

North Dudley Area Committee 25th June 2008

Joint Report of the Director of Adult Community and Housing and the Director of Children Services

Progress of Elected Member Visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments 2007/08

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 Halesowen 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 5 individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2007 and April 2008. Three out of the 5 visits were carried out.
 - Hill House (Mental Health] Members provided positive comments from service users and staff. Some concern that staff were not aware of location of one of the record books. Also concern that the bathroom needed some improvements. The Assistant Director thanked Members for their report and advised that the service manager is making sure that the complaints log book is accessible and complete. The Health Estates Management Team will be addressing the issues raised about bathing facilities as Hill House is situated within a Health Building.
 - Parkway Road (Children] All of the young people were out at the time of the visit. The home had been opened up for a short time to work with a small number of young people and would be closing shortly.
 - Wallbrook. [Adults] No concerns raised by Members. Members spoke to a number of residents who were very happy with the home and stated they found the staff to be very pleasant. Members commented that the staff group appear to be doing a great job. Overall premises were in need of a little decoration.

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 specifically enable members to effectively 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.

16. Recommendation

It is recommended that:-

- 1] That Members consider and comment on the information contained in this report and attachments.
- 2] That Members make further nominations from Committee for participation in the rota for the year 2008-2009.

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List of Background Papers

- Appendix 1. A list of residential and day care establishments for adults and children across the Borough.
- Appendix 2 The Protocol for Members Visits.
- Appendix 3 Details of the visits carried out by Members of North Dudley Area Committee