

LG Ombudsman rules against Leicester over routine visits.



Michael King, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, said:

“Parents have a right to know on what basis a council proposes to visit them when they are educating their children at home. It may be a routine visit or one prompted by information which has come to the council, but it is vital that this information is passed on, particularly where a parent may need to provide an explanation.

“For the council to have continued to pursue the mother after we had repeatedly told it there was no basis for its actions was particularly disappointing.

“I now call on Leicester City Council to review my report and accept its findings.”

Councils must be clear with parents of home-schooled children whether home visits are routine or triggered by specific concerns, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has said.

This comes following an investigation into a complaint about Leicester City Council, after attendance officers visited a family based on unsubstantiated claims a boy’s education was unsuitable.

The Ombudsman’s investigation found the council had no justification to visit the mother and son on the referral they received, and it should have checked the facts before visiting. The council also did not tell the mother the full grounds on which officers were making the visit or allow her the chance to dispute the incorrect information.

After the information was found to be wrong, attendance officers maintained their approach of demanding the mother enrol her son at a local school or face legal proceedings.

The investigation also found the council incorrectly sought to justify its actions based on an anticipated change in government guidance. And in any case the new guidance, which was issued nine months after the events, does not authorise any approach to parents based on incorrect information.

A copy of the full report is available at

www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/5645/REPORT%2018010117%20LEICESTER%20CITY.pdf