



Department
for Education

Regulating supported accommodation – tell us what you think

Government consultation

Launch date 5 December 2022

Respond by 16 January 2023

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What are we doing?

The Government is making important changes so that supported accommodation for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17 is high quality – this means it is safe and provides enough support for the young people living there.

This type of accommodation is meant to offer young people aged 16 and 17 somewhere to live that gives them the chance to develop their independence as they prepare for leaving care and starting adult life.

You might have heard supported accommodation called many different things, for example, semi-independent accommodation, supported living or 16+ accommodation. This accommodation is often called ‘unregulated’ because, unlike children’s homes, this accommodation is not inspected by Ofsted, the organisation that checks that places where children live are good enough.

The Government is concerned that supported accommodation is not always good enough and over the last two years we asked for views on how to improve on it.

After listening to young people’s views, the Government already:

- Banned the use of this type of accommodation for children under the age of 16. We think children under 16 should live in a children’s homes or foster care as they are too young to live somewhere that focuses on preparing young people for independence.
- Named this type of provision ‘supported accommodation for young people’.

Following this consultation, the Government will:

- Introduce ‘quality standards’ and rules for supported accommodation – these will make sure that all places where children and young people live are high quality, safe, and support them properly.
- Make sure that Ofsted check that supported accommodation is following the standards and rules. In order to check that supported accommodation is high quality, safe and supports young people properly, Ofsted will visit accommodations to inspect them and speak to young people about their experience living there.

What are we asking you to do?

The Government is asking children and young people with experience of care if the new standards cover the right things to make sure that young people are safe where they live and receive the right support.

Based on your experience of being in care and living in different types of accommodation, we also want to know how you think Ofsted should check that people who deliver supported accommodation (who are called providers) follow the standards to make sure that supported accommodation does everything we need it to for children and young people.

We would like to know your views on:

1. A set of principles which are statements that we want young people to be able to say when they are living in supported accommodation – do you think these statements describe what it should feel like to be supported while living in a high quality accommodation?
2. If you think the four quality standards and new rules include the right things to make sure that young people are safe where they live and are offered the right kind and level of support.
3. If you think how we are asking Ofsted to check if providers are following the standards will improve the quality of accommodation and support for young people living there.

We will use your views to help us:

- Put the quality standards and new rules into the law
- Decide how Ofsted will make sure providers of supported accommodation are following the law

We have also published a separate version of this consultation, which is aimed at local authorities, providers and anyone else who wishes to respond. The main consultation can be found at <https://consult.education.gov.uk/regulating-supported-accommodation-team/regulating-supported-accommodation-for-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-aged-16-&-17>

How will your involvement help us?

Thank you for taking the time to help us.

We know that some young people aged 16 and 17 want to live in a children's home or foster care and others want to live somewhere where they can have more independence.

The Government supports this choice. Your answers will help us make sure the rules will mean that young people who decide that living with more independence is right for them always have accommodation that is high quality and that they receive the support they need to prepare for adult life.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 5th December 2022.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

CSCUnregulated.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in early 2023.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#) to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

If you are not responding via the online survey, please can you ensure you provide:

- Your name
- Relevant contact details
- Whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation

- Whether you would like your responses to be kept confidential within your response.

By email

CSCUnregulated.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

By post

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Deadline

The consultation closes on 16 January 2023.

1. Principles for supported accommodation – do these statements describe what it should feel like to be properly supported while living in high quality accommodation?

We want to make sure that young people living in supported accommodation feel safe and good about where they live. We want the changes we are making to make sure young people feel supported, empowered and positive about what their life looks like and their future opportunities.

We want people providing supported accommodation to have these principles in mind when they are making sure they are providing high quality accommodation and the right support for young people so that the young people they help would be able to say these statements confidently.

We chose to write these principles as statements from the perspective of young people – we think it is important that the experience of young people is at the centre of the accommodation and support they are offered, and that young people should be considered at every step.

