

*Your Reference*

All Councillors

*Our Reference*  
EB

*Date*  
10 October 2011

*Contact*  
Ellen Bird

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Dear Members

## **Member Visits to Children's Homes**

At the last Children and Young People Commission meeting held on 13 September, Members agreed that our children's homes should continue to have regular Councillor visits.

This is not a legal requirement as all our homes are regularly inspected by officers and reported to OFSTED under regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. However, experience from member visits carried out over the past few years show that they can achieve very positive outcomes.

The visits not only give members an opportunity to assess and comment on the quality of provision being offered by the Council but more importantly, gave assurances to staff and to the children that Members are genuinely interested in their welfare and that they take their role as Corporate Parents seriously. Members who took part also said that they found the visits enjoyable.

You are therefore requested to once again look at your busy diaries and to complete the form at the end of this letter. Please return the form to Ellen Bird (Overview and scrutiny Co-ordinator) to let her know when you are available to visit children's home(s) within the next 6 months and where possible let her have your preferred name of the home you wish to attend. Ellen will then make all the necessary arrangements for the visit. The more members who sign up the fewer visits each one will be asked to do.

Ideally homes should be visited at least twice a year. The visits usually take place around tea time, between 4pm and 6pm as this is the time when most children are likely to be at home. The visits should ideally be carried out in pairs. However, if this was not possible than a member may carryout the visit on his/her own.

Members carrying out the visits will be provided with brief description of the home they are visiting including a map giving directions and a short statement highlighting

key points contained in the latest OFSTED inspection report. They will also be given a short form to record any issues which they come across up during the visit. This form should be completed before leaving the home and returned to Rod Jones in Children and Young People's Department who will consider the findings and take action where appropriate. A regular report of the visits will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission and the Corporate Parenting Board.

Please return the slip below to Ellen Bird, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer.

Yours sincerely

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evonne Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Councillor Sara Bolton**  
Chair of the Children and  
Young People Overview and  
Scrutiny Commission

**Councillor Evonne Williams**  
Cabinet Member for Children and  
Young People

Please return this form as soon as possible to  
**Ellen Bird, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer,**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Saxon House**

Ellen will contact you again shortly to confirm times and dates of visits.

Schedule of visits to Children's Homes

<b>Month</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Dates available for the Visit (between 4pm- 6pm)</b>
October 2011	Coronation Avenue	Boulton	
October 2011	The Lighthouse St Marks Road	Derwent	
November 2011	Queensferry Gardens	Chellaston	
November 2011	Cricklewood	Mackworth	
December 2011	Moorfield	Sinfin	
December 2011	Bute Walk	Derwent	
January 2012	Moorfield	Sinfin	
January 2012	Bute Walk	Derwent	
February 2012	Cricklewood	Mackworth	
February 2012	Queensferry Gardens	Chellaston	
March 2012	The Lighthouse, St Marks Road	Derwent	
March 2012	Coronation Avenue	Boulton	