

Inspection of residential family centres

Consultation document

This is a consultation document on Ofsted's proposals for a revised framework for the inspection of residential family centres.

We are seeking the widest possible range of views from those who have an interest in, or expertise relating to, family assessment and support, so that the inspection framework takes proper account of the needs and circumstances of all interested parties. We particularly want to hear from people who have been directly involved with residential family centres: children, parents and those who commission services.

Above all, the framework must assure the quality of assessment, care, support and guidance for parents and their children who use residential family centres, and support the continuing improvement of the services provided.

The closing date for the consultation is 9 October 2012.

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Introduction

- 1. This consultation seeks your views on proposals for a revised framework for the inspection of residential family centres.
- 2. Ofsted inspects against the relevant regulations that residential family centres must comply with, taking into account the relevant national minimum standards (NMS).
- 3. We are developing the new framework to ensure that inspection supports improvement and focuses on what makes the greatest contribution to helping families. We will judge the extent to which assessments are robust, accurate and support sound decision making, and assess whether parents and children are protected by the quality of services provided.
- 4. We would like to hear from everyone involved with residential family centres, including children and parents, commissioners, court services, partner agencies, staff and managers. Your views will help to refine and develop the inspection framework.
- 5. The consultation runs from 17 July to 9 October 2012.

Background to the consultation

- 6. The Department for Education (DfE) are currently revising the national minimum standards (NMS) for residential family centres and the associated regulations. The consultation on their proposed changes closed on 13 July 2012¹ and we expect the revised NMS and regulations to come into force on 1 April 2013.
- 7. The introduction of amended regulations and new NMS requires a revision of the inspection framework so that it remains consistent with the regulatory and legislative requirements. This review will strengthen our inspections of residential family centres by focusing more on the quality of their assessments of parenting skills and capacity to change, and on the quality of care, support and guidance offered to parents and their children.
- 8. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Annual Report 2010/11 stated that the NMS for residential family centres were overdue for revision. We are pleased that this review is now underway and welcome the opportunity to revise the inspection framework. The aim of this review is to ensure that the inspection of residential family centres:

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¹ Review of regulations and national minimum standards for residential family centres, DfE, 2012; https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/departmentalinformation/consultations/a00211122/nms-residential-family-centres.



- enables Ofsted to support improvement in the services we inspect and regulate
- meets the needs of children and parents who use the services
- promotes the effective use of resources.
- 9. The proposals set out in this consultation take account of the draft revised regulations and NMS issued for consultation by the DfE on 10 April 2012. If, following the DfE's consultation, the regulations and NMS change further before they are published, we may need to make further amendments to the proposed framework. Beyond this, the proposals are framed within the existing legislative and regulatory framework governing the role and responsibilities of Ofsted, the responsibilities laid upon providers, and the frequency of inspection.

Proposals for the inspection of residential family centres

Notice given before inspection

- 10. We propose that all residential family centre inspections continue to be unannounced, as they have been since Ofsted took on responsibility for them in 2007. We think that no-notice inspections are best, as they reduce concern before inspection, allow a clearer view of practice as it really is, and prevent time being taken away from parents and children in order to prepare for inspection.
- Q1. Do you agree or disagree that inspections of residential family centres should continue to be unannounced?

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

The frequency of inspection

- 11. Under current statutory requirements, every residential family centre must be inspected at least once in each three-year inspection cycle. However, Ofsted retains the right to bring an inspection forward in certain circumstances. We propose that in making such a decision, we should consider:
 - complaints and concerns received about the residential family centre
 - evidence that performance has deteriorated (such as information from the proposed online questionnaires about a deterioration in the quality of assessments)
 - changes to the ownership or management of the centre



- information contained in notifications and in reports produced in accordance with regulations 23 and 25 of The Residential Family Centres Regulations (2002).²
- Q2. Do you agree or disagree that the matters set out in paragraph 12 are the right ones for Ofsted to consider when deciding whether to bring an inspection forward?

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

12. Judgements will be made against the following scale:

Outstanding	a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Good	a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements
Adequate	a service that only meets minimum requirements
Inadequate	a service that does not meet minimum requirements

- 13. We propose that Ofsted should re-inspect residential family centres judged to be inadequate for Overall effectiveness within 12 months.
- Q3. Do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should re-inspect residential family centres judged to be inadequate for Overall effectiveness within 12 months?

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

The evaluation schedule and grading

- 14. We propose to make judgements on:
 - Overall effectiveness
 - Quality of assessment
 - Quality of care, support and guidance
 - Safeguarding children and parents
 - Leadership and management.
- 15. The experience for parents and their children must be central to the conduct and findings of inspection. The proposed framework seeks to ensure this.
- 16. The NMS are **minimum** standards; achieving them will not necessarily mean that a residential family centre is good or outstanding. The judgement grades are based on an evaluation schedule that sets out the characteristics of

² The Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002; http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/3213/contents/made.



inadequate, adequate, good and outstanding services. All evidence will be considered on a 'best fit' rather than a formulaic model.

