

MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION

Chief Executive's Department



Name of Member submitting the question:	Councillor Mrs Terri Beer
Date received by Democratic Support Team:	22 January 2019
To the Cabinet Member for:	Councillor Mark Lowry

Question: Please can the Cabinet Member tell me why there was difficulty in residents getting through to the out of hours number at Harewood House when 120 people were outside expecting to see a performance that they had paid for and no one turned up to open the building. On not being able to get in, the organisers rang the out of hour's numbers and not one phone was answered.

Can you also confirm the caretaker arrangements at Harewood House and the use of agency staff who have little knowledge of the building or even their duties?

Answer

An event was booked by Sandy's Songbirds for 1st December 2018 for 7.30pm at Harewood House. Facilities Management had made arrangements for the site to be open and ready for the event organiser; this was being covered by agency staff. The member of staff did not attend. The organisers on site contacted PCC by using the contact numbers supplied on the door and spoke to the out of hour's service. This officer was not able to make contact with a key holder and therefore the organiser cancelled the event

As soon as this was brought to our attention the organiser was contacted, both to apologise and to offer some solutions to reschedule if Sandy's Songbirds wanted too. Alternative dates were offered and the rescheduled event went ahead.

This matter was investigated and it was clarified that the temporary member of staff allocated the work did not attend. The Agency have confirmed that this was a misunderstanding during the work allocation process and could not have been pre-empted. All staff including agency staff attending sites will be made aware of the specific duties required and relevant information about the location they are working. It is usual

Signed

Date 23/0/2019

Note

- Written questions must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer via the Democratic Support Team.
- Written questions will be replied to within 10 working days.
- Written questions and answers will be published on the last Friday of each month.

that any agency staff will be allocated work for sites that they have previously worked to enable consistency of service delivery.

The customer did make contact with PCC's out of hour's service whose contact details were available on the door at Harewood House. This service tried to contact a PCC officer however they were attending an alternative event and were not aware of the call. Our key holders did have access to the site but without authorisation were not able to attend to open the site. For health and safety reasons without an appropriate member of staff on site for the duration of the event it would not have been able to be run.

All matters have been investigated and this situation has highlighted areas where improvements are needed. Management of the service are currently reviewing and implementing new procedures to ensure that this does not happen again and improvements are made.

The event was rebooked and held in January at no charge. An apology has been made and published on the BBC Devon website. In addition a £200 payment has been paid to the organisers to cover the fee and as a good will gesture for the disruption to their event.