

---

**Stourbridge Area Committee Meeting 16th June 2008**

**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 2007/8**

**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 2007/8 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 2008/09

**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 2008/9 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
- In total there were 6 individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2007 and April 2008. 3 visits took place.
  - A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
  - Shenstone (Older People) Members observed a happy atmosphere throughout the home and good rapport between staff and residents. The premises were well looked after but required redecoration and carpets replaced. Members highlighted some safety concerns. The Assistant Director responded and advised that the existing fire alarm system is due for updating in the new financial year. Appropriate safety measures have been fitted to the staircases to avoid potential risk to residents.
  - Brett Young Day Centre, Older People. Members were very impressed with the art work done by service users and remarked that the quality of the pictures 'is excellent'. Members observed a sociable atmosphere between service users and staff. Members noted that the roof is leaking badly in several areas. Day centre users are not happy with the daily meals which need to improve. The Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive report. There is a proposal to install a new roof via the Capital Bid process. Measures are in place to work with the Catering Team to address the concerns that have been raised about the daily meals.

## **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. The visits provide a specific, effective and positive opportunity in enabling members to respond to their corporate parenting role and responsibilities.

## **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 2008-2009.

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

**Linda Sanders**  
**Director of Adult, Community & Housing Services**



**John Freeman**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer:  
Steve Rice  
Quality & Complaints Manager  
Policy & Performance Resources Unit  
DACHS

Telephone 01384 814723 e-mail [Steve.rice@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.rice@dudley.gov.uk)