

**AGENDA ITEM NO 15**

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH**

**Stourbridge Area Committee 18 June 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 Stourbridge 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 seven individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2006 and April 2007. All visits were carried out.
  - A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
  - Members spoke to a number of service users at Brett Young who all stated their satisfaction and were genuinely happy. The opportunities for service users to continue with Art and IT courses needs continued support (the Centre won a life-long award in 2006 for its work with Art). All issues raised in last year's report had been addressed. Some maintenance required on windows and paving slabs and an area of carpet. The Assistant Director thanked the Members for their positive report which indicates that the manager and staff team continue to provide well for the service users. Work identified on the

premises has been included on the Property database which is used to inform the Capital Bid programme for 2007/8.

- Children were at school at the time of the Member visit to 14 St James's Road. Members observed that the staff appeared to be friendly, happy and motivated and looking to options to enhance the experience of the children concerned. Newly refurbished building and staff are pleased with the result. Assistant Director thanked Members for their positive report.
- There were no service users present at the Family Assessment Centre when Members visited. They observed good staff morale, a pleasing living environment, well decorated and maintained. There is a lack of space and working area for staff and sharing kitchen with residents not good. Some maintenance work required on upstairs windows. Assistant Director thanked Members for their report and noted the comments to improve facilities at the Centre. The Service Manager is recommending increasing the capacity at the Centre to accommodate another family. This should address the improvement concerns highlighted by Members.

### **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'.

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

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

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

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