

Central Dudley Area Committee 10 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 11 individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2007 and April 2008. Out of the eleven visits 6 took place, however, two visits could not be carried out due to one closure, Arcal Lodge, and one temporary closure for redecoration, Bridge House. A planned Members visit to one establishment could not take place due to unavoidable circumstances of ill health.
 - A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
 - Roseville House Day Centre:- Highly positive report with Members commenting that the overall impression of this establishment and its staff was exemplary. No concerns at all raised with members by service users and Members felt staff should be commended for their attitude and dedication
 - Maitland Road:- Members provided very positive comments about quality of care provided and interaction between staff and young people. Members commented on some damage done to parts of the home and have been responded to with confirmation that repair and any damages will be put right at the earliest opportunity.
 - Members raised an issue regarding the increased numbers of users at Amblecote Day Centre. The Assistant Director responded to the issues raised – including that of refurbishment of toilets and explained the reasons why Amblecote is currently a very busy centre.

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.

 Linda Sanders.

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 initial 'J'.

John Freeman
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