

Guidance for Elected Members undertaking visits to care homes

1. If Members would like to discuss which care homes to visit then please contact one of the Market Management Officers (list to be supplied).
2. Things to consider when undertaking unannounced visits:
 - There may be activities/outings taking place or other professionals may have a planned visit, i.e. staff from the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Care Quality Commission, the Fire Service, and Nottinghamshire County Council etc. There may also be occasions when a care home is closed because of an 'outbreak' such as scabies, flu or norovirus.
 - In the smaller care homes for younger adults some, or all, of the residents may be out attending day-activities.
 - Members should also be aware that some residents, in certain care homes for Younger Adults, may become distressed if people they don't know visit or ask them questions. It is particularly recommended that contact is made with these care homes prior to visiting.
 - If Members would like general guidance on whether to undertake an announced/unannounced visit to any particular care home then please contact the relevant Quality Monitoring Officer for advice.
3. Think about the timing of a visit – just after breakfast can be very busy, medication rounds can be taking place. Visits around lunch time/tea time can be useful to observe the mealtime experience but some residents can be distracted by visitors.
4. When visiting a care home take the opportunity, if you can, to just sit and observe quietly for 10 minutes – it can be surprising how quickly people start to ignore you. Note the interactions between residents (and any visitors) and staff – including their body language. On the surface some homes can seem noisy and chaotic but then you hear the laughter!