
Brierley Hill Area Committee 30th June 2011

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 2010/11

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 2010/11 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 2011/12.

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 2011/12 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 Brierley Hill 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

There were four individual establishments for nominated Members to visit between September 2010 and April 2011. Two out of the four visits took place; the remaining visits could not be completed within the timescales due to the unexpected unavailability of members. Consideration is being given to ways of assisting Members to complete visits when difficulties arise.

- A consistent message from all visits carried out was that of a positive relationship between service users and staff and a welcoming environment.
- In the first of two visits to Parkes Street Members commented that the young people were happy and settled. Members commented positively on the activities arranged for the young people.
Members commented that there were some items in need of repair/attention. Members also queried the lack of a log book for them to sign in respect of having examined the fire safety records
The Assistant Director thanked Members for their visit and positive report. Members were advised that damaged items of furniture had been replaced. Members we advised that a log book was now in use.
- In the second visit Members commented positively on the standard of care provided to the young people.
Members took the opportunity of speaking with two young people who were present, both of whom presented as confident and settled.
Members commented positively about administrative practices within the home, but raised some concerns about the home's fabric and low staff numbers.
The Assistant Director thanked members for their visit and positive comments. Members were advised on repairs that had been completed following the visit.
The Assistant Director assured Members about the appropriate level of staffing for the home.

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 Members participation in the rota for the year 2011-2012.



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