

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN**

**ROTA VISITING BY ELECTED MEMBERS**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information to the Committee on rota visiting to the council's children's social care establishments.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the rota programme includes visits to council and independent adult social care establishments and a separate report was taken to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

**2. CONNECTION TO THE CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITY**

- 2.1 This report links to the following improvement priorities in the 2013-17 Corporate Plan:
  - Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
  - Working with children and families to tackle problems early

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 It is important that Members contribute to the safeguarding of our vulnerable adults, children and young people and help to ensure that the quality of care provided is appropriate. It is essential that opportunities are presented for Members to meet with adults and children and young people who receive services from us to listen to their views.
- 3.2 Members will be aware that there is a programme of rota visits to the children's and adults' social care establishments. Members undertake visits in pairs and written reports are submitted by them for noting or action. Where Members have identified that an action is required, they will receive a formal response to their report. All comments received from Members are reported into the respective services.
- 3.3 The comprehensive guidance has been further developed through previous discussion with Members and provided to all Members involved in the programme of visits. Training sessions were arranged including some 1:1 sessions to ensure that any new Members were updated on the process. Also, to assist members

with the process, an email is sent to them on the first day of every month to remind them of the visits that are due that month.

- 3.4 Previous reports to the Corporate Parenting committee and Overview and Scrutiny committees noted that the importance of Member visits could not be over-emphasised as they provided a point of contact for service users that was over and above that of the staff. It is recognised that it gives service users an opportunity of expressing their feelings to persons outside the establishments.
- 3.5 This report will provide information on the 2013/14 rota programme and the latest situation in 2014/15.

#### **4. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 4.1 The 2013/14 rota commenced in May 2013 and, because of the success of the pilot of visits to independent sector homes for adults during 2012/13, the programme was expanded to include 13 independent sector homes. This figure equates to about 50% of the total number in the county borough.
- 4.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a schedule of visits carried out to the children's establishments between May 2013 and March 2014 together with a summary of the comments made. It is not possible to include every comment and the summary gives the main points relating to the welfare of the children and young people.
- 4.3 Out of a possible 33 visits to children's services, 14 visits were carried out during the year. This equates to about 42% of the visits that were due.
- 4.4 In May 2014, the Council received the annual Internal Audit Assurance Report in relation to the review work that Internal Audit carry out on inspection activity undertaken by others within and outside of the authority. In general the report was positive, however, the report noted that only a small number of Member rota visits are being carried out and highlighted this as an area for improvement.
- 4.5 The current rota visiting programme commenced in April 2014. 11 teams of Members have signed up to participate and the programme this year.

#### **5. EFFECT UPON POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE RULES**

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

#### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There is no negative impact relating to equality characteristics arising from this report.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no financial implications.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the information provided in this report.

**Deborah McMillan**  
**Corporate Director, Children**  
**August 2014**

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**Background Documents**      None.

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Children's Social Care services**

**ROTA VISITING  
PREMISES VISITED – May 2013 – March 2014**

	May 2013	June 2013	July 2013	Aug 2013	Sept 2013	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2104	Mar 2014
Bakers Way Respite House: 2a Bakers Way, Bryncethin, Bridgend, CF32 9RJ		X	X			X	X				X
Newbridge House Transition Unit: Merthyr Mawr Road, Bridgend, CF31 3NY	X		X					X			X
Sunnybank Complex Needs Unit: 31 Pant Morfa, Porthcawl, CF36 5EN	X				X			X	X		X
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>

Establishment	Comments
Bakers Way Respite House: Bryncethin, Bridgend,	<p>We visited the home, and spoke to service users and staff. They had a good selection of activities for users, when we were there.</p> <p>Impressed with the beautiful hanging baskets and tranquil setting. The children were in school when we visited but it was evident from the photographs that they engage in various networks to promote life skills and leisure activities.</p> <p>We were told about the services provided which appear to be adequately funded.</p> <p>Very impressed with the happy atmosphere and the obvious rapport between staff and children. This is obviously a much needed facility that serves the needs of both parents and children very well.</p> <p>The cost of transporting the children to and from school during their respite is deducted from the Bakers Way budget despite the fact</p>

	<p>parents have free provision. We feel this is having a negative impact on the unit and taking away much needed resource. The onus should be on the education budget.</p> <p>Staffing levels accommodate the individual's needs.</p> <p>We were informed there is a lack of parking when meetings take place, i.e. four parking spaces when seven/eight are needed. We would like to request this be looked into as that street can become very congested during the day.</p> <p>A pleasant atmosphere and all areas spotlessly clean. Bedrooms well-equipped and decorated. Staff consider they have good relations with both parents and children, with a key worker allocated to each child. The home ensures that compatible children are accommodated together. The rooms have locks but we were assured they were never used.</p> <p>There is a well-equipped sensory room which is popular, as is the soft play area and outdoors play area.</p> <p>Only two downstairs bedrooms and no lift so this limits the no. with physical disability.</p> <p>The minibus can only accommodate one wheelchair user which is a problem.</p> <p>Spoke to service users and staff. Good selection of activities.</p>
<p>Newbridge House Transition Unit: Bridgend,</p>	<p>Given a very warm welcome and guided tour. There is access to communal kitchen/lounge and TV, computers and job seeking, male and female bathrooms and toilets. Viewed one of the private rooms but not the flat as it was occupied. Zero tolerance attitude to violent behaviour.</p> <p>Warm and cheerful atmosphere. We introduced ourselves to the staff and spoke to two of the four clients currently in residence. Both said they were happy and enjoying their stay, adhering to the rules and learning how to be independent, cooking for themselves and travelling to Cardiff for example, which raised their aspirations for the future.</p> <p>As usual, Newbridge House was immaculate and we believe the staff are doing a very good job to help youngsters 'on their way'.</p> <p>It was encouraging to note that the unit was operating to near capacity and that admissions were all planned rather than emergency.</p> <p>Evidence of a planned approach to developing the wellbeing of young people clearly emerged from our conversations with two teenage residents who were being encouraged to take the step towards vocational training and independent living and felt happy, secure and optimistic for the future.</p>

<p>Sunnybank Complex Needs Unit: Porthcawl,</p>	<p>We received a detailed explanation of the home's policy and how it's run. Highly impressed with the facilities/ décor. Met two of the three currently resident who appeared relaxed and enjoying their environment. The guest bedroom, lounge, bath and shower rooms and dining room are all newly refurbished and immaculate. The unit made us proud to be Bridgend councillors.</p> <p>A warm and friendly welcome on arrival. The facility looked as a family home should, tastefully decorated, in immaculate condition, well maintained by the staff. Provision for high standard home schooling.</p> <p>We were quickly impressed with the very happy environment and were greeted warmly by staff and children alike. The children were confident, relaxed and at ease with the staff and with us.</p> <p>Very impressive facilities – bathroom, kitchen, living room and classroom all recently refurbished. The unit is clean and well-resourced and the staff, who have consistently developed their skills and knowledge while in post, clearly work hard.</p> <p>This is an excellent facility for young people in BCBC and our visit proved to be an uplifting and very reassuring experience.</p> <p>We looked around and spoke to one of the residents whose room we then visited. Residents are encouraged and supported to be independent, helping with food, cleaning their rooms, loading the dishwasher and doing their own washing with supervision if necessary. Residents and staff socialise at mealtimes.</p> <p>The unit prepares residents for independent living and encourages co-operative living, with staff able to enforce appropriate boundaries.</p> <p>The premises were extremely clean and tidy with a homely feel and well-equipped bedrooms and communal rooms. There is internet access with library protocols and the service runs a vehicle.</p>
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