comment was made on the need to pollard trees in the grounds.

The Assistant Director thanked members for their positive comments and advised that she would pass these back to the care team and discuss the comments about trees with the Manager.

- Pavilion Day Centre: Members observed that the service users were happy and contented and enjoyed varied activities at the centre. Members commented positively on the care offered by the staff and the relationship that existed between them and the service users.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive comments.

- Tipton Road: Members commented positively on the variety of communication systems available in this home for young people who have learning disabilities. Members advised that they were pleased with the physical environment and commented on recent improvements that had been made.

The Assistant Director thanked members for their visit and for their positive comments regarding the excellent standards of care which is provided at the home. The Assistant Director commented that the Members comments were also reflected in the recent Ofsted inspection which rated the home as 'outstanding'.

- Tiled House: Members commented with concern on difficulties that the home experienced in having the heating system repaired. Members were also concerned by problems that the home had experienced due to stray horses and criminal damage of mini buses; the members accepted that these may be outside of the home and Directorate's control, but recognised that this still impacted on the residents.

Members commented that the home was very friendly and comfortable although one area was in need of redecoration. Members spoke positively on the level of experience of the manager, but commented that additional senior staff would be valuable. Members commented highly on the range of activities for the residents. Residents were reported to speak highly of the staff. It was acknowledged that this is a home that has been designated for closure.

The Assistant Director thanked members for their visit stressing the importance of the visits by Councillors to establishments. The Assistant Director thanked members for their positive comments about the activities available to residents and the commitment of the staff. Members were informed that the heating system had been repaired later on the day of their visit. Mini buses are no longer parked on the drive, making the premises safer and staff are fully aware of whom to contact if stray horses are seen again.

The Assistant Director thanked the Members for the letter that they had written to the Manager and team following their visit.

- Parkes Street: Members spoke highly of the interaction between service users and staff who were described as very enthusiastic and promoting a caring atmosphere with good opportunities. Members commented positively on the Management of the home.

Members asked that the lack of CCTV at the front entrance of the building be attended to urgently. Members also commented that heating for the unit was controlled centrally rather than from within the unit.

The Assistant Director thanked members for their positive comments and them that the possibility of CCTV was being explored and that there were mechanisms for overriding the heating system.

- Adshead Road: Members commented positively on the relaxed nature of the home whilst also observing that there was a strictly structured routine in it. Members also commented on the support that continues to be offered to the young people when they leave Adshead Road.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their visit and their positive comments and expanded on the various levels of support provided to the young people to help them move towards independent living and help this transition be more successful.

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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