

Guide to organising an MP or Councillor visit to your housing association

NHF guide for housing associations

Summary

As part of Starts at Home Day on 2 September 2022, we're asking members to arrange visits and meetings with their local MPs and Councillors. This is an excellent way to showcase the vital role supported housing plays in helping people to live independently and with dignity.

Over the years, lots of housing associations have organised events with politicians for Starts at Home Day. If this is the first time you've tried it, this guide is for you.

Getting started

MPs' and Councillors' diaries fill up quickly, so it's a good idea to invite them to a visit as soon as possible. We've got a [template invitation](#) you can use, but please feel free to edit it or draft your own. MPs' email addresses can be found on their constituency websites and those for Councillors are available on your local authority website.

Try to be as specific as possible in your invitation, thinking about the location and timings for the event. Make it easy for the MP's office to get in touch with you and don't be afraid if necessary to telephone the constituency office to chase the invitation a couple of weeks after you've sent it.

Preparing for the visit

It would be good to provide the MP or Councillor with an agenda for the visit. They are likely to want to see inside a scheme, talk to staff and also to a resident. You will need to think in advance about who those people will be, so you can prepare them for the day.



At the time of writing, there are currently no coronavirus restrictions in place, but you might want to check with everyone taking part that they are comfortable with a face-to-face visit and consider which infection control measures might need to be in place. It would be a good idea to let the MP or Councillor know in advance if there will be any measures you'd like them and their team to adhere to.

On the day

When the day of the visit arrives you'll want to make sure you have a camera to hand to take plenty of photos and be prepared with any key messages you would like to get across to the MP or Councillor.

They are expecting you to show them around your scheme, but also to talk to them about local and national policy changes that will make it easier for you to deliver supported housing for the community. You will know what changes need to happen in your area.

Communicating about the visit

Don't forget to post photos of the visit on social media using the #StartsAtHome hashtag. You might also want to let the local newspaper know that the visit is happening to see if they would like to cover the story.

If you do secure a visit with your MP or Councillor, [please do let the NHF know](#). In particular, we can provide you with background information on your MP or answer any other questions you may have about organising a visit.