

Purpose of the Visit

Elected Members are all Corporate Parents to children in the care of the Local Authority and as such showing an interest in the wellbeing and progress of these children and young people is encouraged, including visits to residential settings. These visits allow Elected Members to understand more about the experiences of children in care, to hear directly from them and to hear about any concerns or examples of good practice from staff as well as the children themselves.

Elected Members are not expected to "inspect" or form judgements on the performance or safe operation of the homes. The Children's Home Governance Board is responsible for oversight of performance based on regulation 44/45 reports, Ofsted reports, management reports and subsequent action plans.

Planning and Undertaking Visits

Visits should be formed of a mixture of pre-announced and unannounced visits.

Visits to homes should where possible be organised outside of school hours.

For pre-announced visits Elected Members should be accompanied on their visit by the Home Manager or their nominee. For unannounced visits Elected Members should be accompanied by a Manager or senior practitioner from outside of the home.

Direct Contact with Children and Young People

Elected Members are encouraged to visit at times when young people are more likely to be present in the home and to engage with them. If a young person requests to speak to an Elected Member alone then this is permissible but should always be conducted in a situation which is observable by residential staff.

Suggested Questions for Elected Members to consider

- Whether the children/young people in the setting are happy, and if not why and what is being done about it
- Where young people say is the place that they can get help and support
- Whether the children in the setting are engaging with and making progress in education or training
- Whether there have been any issues in the health needs of the children being met and, if so, what action is being taken
- Whether there are any issues with children's behaviour and that the staff team feel confident in addressing these
- What leisure activities the children are involved in.

Members may also be interested in the home environment and making sure that it is appropriate and that any routine cleaning and maintenance tasks are being undertaken.

Escalation of Concerns

Any immediate concerns should be addressed to the Home Manager escorting the visit.

Elected Members should also feel free to raise these concerns with the Responsible Individual overseeing the Children's Homes (currently Devon Allen) or any of the Directors in the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team.

Reporting any Routine Findings from Visits

Following the visit members are asked to send an email outlining their observations to Philippa.Milbourne@nottscc.gov.uk along with any recommendations. This will then be placed on the agenda for the Children's Homes Governance Board. Feedback on any subsequent action will be relayed to the relevant Elected Member by the Chair of that Board.