

North Dudley Area Committee 28 June 2006

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 2005/06

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 2005/06.
2. To inform Committee about actions taken in response to Member visits and their comments.
3. To identify issues arising from the rota visits and seek Members' views.

Background

4. 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 is attached as Appendix 1.
5. 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
6. The visits also assist Members in fulfilling their role as Corporate Parents of Looked After Children.
7. All Members participating in the rota of visits must have received training in the role and satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau clearance.

8. Training to assist the process for 2006/07 will be provided to Members. The training will provide a 'refresher event' for Members who have received training before; it will also be designed to assist Members who have not had the opportunity of attending training previously. The date for the training is to be confirmed.
9. The rota process and the delivery of training is managed within the Policy & Performance 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 and will be incorporated into the Protocol determining the responsibilities of Members and officers. The Protocol is attached as appendix 2.
10. Staff of the Policy & Performance 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 children's 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.
11. 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
12. Staff of the Policy & Performance Unit pass information following Members comments to the Quality & Complaints Manager and the Property & Steering Capital Group, as appropriate.
13. Members Feedback: Members have commented on two main points:
 - **Timescale for visits:-** Members visits to establishments have for a number of years taken place between October and March. Some Members have asked if the visits could begin earlier than this due to the level of commitments for Members throughout the year. The earliest month that the visits could begin would appear to be August; this is due to the need to await Member nominations from all five area committees and also the need to provide a training opportunity for Members. We have requested a training date for July 06, however a date is yet to be confirmed. Every attempt will be made to provide Members with all relevant paperwork and assistance to enable visits to begin as soon as possible this year.

- **CRB Checks.** The Protocol requires that Members must be CRB checked in order to carry out a rota visit to a Social Care establishment. Every effort was made to ensure that all nominated Members were given the opportunity to carry out a visit, however, this year some Members were unable to carry out a visit due to CRB checks not being carried out or concluded in time for inclusion on the rota of visits. Members who are nominated to carry out visits for 2006/07 are courteously asked to ensure that they are CRB checked or to seek clearance at the earliest opportunity.

Finance

14. There are no immediate financial implications from this report. The programme of Member Visits can continue to be provided from within existing resource allocation.
15. 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

16. 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

17. The visits to establishments are intended to assist officers in ensuring that services are delivered in a fair and service user focused manner.

Recommendation

18. That Members consider and comment on the information contained in this report and attachments.

19. That Members make further nominations from Committee for participation in the rota for the year 2006-2007.



Linda Sanders
Director of Adult, Community & Housing Services



John Freeman
Director of Children's Services

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

Telephone 01384 814723
e-mail Stephen.Rice@dudley.gov.uk