Summary of the evaluation schedule

- 17. The proposed revised NMS focus on the quality and effectiveness of the service provided to parents and their children, with a particular focus on the assessment of parenting skills and their capacity to change. Our inspection framework must equally demonstrate such an emphasis.
- 18. The framework and the evaluation schedule will focus on the areas we have identified above. We welcome your views on whether we have identified the right areas, and whether there are other areas you think we should consider.

Q4. Do you agree or disagree that the following judgement areas are the right ones for Ofsted to inspect:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of assessment
- Quality of care, support and guidance
- Safeguarding children and parents
- Leadership and management?

Overall effectiveness

19. Inspectors will weigh the evidence and judgements from all areas considered during inspection before arriving at the Overall effectiveness judgement. This judgement summarises: the quality of assessments; the quality of care, guidance and support; safeguarding children and parents; and how leaders and managers work to improve the safety of parents' and their children's safety and well-being.

Quality of assessment

- 20. To make this judgement, inspectors will evaluate the quality of the assessments of parenting skills and capacity to change. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
 - assessments contribute to robust and effective decision making, and explicitly address the issues required by the court
 - the centre has a written plan outlining how they will assess parenting skills and capacity to change while promoting the welfare and safety of the child
 - the placement plan clearly explains what care, support and guidance will be given to help each parent to develop their parenting skills and safely care for their children



- parents and staff are clear about the distinction between assessment and any support, advice or guidance provided
- throughout the assessment, parents are enabled to contribute to and challenge the process, the emerging judgements and findings of the assessment
- the assessment clearly identifies risks to children and how these should be managed
- the child's safety, welfare and needs are the focus of the assessment and final report
- the final assessment report is evidence based, robust, clearly expressed, and written in non-stigmatising language.

Q5. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right issues for Ofsted to evaluate in making a judgement on Quality of assessment?

Are there any other issues you think we should include?

Quality of care, support and guidance

- 21. To make this judgement, inspectors will evaluate the quality of care, support and guidance provided by the residential family centre to all parents and children. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
 - parents and children enjoy sound relationships with staff, based on honesty and respect, that support them to develop skills to sustain constructive relationships
 - parents have individualised support that takes account of their: age; religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds; sexual orientation; gender identity; disability; or special needs
 - staff promote the development of a positive identity for parents and children
 - parents' and children's needs, views, wishes and feelings influence all aspects of their placement
 - parents are supported to meet the educational and health needs of their children
 - parents and children (subject to their age and understanding) have access to independent support and advice
 - parents and children have contact with their family members, including children's siblings, where this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare
 - any parenting support helps parents and children to make good attachments, and develop skills, emotional resilience and self-esteem that prepare them to care safely for their children and promote their welfare



- parents and children live in a well-designed, comfortable and well-equipped centre, with adequate space, in a suitable location where there is access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities
- children of all ages, including babies, have facilities and play materials that meet their needs
- practice is evidence based and all those delivering the service have knowledge and understanding of assessing, caring for, supporting and quiding parents and children
- managers and staff work in partnership with other agencies to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and parents
- parents and children are welcomed into, and leave, the centre in a planned and appropriate manner
- parents and children understand how to make a complaint.

Q6. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right issues for Ofsted to evaluate in making a judgement on Quality of care, support and guidance?

Are there any other issues you think we should include?

Safeguarding children and parents

- 22. This judgement focuses on the significance and priority that the staff at the residential family centre give to the safety and welfare of children and parents. In making this judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
 - children are safe and feel safe
 - the residential family centre prioritises the safety and welfare of children and adults and promotes their physical, mental and emotional health
 - the residential family centre operates clear safeguarding procedures that are up to date and consistent with the policies of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and statutory guidance
 - the placement plan identifies risks to children and sets out the actions staff should take if they are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child
 - effective risk assessment contributes to the safety, health and well-being of parents, children and staff
 - adults recognise when children are at risk and take immediate action to safeguard them
 - children feel protected and are protected from harm, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, accidents and bullying
 - parents are protected, as far as possible, from abuse, violence, accidents and self-harm
 - staff know what action to take if the whereabouts of parents or children is not known



- positive behaviour by children, young people and parents is promoted, restraint is only used in exceptional circumstances, if at all, and in strict accordance with the legislative framework, including accurate and clear recording of the restraint and the reasons for its use
- staff and volunteers working with families in the residential family centre are carefully selected and vetted, to help prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children or place them at risk
- investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently, and in a way that provides effective protection and support for the child, the person making the allegation, and the person who is the subject of the allegation
- the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the families using the centre
- parents and children, of an appropriate age, know what surveillance methods are used in the centre and how these relate to their assessment and support
- staff are suitably trained in the provision of care for children and in the use of different surveillance methods
- the use of surveillance does not intrude unnecessarily on the privacy of parents and children
- any discrimination or bullying is tackled robustly and action is taken to prevent further occurrences.

