

COMMUNITY AND ELECTED MEMBER CONCERNS

REGARDING PRIVATE CHILDREN'S HOMES

INTRODUCTION

Within Knowsley there are a small number of local authority children's homes. These children's homes are subject to rigorous inspection both externally and internally.

There are also a number of private children's homes, owned by independent companies who are inspected externally by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Given the growth in the number of these homes and the questions beginning to emerge from local residents in the Borough it seemed appropriate to clarify the Local Authority's position in relation to this private sector service.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I have been informed that within my local area a private children's home is due to open. A number of residents are very concerned about this and I am wanting to seek clarification that this is the case and to raise a petition opposing the opening of the home as this is an area populated with older people.

RESPONSE

The Commission for Social Care Inspection are responsible for authorising and regulating private children's homes. Any application to open a private children's home must be shared with the Commission for Social Care Inspection. If you have any concerns or seek clarity as to whether a home is opening please contact the Duty Inspector at the Commission for Social Care Inspection on 0151 949 9540. If the home is open and you have issues to raise regarding any thing in relation to the home then once again the appropriate course of action would be to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection in the first instance.

QUESTION

A home is opened in my area and there are a number of young people who are hanging around and perhaps not behaving in an appropriate manner. What do I do?

RESPONSE

If the behaviour is felt to be minor, eg hanging around street corners, ie loud music etc, in the first instance you may want to talk with the staff in the home or contact Citizenship and Social Inclusion within Knowsley MBC on 0151 443 3930.

A member of staff from Citizenship and Social Inclusion will then visit the local residents/complainants and discuss what the issues are and act as an intermediary between the complainant and the home and the young person or persons involved and to consider other activities that might address the issue.

Alternatively, if you feel that the behaviour of the young people is of an extreme anti-social nature then you should contact your local police service and follow the routine procedures.

QUESTION

How does the Council ensure that it is performing its duty of care to the residents of Knowsley and ensuring appropriate care is provided to young people within the homes.

RESPONSE

The Commission for Social Care Inspection has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that standards are met in relation to the care of young people in the home, but the Council does have a duty to provide education for these young people and additionally the local National Health Service, Knowsley Primary Care Trust has responsibility to ensure the young people are registered with a doctor and have access to health care as required.

In an attempt to positively develop a relationship with the private home owners, Knowsley has developed what is known as a visiting scheme to private providers. This scheme involves a number of locally elected members on a rotational basis, visiting the private children's homes and discussing with the home owners and the staff any issues which can positively develop the relationship with the home and its local community.

If you want to know who is the local elected member visiting a private children's home in your area then you should make contact with your Ward Member who will take forward your issues on your behalf or identify for you the appropriate process. If you would like to know who your Ward Member is please contact Knowsley's Democratic Services on 0151 443 3530.