

Halesowen Area Committee 1st 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 the 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 (excluding Cabinet 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
 - a reminder 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 pro formas 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 seven individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2008 and April 2009. Out of the seven visits, six took place, however, one to a Children's establishment was cancelled because it had received a visit the previous week; Children's establishments should receive two visits each during the programme.
- A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of the commitment and skill of the staff in providing a high quality of service and of users and staff who were happy with the provision.
- Brett Young Day Centre:- Highly positive report with Members commenting highly on the quality of the staff. Members commented on insufficient toilet facilities for such a busy and well attended centre. Members also commented on other possible improvements which could be made to the centre.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their very positive feedback, particular attention was drawn to the initiative which has seen links with the college established under the Borough Strategy for Older People.

The potential improvements to the centre have been referred on for further consideration and attention.

- Russell Court: - Members commented that residents and their relatives were happy and that staff are caring and encouraging towards residents. Members also commented that good links exist with the local community and on the high service standards, design and maintenance of the home.

Members commented, "Russell Court remains an outstandingly welcoming environment. It is a credit to the DACHS managers and staff who work so hard to keep it that way".

Members commented on ongoing staff training in dementia issues which continue to improve the quality of care on offer. Members expressed some concern at reliance on agency staff. Comments were also made by staff about the adequacy of the transport available.

The Assistant Director thanked the Members for their report and commented on the importance of the Members visits programme in scrutinising services offered. The Assistant Director shared the Members' enthusiasm for the standards within the home and the innovations that have been seen there.

- Rowan Lodge Day Centre: - Members reported on the good working relationship between staff and service users, Members also commented on the support that is offered to carers. Members also commented on limited space within the centre.

Members were thanked for their report, the Assistant Director offered assurance regarding space which is well managed by carefully planning its use through the week.

- Shenstone: - Members commented on the high skill levels of staff and on the good relationship with service users. Comment was also made that décor needed to be improved.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their comments, advising that the home had a much higher level of staff achieving NVQ level 4 than was set by the National Standard. Issues of concern have been addressed. Comments about décor have been acknowledged and will be addressed.

- Hill House Day Centre: - Members commented positively on the commitment of the staff, and the range of activities and therapy available to service users.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their comments and clarified some queries relating to the setting and maintenance of the centre.

- Family Assessment Centre: - Members reported positively on the Centre. Members noted that the centre can assess two families on a residential basis at a time and would like to see the facilities expanded to accept more families.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive report; expanding the Centre has been considered and further thought is being given to this.

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.



Linda Sanders
Director of Adult, Community
& Housing Services



Jane Porter
Interim Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Steve Rice
Quality and Complaints Manager
Policy & Performance Resources Division
DACHS
Telephone 01384 814723
e-mail steve.rice@dudley.gov.uk