Q7. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right issues for Ofsted to evaluate in making a judgement on Safeguarding children and parents?

Are there any other issues you think we should include?

Leadership and management

- 23. The focus of this judgment is on the leadership and management of the service and the impact and difference that it makes to the experiences of children and their parents. In making their judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
 - the residential family centre is effectively and efficiently managed, including the permanent employment of a suitably qualified and experienced registered manager
 - the provider delivers the service in line with the aims and objectives in the statement of purpose
 - parents, children, staff and commissioners are clear about the aims and objectives of the residential family centre, the help that is available, the services and facilities it provides, and the arrangements for and purpose of supervision and assessment



- the registered person actively and regularly monitors and understands the impact of the quality of assessment and the importance of care, support and guidance
- leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the residential family centre and have improvement and development plans in place that are informed by feedback from children and parents
- the residential family centre demonstrates capacity for, and has evidence of, continuous improvement, based on the needs of the children and parents using the service, the quality of the assessments it undertakes, the care, guidance and support it provides, and its performance since its previous inspection
- requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed
- concerns or complaints have been well managed since the last inspection, and whether those complaints and concerns have been addressed and resolved
- leaders and managers learn from research-based practice, placement breakdowns, professional feedback, relationships with the courts and placing authorities, complaints and allegations, and they use this to develop effective, professional learning and development plans
- leaders and managers are committed to meeting the needs of all children and parents, including those relating to disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, language, religious belief and sexual orientation
- the residential family centre employs and retains appropriately skilled, qualified, vetted and experienced staff and promotes their professional development by providing training and supervision
- all significant events relating to the protection of children and parents accommodated at the residential family centre are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities, and appropriate action is taken following the incident
- records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and contribute to assessment reports
- there is evidence of the financial viability of the provider
- managers ensure that the physical environment at the residential family centre is maintained to a high standard.

Q8. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right issues for Ofsted to evaluate in making a judgement on Leadership and management?

Are there any other issues you think we should include?



Q9. Please include any comments on the detail of the evaluation schedule as set out in paragraphs 15–24 of this document. Are there any other areas you consider important?

The views of children, adults and professionals involved with residential family centres

24. We are keen to hear the views of anyone using or working with residential family centres. Therefore, we plan to distribute links to online questionnaires annually via email to each provider. We will ask them to forward these to all those who were involved with the centre over the previous 12 months. This would potentially include parents who are or have been resident at the centre, staff, commissioners, Cafcass, and other agencies that are significantly involved with the centre.

Q10. Do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should send online questionnaires annually to those involved with residential family centres to enable them to provide feedback?

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

The consultation process

- 25. We welcome your responses to this consultation questionnaire and your views on any aspect of the inspection of residential family centres. We will consider all responses carefully.
- 26. Please use the comments section to raise any additional points not covered by our questions.
- 27. During the consultation period we will also meet with representative groups from the residential family centres sector and, if possible, with children and parents who are or have lived in residential family centres, to hear their views in person.
- 28. The consultation remains open until 9 October 2012.

What happens next?

29. We will publish a report on the responses to this consultation in February 2013, when we will also publish the revised framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential family centres, taking full account of the responses to this consultation.



Sending back your questionnaire

30. There are three ways of completing and submitting the questionnaire or sending us your comments.

Online electronic questionnaire

31. Visit our website to complete and submit an electronic version of the questionnaire: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ofsted-rfc2012

Print and post

32. This document can be downloaded from www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120115, printed and completed by hand. When you have completed the questionnaire, please post it to:

Ofsted
Social Care team
Floor 7, Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE.

Download and email

33. This document can be downloaded from www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120115, completed on your computer and emailed to: socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk. Please put 'Residential family centres inspection consultation' in the subject line.



Questionnaire for the inspection of residential family centres consultation

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, influence policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confide	ence, if	you disclose it to us.						
Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?								
es please complete Section 1 and the following questions.								
No								
Section 1								
If you would like us to consider pub indicate this below.	lishing	the views of your organisation, please						
Organisation:								
Section 2								
Which of the below best describes y	ou? Pl	ease tick one option.						
I am:								
a parent who is or was resident in a residential family centre		an independent provider of a residential family centre						
a child who is or was resident in a residential family centre		a local authority provider of a residential family centre						
a relative of a parent or child who is or was resident in a residential family centre		an employee of a residential family centre						
a commissioner of services in residential family centres a social worker or manager working with parents and children who are undergoing assessment in a residential family centre								
a representative member of a national or regional residential family centres organisation		Prefer not to say						
Other (please tell us)								



Q1.	Do you	agree o	r disagree	that	inspections	of	residential	family	centres	should
con	tinue to	be unan	nounced?							