Principles for supported accommodation

1. I feel safe and secure where I live and in my wider environment
2. My voice is respected, heard and advocated for, so I can influence the support I receive
3. I have confidence that the adults who support me understand me, are skilled and work effectively together to best meet my needs
4. I have my own space that I feel proud of and live in a comfortable, well-maintained, and stable accommodation
5. I receive high quality, tailored support that sustains my health and wellbeing
6. I have strong, trusting, and meaningful relationships within my support system and can rely on the adults around me
7. I feel empowered to learn and apply skills for independent adult living
8. I feel positive about my future and opportunities as a result of the support I receive

Q1: Do you think these statements describe what it should feel like to be properly supported while living in high quality accommodation?

a) Yes/ No/ Not sure

b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:

- **Anything you think is missing from these statements.**
- **Anything in the statements that you don't agree with.**

2. Quality standards and new rules – are the right things included to make sure that young people are safe where they live and are offered the right support?

Quality standards

We are introducing quality standards for supported accommodation which providers will have to follow.

There are four themes of standards:

- The leadership and management standard
- The protection standard
- The accommodation standard
- The support standard

Within each of the four themes, there are a number of standards that explain what we expect of supported accommodation when it is high quality and provides enough support for the young people living there. The standards will also make sure Ofsted can take action where the accommodation and support does not follow the standards and is not good enough. This is what Ofsted already do for children's homes.

Last year, we asked for young people's views on a draft of the standards. We have listened to your views on if we covered the right things and if anything was missing and made changes to improve the standards.

We have included the latest draft of the new standards in the supplementary document to this consultation called 'Guide to Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards'. The standards, as well as some other rules, are presented in the Guide in the blue boxes. The text around the blue boxes explains in more detail the information in the blue boxes.

Q2: Do you think we have missed anything that you would expect the new standards to cover? Please explain here.

a) Yes/ No/ Not sure

b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:

- **Anything you think is missing from the new standards?**

Q3: Do you think we have included anything that shouldn't be included in the new standards?

a) Yes/ No/ Not sure

b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:

- **Anything in the standards that you don't agree with.**

Other new rules

In addition to the quality standards, there will be other rules that people providing supported accommodation will need to do to pass Ofsted's checks. These other rules will work hand in hand with the standards – together they will make sure young people are safe, well supported, and live in high quality accommodation.

Staffing

There will be an overall manager who will make sure that every setting has the right number of leaders and staff who have the right skills and experience to be able to support young people and keep them safe.

The people providing supported accommodation will have to decide how many staff need to be on site and when, depending on the needs and level of independence of the young people. If there won't be staff on site 24/7, the people providing supported accommodation will have to have other ways for young people to access support at all hours.

Location assessments

There will be a rule to make sure that people providing supported accommodation must check if the location of an accommodation is safe, does not put young people at risk of harm, and has good access to community centres, local services like shops as well as good transport links. The location of accommodations should make it easy for young people to access education, employment and training to help young people work toward their professional and educational goals. The location of accommodations will have to be reviewed once a year to make sure to make sure the people providing supported accommodation know about any changes to the local area and can confirm that the location is still safe and suitable for young people to live in.

Policies

The people providing supported accommodation will have to produce three policies that will help to protect young people.

Safeguarding Policy: this policy will have to describe how staff will support young people with their mental health, including how they will support young people who self-harm. Staff will have to help young people access professional support to keep them safe and help them understand difficult emotions and past experiences. This policy will explain how staff will work together with local authorities and the steps they will take if they find out that abuse or neglect has taken place, including how to report incidents of harm and keep records.

Missing child policy: this policy will describe the steps staff must take to prevent young people from going missing from the accommodation, and what they will do if a young person does go missing. It will be important that staff and young people maintain good communication so that staff know that young people are safe even when they are not at the accommodation. This policy will need to take into account the views of local authorities, the police, and other organisations or people that are involved in supporting and protecting young people from harm so they can work well together.

