

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

Brierley Hill Area Committee 5 July 2007

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 2006/7

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 2006/7 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 2007/08.

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 2007/8 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 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 four individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2006 and April 2007. Three out of the four visits took place, with one establishment i.e Parkway Road not receiving a visit as the building was temporarily closed (pending re-opening).
 - A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
 - Children were at school when Members visited Tipton Road. However three members of staff spoken to advised that the children were happy. Councillors were extremely impressed with all aspects of home and wanted to congratulate all members of staff for the high standard of care at the home. Assistant Director thanked Members for undertaking the visit and for the positive observations of the Unit. The message will be conveyed to relevant staff concerned.
 - Members observed 'a very warm feel' at Queens Cross Centre and the service users were very happy. Interaction between service users and staff is good and service users are consulted on all aspects. Members noted lots of nice compliments recorded in the log. There is some repair/maintenance work

required on the building. Assistant Director thanked Members for such a positive report. All items identified for repair or maintenance have been presented to the Capital Bids process in the 2005/6 and 2006/7 and will be presented again in 2007/8. The reception window is to be funded from the Unit's budget and a request via the DDA route is in hand for new replacement automatic doors.

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 2007-2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Sanders". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'L'.

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