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			_		
Do you have a	ny comments	or suggestions	?		

Q2. Do you agree or disagree that the matters set out in paragraph 12 are the right ones for Ofsted to consider when deciding whether to bring an inspection forward?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Complaints and concerns received about the residential family centre						
Evidence that performance has deteriorated						
Changes to the ownership or management of the centre						
Information contained in notifications and in reports produced in accordance with regulations 23 and 25 of The Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002						



Do you have a	iny comments	or suggestions	?		
	ree or disagree nadequate for				amily centres
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Do you have a	ny comments	or suggestions	?		



Q4. Do you agree or disagree that the following judgement areas are the right ones for Ofsted to inspect?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
				disagree			
Overall effectiveness, including areas for development							
Quality of assessment							
Quality of care, guidance	support and						
Safeguarding ch parents	nildren and						
Leadership and	management						
Q5. Do you ag Ofsted to evalu	uate in making	a judgem	ent on (Quality of as	sessment?		
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Di	sagree	Strongly disagree	Don't kı	now
		disagree			a.ca.g. cc		
]
Are there any	other issues y	ou think w	e should	d include?			



Q6. Do	you agree c	r disagree	that these	are the	right iss	sues (se	e paragrap	h 22) for
Ofsted	to evaluate	in making	a judgemei	nt on Qu	ality of	care, su	ipport and	guidance?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
re there any	y other issues y	ou think we sh	ould include?		
Ofsted to eva	agree or disagre aluate in making Agree	Neither agree nor			
	aluate in making	g a judgement Neither	on Safeguard	Strongly	nd parents?



Q8. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right issues (see paragraph 24) for Ofsted to evaluate in making a judgement on Leadership and management?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Are there any	other issues yo	ou think we sho	ould include?		
O9 Please in	clude any comm	nents on the de	etail of the eva	luation schedu	le as set out
	s 15–24 of this of				
important?					
important?					
important?					



Q10. Do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should send online questionnaires annually to all those involved with residential family centres to enable them to provide feedback?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Do you have a	ny comments (or suggestions	?		
If you have an	y further comn	nents, please i	nclude them h	ere:	



What did you think of this consultation?

We are committed to monitoring whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part. Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

Agree Neither agree Disagree Don't

I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand. I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website. I had enough information about the consultation topic. I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation. How did you hear about this consultation? Ofsted website Ofsted News Ofsted conference Another organisation (please specify, if known) Other (please specify) Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.		Agree	nor disagree	Disagree	know
on the Ofsted website. I had enough information about the consultation topic. I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation. How did you hear about this consultation? Ofsted website Ofsted News Ofsted conference Another organisation (please specify, if known) Other (please specify) Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future					
consultation topic. I would take part in a future Ofsted					
How did you hear about this consultation? Ofsted website Ofsted News Ofsted conference Another organisation (please specify, if known) Other (please specify) Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future	<u> </u>				
 ■ ☐ Ofsted website ■ ☐ Ofsted News ■ ☐ Ofsted conference ■ ☐ Another organisation (please specify, if known) ■ ☐ Other (please specify) Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future 	•				
	 Ofsted website Ofsted News Ofsted conference Another organisation (Other (please specify) Is there anything you would like us	please sp s to impro		ently for fut	cure

Thank you for taking part in our consultation.



Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. Completing this section is optional, you do not have to answer all of the questions, and all responses are confidential.

Please tick the appropriate box.									
1. Gender									
Female									
2. Age									
Under 14	14–18	19–24	25–3	4	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	
3. Ethnic o		escribe you	r natio	onal g	roup?				
British or m	ixed Britis	h			English				
Irish				Northern Irish					
Scottish				Welsh					
Other (specify if you wish)									



b) How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian		Mixed ethnic origin			
Bangladeshi		Asian and White			
Indian		Black African and Whit	е		
Pakistani		Black Caribbean and W			
Any other Asian backgı	round	Any other mixed ethnic	c background		
(specify if you wish)		(specify if you wish)			
Black		White			
African		Any White background (specify if you wish)			
Caribbean		Any other ethnic background			
Any other Black backgr you wish)	round (specify if	Any other background wish)	(specify if you		
Chinese					
Any Chinese backgrour	nd				
(specify if you wish)					
4. Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual		
5. Religion/belief	<u> </u>				
Buddhist		Muslim			
Christian		Any other, please state:			
Hindu		None			
Jewish					
6. Disability					
Do you consider yourse disability?	elf to have a	Yes	No		