Behaviour management policy: this policy will describe how staff will encourage appropriate behaviour in the accommodation and how staff will prevent inappropriate, violent or potentially criminal behaviour in order to keep young people safe.

We expect that the young people living in supported accommodation will have a high level of responsibility and maturity. We do not think it is acceptable to use restraint on young people except for in very rare and serious incidents where staff are unable to calm a young person down and there is an immediate safety risk to the young person or anyone else. Even if restraint is not likely to happen, we believe it is still important that staff are trained on how to de-escalate a difficult situation and if they need to use restraint, that they are trained to do it safely, without anyone getting hurt.

There will also be rules around what staff have to do after a restraint incident, like making reports and records. There will be a rule that staff must have a meeting with the young person and with the young person's personal adviser/advocate/social worker so that the young person can express their feelings about what happened in a safe and supported space, ideally within 24 hours of the incident. This is to protect young people and make sure that they can tell their side of the story and have good support after they experience a difficult situation.

Q4: Do you think these rules and policies help to make sure that young people are protected in supported accommodation?

a) Yes/ No/ Not sure

b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:

- **Anything you think is missing from these rules and policies.**
- **Anything in the rules and policies that you don't agree with.**

3. Do you think the checks made by Ofsted will make sure people providing supported accommodation are following the standards and rules?

You might know that Ofsted are the organisation responsible for making sure that children's homes and foster care are good quality and that children are safe and get all of the care and support that they need. Part of the way Ofsted does this in children's homes is by inspecting them. They can turn up at a children's home, sometimes without any notice, to check on them. Ofsted does this to take a look at whether children's homes are following the standards and rules, and they can take action where they find that children's homes are not meeting the standards that we expect for children. They also inspect schools, where you might have seen or heard of Ofsted before.

You may have experience of living somewhere that Ofsted have inspected before. Ofsted's inspectors often speak to the children living there, asking them about the home and their experiences there, and whether they are happy. This is a very important part of inspections.

From next year, Ofsted will start to have a role in doing this for supported accommodation for young people.

Ofsted will start by registering providers and keeping a list of all the accommodations that they run. Ofsted will inspect the provider as a whole at least once every three years and will look at how good the provider is at following the standards and rules across all their settings. To be able to give providers a grade on how well they deliver accommodation and support generally, Ofsted will inspect some of the accommodations to make a judgment on their quality across the board. Ofsted will visit different accommodations at each inspection.

If Ofsted receive a complaint or hear of any situation that makes them concerned, they may visit accommodations, sometimes without any notice, and carry out an inspection so that they can check what is going on take action if they find that providers are not following the standards or rules.

Q5: Do you think these checks made by Ofsted to get an overall sense of the quality of the support and accommodation delivered by that provider will make sure providers follow the standards and rules?

- a) Yes/ No/ Not sure**
- b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:**

- **Anything you think is missing around Ofsted inspections that would help to make sure a provider is following the standards and rules and keeping young people safe.**
- **Anything around Ofsted inspections that you don't agree with.**

List of consultation questions

Q1: Do you think these statements describe what it should feel like to be properly supported while living in high quality accommodation?

- a) Yes/ No/ Not sure
- b) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:
 - Anything you think is missing from these statements.
 - Anything in the statements that you don't agree with.

Q2: Do you think we have missed anything that you would expect the new standards to cover? Please explain here.

- c) Yes/ No/ Not sure
- d) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:
 - Anything you think is missing from the new standards?

Q3: Do you think we have included anything that shouldn't be included in the new standards?

- c) Yes/ No/ Not sure
- d) We want to understand why you answered the way you did. Can you please explain your answer here in more detail. Things you might want to explain in more detail could include:
 - Anything in the standards that you don't agree with.

Q4: Do you think these rules and policies help to make sure that young people are protected in supported accommodation?

- a) Yes/ No/ Not sure
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 - Anything you think is missing from these rules and policies.
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