

**Central Dudley Area Committee 9<sup>th</sup> June 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 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 proformas 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.
13. In total there were nine individual establishments for nominated Members to visit from this committee. Visits take place between October 2008 and April 2009. Regrettably, due to issues of poor health and significant diary commitments only two out of the nine visits could be carried out this year. However, two members have advised that they still wish to complete their three visits by the end of May which would bring the number of visits carried out up to Five.
14. Further assistance in this important role will be offered to members next year to ensure visits take place wherever possible.
15. Summaries of issues arising and specific action taken in response to Members comments:- Please refer to appendix 3 for full details
  - A consistent message across all committees was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.

- Amblecote Centre:- Highly positive report with Members commenting extremely highly on the quality of the staff. Members commented on insufficient toilet facilities for such a busy and well attended centre. The Assistant Director thanked members for their report and the positive comments received about staff and services. The Assistant Director advised members that improvements to facilities are to be followed up.
- Brettell Lane Day Centre:- Members submitted a very comprehensive report detailing a number of improvements believed to be necessary. Members passed on service users' concerns about increases in the costs of meals. Members commented that service users appeared contented and interacted well with staff. The Assistant Director thanked members for their report. Members were advised that complaints concerning meals were being addressed within the Directorate. Members were also assured that their comments concerning the fabric of the home mainly had been or were being addressed in line with the budgets available.

### **Finance**

16. There are no immediate financial implications from this report. The programme of Member Visits can continue to be provided from within existing resource allocation.
17. 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**

18. 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**

19. 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**

20. That Members consider and comment on the information contained in this report and attachments.
21. That Members make further nominations from Committee for participation in the programme of visits for the year 2009-2010.

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**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Porter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

**Jane Porter**  
**Interim Director of Children's Services**

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