

Message from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care, 19 June 2020

To children's social care providers and local authorities:

Our weekly updates continue to get positive feedback from the sector and we will therefore carry on even on weeks where there is less news to share. In response to the newsletters colleagues send me their thoughts on what is going well and also the current and anticipated challenges. My colleagues and I feed them into our regular discussions with the Department for Education (DfE), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Family Courts and our partner inspectorates. Your insights are always welcome and helpful. I have also occasionally received some lovely poems written by our children – always a wonderful end to my week!

This week I was pleased to participate in a What Works in Social Care Seminar on the impact of COVID and the transition as more schools open to more pupils. We discussed the differential impact on specific groups of children, families and communities and the important role of social care in working at child, family, community and system level to effect purposeful change. We also shared ideas on the learning and good practice we have experienced during COVID. Again, if you have ideas or thoughts to share do continue to do so via socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk.

Notifying Ofsted of serious incidents – new online form

Children's social care providers registered with Ofsted must notify us of certain events or incidents as set out in the regulations covering their service.

On 17 June 2020 we launched a new online GOV.UK form for providers to use to notify us of these events and meet their legal duties. This replaces the old online form and is easier to use.

The new form and relevant guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-about-an-incident-childrens-social-care-notification>.

If you have a link to the old online form bookmarked in your web browser you will need to take the following steps:

- delete their existing bookmark in your web browser (if you have one)
- navigate to this link in your browser: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-about-an-incident-childrens-social-care-notification>
- bookmark this guidance page
- read the guidance and start a new form via the link provided.

If you continue to have problems and are contacting us to help, please provide a screenshot of the page if possible so we can investigate.

Updates to notifications

A significant number of the notifications we receive are updates to previous incidents. You are not required by law to send updates to notifications.

The most frequently sent updates are in relation to child protection enquiries. The regulations only requires a notification when a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated or concluded. It does not require several notifications providing updates of the enquiry or allegation. The new online form does not let you submit a form if you say it is an update unless it is to tell us that a child protection enquiry you have already told us about has concluded.

There may be occasions when an inspector will ask you to send in an update following a serious incident because this would be helpful in understanding what has happened and the action that you have taken. In these situations, the inspector is likely to ask you to communicate by email rather than submitting another online form.

Special guardianship orders practice guidance

The Public Law Working Group, the Family Justice Council and others, have recently published a comprehensive and authoritative [guidance on special guardianship orders](#) (SGOs). The President of the Family Division has issued the guidance and said that it should now be applied and used in every case where a SGO is an option.

Using technology to deliver children's social care during the COVID-19 pandemic

The DfE have produced the attached information sheet for social care professionals, and others supporting vulnerable children and young people, about using technology safely and effectively. The information is intended to supplement guidance provided by local authorities (and other employers) to their staff.

COVID-19: Notification process for the deaths of colleagues across children's services

In response to the very sad deaths from COVID-19 within the children's social care sector, the DfE are writing to providers to ask them to voluntarily notify them of the death of any carers or colleagues across children's services. This is in line with a similar process for adult social care and includes children's social care workers, foster carers and education staff.

They have designed the notification process to be light-touch, and there is no legal duty on employers or providers to submit the information to the department.

Notifications are done via a secure and confidential mailbox: CSCcovid.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk. The DfE wish to gather this information so they can write to bereaved families to offer their condolences, where appropriate, and to collect data to inform policy development. Further information about this can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

I hope this update is helpful to you. As I said above, if you have any further queries or feedback, please continue to send them to socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk.

Best wishes,
Yvette.