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Consultation outcome

Regulating supported accommodation - views of children and young people with experience of care: government response

Updated 23 March 2023

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Response from the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing

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As the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing I am writing to update children and young people on the new quality standards for supported accommodation for children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17.

Supported accommodation can offer young people aged 16 and 17 somewhere to live that allows them to feel supported and empowered, and gives them the chance to develop their independence as they prepare to leave care and start adult life.

However, too many children and young people have told us that supported accommodation is not always good enough, so we have been working hard to bring in new quality standards and rules that everyone who provides supported accommodation to young people must follow.

These new rules will become the law in April 2023.

In December 2022, we [published this consultation](#) which asked children and young people with experience of care:

- if they thought these new rules covered the right things
- how Ofsted should check that the people who deliver supported accommodation are following these new rules

I am particularly grateful to the 64 children and young people who took the time to share their experiences, thoughts and views on these proposals. Taking the time to consider and provide feedback is testament to your dedication and desire to bring about improvements for others.

Having heard your feedback and experiences, I am more determined than ever to ensure these important changes are made so that all children and young people in supported accommodation are given the opportunity to succeed and flourish as they move towards independence.

I have set out a short summary of what we asked, what young people told us, and how we have taken your views and feedback onboard ahead of making changes to the law to bring the new rules and Ofsted regulations into effect.

We have also published:

- a detailed response to the consultation aimed at the people who provide supported accommodation, social workers, local authorities and other professionals

- a detailed analytical report about all of the responses we received from both consultations

Both documents are available alongside the consultation about [introducing regulations for supported accommodation provision](#).

I would like to finish by again offering my grateful thanks to all who responded to this consultation and others we have published in recent years. As the future of this country, and those with real life experience of this accommodation, it has been so important to me that your views and experiences are heard.

I look forward to continuing to meet and listen to as many of you as possible as I continue in my role as Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing.

Claire Coutinho MP, Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing

Principles for supported accommodation

We asked: Do you think the 8 principles we want the people who provide supported accommodation to keep in mind are the right ones?

These principles are:

- 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.

You said: The majority of you (81%) agreed with the 8 principles. In particular you agreed that it was really important to feel safe and secure in the accommodation, to have access to trusted adults and, to feel empowered to learn and develop new skills.

A small number of you asked that we change some of the language in the principles to make them clearer, for example changing 'empowered' in statement 7 for other words such as 'helped, supported or enabled'.

We did: We have reviewed your feedback and will make some amendments

to the language we have used in the principles, to make sure they are clear and can be understood by both the people who provide supported accommodation, and the children and young people who are accommodated in it.

Quality standards and new rules

We asked: Have we included the right things in the new standards and rules to ensure that young people are safe where they live, and are offered the right support?

There were 4 themes of standards that we asked questions on:

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

We also asked questions about other rules which would work hand in hand with the standards. These were rules on:

- Staffing
- Location assessments
- Safeguarding policy
- Missing child policy
- Behaviour management policy

You said: The majority of you told us you thought the new standards didn't miss anything that should be included (67%), didn't include anything that shouldn't be included (73%) and that the new rules would help make sure that young people are protected while they live in supported accommodation (84%).

Some of you told us that you thought the guidance was too long and could be quite hard to understand. Some responses also said that the guidance didn't reference lived experiences and the opinions of children and young people enough.

We did: When writing this guidance, we have tried to make it as easy to understand for children and young people as possible, while also making sure we cover everything that the people who provide supported accommodation need to know to make sure they can follow the new rules.

One of the rules we have set is that all supported accommodation settings must make a 'young persons guide' which sets out in an easy to understand way:

- exactly what the young person will be offered
- what the rules are
- how the accommodation meets the standards

This will make sure that any young people accommodated in the setting will know exactly what they can expect.

Another rule we have set is that the people who provide supported accommodation will have to complete a review of the support they are offering young people every 6 months. This review will have to include the

views and experiences of the children and young people living in the accommodation and will be used to make sure the accommodation is meeting the needs of everyone who lives there. The provider will have to send this report to Ofsted every 6 months, who will check to make sure they are making any changes that they need to as a result of the review.

New Ofsted checks

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

You said: The majority of you (78%) told us you thought that the Ofsted checks we have set out would help make sure that the people who provide supported accommodation are meeting the rules and standards. A lot of you told us you liked the fact that Ofsted would be making the checks, as you thought this would help make sure that the rules were being followed.

Some of you said that you thought children's and young people's experiences should be discussed as part of Ofsted inspections, and that Ofsted should also make sure that they speak to staff and check their work.

Some of you also told us you felt that annual inspections of each accommodation would be better than at least once every 3 years, however others disagreed as they felt that Ofsted inspections could be disruptive to the setting.

We did: Ofsted are still deciding on the final details of how they will inspect the people who provide supported accommodation, and they will take the comments and feedback we received in this consultation onboard when deciding on these final details. Ofsted will continue to engage with children and young people as part of this process and will be publishing a further consultation on the inspection framework later in the year.

While the rules are that Ofsted will visit every setting at least once every 3 years, this does not mean this will always be the case. For example, if Ofsted receive a complaint or hear of any situation that makes them concerned, they can visit accommodation without any notice and carry out an inspection, so that they can check what is going on and take action if they find that providers are not following the standards or rules.

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