

EXECUTIVE – NOVEMBER 24 2009

ITEM 6 - DEPUTATION REQUEST – ASTBURY ROAD AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Comments of the strategic director of children's services

1. Own Life Ltd is a private provider of semi-independent housing and support for looked after children and young people. Southwark Council has purchased places in the borough from Own Life since 2004, but none of these placements have been at the Astbury Road premises.
2. There are currently five looked after young people placed with Own Life Ltd by Southwark Children's Services, living at five different properties across the borough.
3. All semi-independent placements are procured as spot contracts on behalf of the Adolescent and Aftercare Service. Before purchasing these placements Children's Services require private providers to submit the following information: audited financial accounts, staff qualifications, CRB checks on staff, references, health and safety information / certification (gas, electricity etc), the organisation's statement of purpose and all policies and procedures.
4. There are no formal regulatory procedures for semi-independent placements, as a consequence any placements made by Southwark Children's Services are subject to close monitoring in line with the spot contract agreement with each provider.
5. In light of the deputation we will be reviewing our monitoring arrangements to ensure that Southwark Council takes immediate action if concerns are raised by residents living near properties where Southwark young people are placed to ensure the provider acts promptly to resolve.
6. If nuisance issues arise caused by young people placed by neighbouring local authorities, they will need to be responded to by reporting them to the Police or Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Team. The Police, Southwark Anti Social Behaviour Team and Southwark Children's Services are already working closely together to address the issues and with a view to drawing up guidelines for the Own Life concerning the behaviour of some of the young people placed in their property.