

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
22 NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

VISITS BY MEMBERS

1. COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH RUTHERFORD - LATIMER
EDUCATION CENTRE (PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT)

- 1.1 I saw George Crosbie (Head of Pupil Support Service) whom I have known and worked with for several years in my capacity as Chairman of the Discipline Panel at Holland Park School. I spent a considerable amount of time with the Headmaster who was immensely helpful in describing the needs and aspirations of some of the young people in his care. My only criticism is that the PRU seems extremely under-populated. There seem to be many more teachers than pupils. Perhaps that could be looked at with a view, possibly, to "sharing" with other boroughs.
- 1.2 The Director for Schools, Quality and Standards comments that the pupil population of the PRU consists of young people permanently excluded from schools or on managed moves to prevent such exclusions. As a result, the pupil population is significantly lower early in the school year. Seventeen pupils were on roll at the time of the visit; that number has now risen to 30. It is expected that the PRU will be at its capacity, 40, by early in the spring term.
- 1.3 It is the case that the PRU is relatively well staffed, reflecting the strategy agreed with the Cabinet Member for Family and Children's Services to maintain its capability at a time when an increase in exclusions is expected. It should be noted that the pupils attending are the most vulnerable and often challenging young people of school age in the borough. Their needs are complex and require high staff-pupil ratios, (as is the case in PRUs nationally), and extensive partnership work with the police, YOT, Connexions, Kensington College and Family Services. There are currently eight full time equivalent teachers, enabling the PRU to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is also a social worker, a non-teaching pastoral support leader and three classroom assistants. Officers are in discussion with other boroughs to consider the possible benefits of greater collaboration in this area of the Council's work.

2. COUNCILLOR ELIZABETH RUTHERFORD - YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

- 2.1 I was given a warm welcome. We discussed young offenders and the measures put in place in trying to help and support them - with varying success I have to say. I also attended morning conference when several cases were discussed at length: court appearances, doctor's appointments, housing needs, etc. I can say that much of the material was very familiar to me following on as it does from my work on the Bench, as a Case Worker at the Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court and as a School Governor. To sum up, I enjoyed the visit, the case workers were more than helpful and I feel that I could easily approach them should the need arise.
- 2.2 The Interim Director for Family Services comments that the team welcomed Councillor Rutherford's visit and the interest she showed in the work they are doing. They hope they were able to demonstrate the holistic approach they take in their work with young offenders and both the challenges and successes involved. They would be happy to answer any further questions which may arise following the visit.

FOR INFORMATION

A J Redpath

Director of Strategy and Service Improvement

Public background papers used in preparation of this report:

None.

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