

## **WOMEN & CHILDREN'S DIRECTORATE**

### **Family & Child Care**

# **Guidance for Trust Board Members Visiting Children's Homes**

**January 2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This guidance has been developed to assist Non-Executive Directors in their role as visitor to Residential Children's Units. The guidance details the role and responsibilities placed on Non-Executive Directors and staff within the Children's Directorate.

## **PRINCIPLES**

The basic principle of the Children Order is that the welfare of children is the paramount consideration. Therefore the primary concern guiding Trust Board members visiting Children's Homes must be to promote the welfare of the children living there. While the Trust Monitoring Officer has specific duties to report monthly on the operational management of the home in line with regulatory requirements, the focus for Trust Board members should be quality of life, safety and well-being of the children.

## **ROLE OF THE TRUST BOARD VISITOR**

Promote the best interests of the children living in the Trust's children's home by:-

- Providing an independent view of the quality of care and the physical environment in Children's Homes.
- Providing a direct contact between Looked After Children and members of the Trust Board.
- Supporting staff to care for children by providing them with direct access to members of Trust Board.
- Assisting the Trust Board to discharge its Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

## **PROCESS**

This process is aimed at ensuring that information is shared appropriately and that efficient and effective action is taken to address matters arising.

- It is recommended that a Trust Board Member should visit each of the Trust's Children's Homes every six months.
- In general residential staff should be given prior notice of a visit, however the Trust Board Visitor may call unannounced if they deem it appropriate.
- Staff should facilitate contact between the Visitor and children. This may involve introducing the Trust Board Visitor and helping them explain their role to the children. They may also have to assist if a child has any communication difficulties. The Service Manager for the Home will support the visit.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Trust Board Visitors should be mindful of the sensitive and personal nature of the information that children or staff share with them during the visit. They should observe Trust policy on confidentiality within the constraints of their duties as a representative of the Trust Board in its Corporate Parent role.

## **REPORTING PROCESS – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The Trust Board Visitor should send a short summary of their visit highlighting any issues they would like to raise to the Assistant Director Corporate Parenting within 15 working days of the visit.
- If the Trust Board Visitor feels that there are serious issues of concern, or that matters they have raised are not being appropriately addressed, they may raise these directly with the Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting.

## **REVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

- A review of key issues may be referenced in the six monthly Director's Corporate Parenting Report to Trust Board and the Trust's reports to Regional Health and Social Care Board on the Discharge of its Statutory Function.

## **RQIA UNANNOUNCED AND ANNOUNCED INSPECTION REPORTS**

Inspection reports received from RQIA and improvement plans will be forwarded to Trust Board members by Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting.

It is anticipated that the Trust Board will allocate a non-executive Director to each Home, who will do a joint visit to the Homes with the Service Manager.

The Trust Homes are:

- Scroggy Road, Limavady                      Service Manager Katie Lavery
- Upper Galliagh Road, Derry                Service Manager Katie Lavery
- The Cottage, Derry\*                          Service Manager Katie Lavery
- 84 Chapel Road, Derry\*                      Service Manager John Gillespie
- Woodlands, Omagh                            Service Manager John Gillespie
- Beechlea, Enniskillen                        Service Manager John Gillespie

\*These Childrens homes are currently being redesigned in line with the Residential review paper.