

Protocol for Visits to Children's Homes

Arranging the visits

- A programme of visits will be agreed by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission at the start of each municipal year for the year ahead
- Each home will be visited no more than twice in the municipal year.
- All Councillors will be informed of the programme of visits and will be asked to contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer if there is a particular visit that they wish to attend.
- Councillors **Must** formally arrange the visit and may not turn up unannounced at a home
- An Officer will contact the homes and agree suitable dates and times for the visits.
- An Officer will initially contact members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission, Ward Councillors and any Councillors who expressed an interest in attending the home to check their availability.
- No more than three Councillors will attend a visit
- If more than three Councillors express a wish to attend, they will be offered on a first come first serve basis.
- If less than three Members from the initial contact can attend an officer will email all Members and invite interest.
- Visits may go ahead with less than 3 Councillors present
- If a Member has concerns about a home or wishes to make a visit outside of the agreed programme they should contact the Scrutiny Officer who will formally arrange this.

Confirmation of visits and information the Councillors will receive

When a date has been confirmed with Councillors and the home the Overview and Scrutiny Officer will

- email the Members attending to confirm arrangements
- provide details of the manager's name and contact details
- Provide a map/ directions to the home
- Provide any information about the home that is relevant e.g. recent Ofsted reports or the home's Statement of Purpose.
- Provide the feedback form from the most recent visit by Councillors
- Provide the manager of the home with details of which Councillors are attending.

The Visit

- The visits will be normally take place at 4pm as this gives Councillors the greatest opportunity to speak with the Children

- Councillors will take photographic identification with them
- All Councillors attending visits will need to have completed a full CRB check prior to the visit
- Councillors are reminded that they are in a child's home.
- Although the purpose of the visit is to critically assess the home it is important to remember that discretion is required as a child may be very proud or defensive of their environment and perhaps unaware of the need for improvement

Councillors Report on their Visit

- Councillors are asked to complete the feedback form from the visit within 10 working days
- The feedback forms can be a group or individual response
- Councillors should return the feedback forms to Ellen Bird Overview and Scrutiny officer
- It should be clear on the form whether it was a group or individual response
- The forms will then be scanned and emailed to the Director of Specialist Services
- The Director of Specialist Services will prepare a formal response to member visit in consultation with the Home Manager and relevant officers.

Feedback from Officers

- The Director for Specialist Services will provide written feedback to the Members who attended the visit and Ellen Bird within 10 working days
- The feedback will address all the issues raised by Members
- If Members are not satisfied with the response they can request that it is included on the next Corporate Parenting Sub-Commission Agenda

Reports to the Commission.

- The Commission will consider all feedback quarterly.