

## Message from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care, 7 May 2021

Our update for children's social care providers and local authorities:

As the regulator of children's residential care in England we are bound by many legal parameters. Some of these are now out of date and in need of reform if they are to enable the development of more flexible, but safe, regulated provision to address the worrying lack of placements for some of our most vulnerable children. This was thrown into sharp relief recently by the serious case review 'David' (Fish & Johnson 2021), which graphically lays bare how systemic gaps in provision can contribute to tragedy.

For our part, we continue to explore how we can best help to increase capacity, for example through our powers to register provision. At the same time, as we continue to tackle the prevalence of unregistered children's homes, we are thinking about what else may be possible within current legislation.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care is an important opportunity to explore sufficiency, but as the learning from 'David' shows, this is not something that children's social care can tackle alone. We need truly joined up systems, where children's health (including mental health), education and social care needs can be met, so we can prevent children from falling through the net because they don't neatly fit with legal definitions or eligibility criteria.

We have a long way to go but we must all maintain our resolve to 'get it right' for all our children.

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### Change in frequency of these messages

We started sending these weekly updates more than a year ago to try and keep you updated during the pandemic. Now the COVID-19 situation is receding, we have decided to change to once a month in future. After today we will send them on the first Friday of each month. That means our next update will be on 4 June 2021.

### The Big Ask - message shared on behalf of the Children's Commissioner

Last month the Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, launched **The Big Ask** – the largest ever survey of children in England, designed to find out about their concerns and aspirations for the future. It is live at <http://thebigask.uk/>.

We need help from everyone who works with children and young people to make The Big Ask a success. **Please encourage all children in your care to respond to the survey using the link above.**

The Children's Commissioner's office has produced some teaching and promotional resources for The Big Ask, including activity packs and posters. These are available for free [here](#).

**The results from this survey will help identify the barriers preventing children from reaching their potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve. We need to reach as many children as possible through The Big Ask – the more children take part, the stronger the results will be.**

We have had great feedback from schools and parents who have taken part:

*“Great way to teach little ones that their voice matters” Sam, parent*

*“Thank you @BuryGrammar for encouraging pupils to be part of the largest ever survey of children and young people in England” Tim, parent*

*“It is vitally important that we listen to children and give them a forum to speak to us to help us understand them better... Having children identify what they see as potential barriers to their lifelong success is powerful and gives us the opportunity to improve their chances of great success. I encourage all children and families to get involved and ensure that their voices are heard!” Angela Watts, Headteacher at The Arbours Primary Academy*

Children can complete the survey up until the 28<sup>th</sup> May. For more information, please contact [big.ask@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:big.ask@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

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### **Notifying Ofsted of serious incidents – online form for registered providers**

We previously told you about the online form for informing Ofsted about serious events or incidents. We ask that registered providers use this form to send us this information.

The form and relevant guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-about-an-incident-childrens-social-care-notification>. The form is only available at this ‘gov.uk’ web address.

When accessing the form through Ofsted online please make sure that you click on the social care serious notification and not on early years serious notification. Your first page should list social care settings. To check you have made a successful submission, you should have received a confirmation email from Ofsted forms ([ofsted.forms@notifications.service.gov.uk](mailto:ofsted.forms@notifications.service.gov.uk)), with the heading ‘Ofsted received your serious incident report’. If you have not received this email then your form has not been successfully submitted to us.

### **Sending independent visitor reports and quality of care reviews to Ofsted**

Social care registered providers are required by regulations to send certain reports to Ofsted when they have been produced. We also ask some providers to share with us reports they have prepared under certain national minimum standards (NMS). These include:

- children's homes and secure children's homes – reports under regulations 44 and 45
- independent fostering agencies – reports under regulation 35 and NMS 25
- residential family centres – reports under regulations 23 and 25
- voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies - reports under NMS 25
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children - reports made under regulations 29 and 30

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), there are likely to be delays in reviewing incoming post. Therefore, we ask that you send in these reports via email instead of post as this is the most effective way of sending us information at the moment.

Please email them to [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) and include Ofsted's unique reference number (URN) for your service and the date on which any visit occurred.

If you are a children's home, please pass this message to your independent visitor on our behalf.

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I hope this update is helpful to you. If you have any further queries or feedback, please send them to [EYRegulatoryandSocialCare@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:EYRegulatoryandSocialCare@ofsted.gov.uk).

Best wishes,

Yvette.