

Message from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care, 26 June 2020

To children's social care providers and local authorities:

In writing this week's message I could not but acknowledge the sad and untimely death of our much respected colleague, Dave Hill. My and Dave's paths crossed repeatedly over the years but we never quite worked together in the same place at the same time. A DCS in Merton, Croydon, Essex and most recently Surrey, Dave had a long career in London before that as well as serving as ADCS President. In all his various guises Dave's work and passion for improving services and outcomes for children shone through. He was also a good professional colleague and friend to many across the social care community. He will be much missed and Ofsted, my team and I send our condolences to his wife Jo, his daughters and to all who are feeling his loss at this time.

Recruitment of agency staff in children's homes

We have been asked recently about the checks required on agency staff.

Children's homes providers must meet the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. [Regulation 32](#) covers the fitness of workers and Regulation 32(2)(b) means that the requirements also apply to agency staff who have contact with children. Regulation 32(3) sets out these requirements:

The requirements are that—

- (a) the individual is of integrity and good character;
- (b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;
- (c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and
- (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

Providers need to be able to demonstrate to Ofsted, if necessary, how they have ensured they have met these requirements in relation to agency staff.

Notifying Ofsted of serious incidents – new online form for registered providers

We alerted you last week to about the new online form for informing Ofsted about serious events or incidents. We ask that registered providers now use this form to send us this information.

The new form and relevant guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tell-ofsted-about-an-incident-childrens-social-care-notification> and is the only form to use. Failure to do so we will result in Ofsted not receiving your online notification. The new form is only available at the 'gov.uk' web address.

We have had many forms successfully submitted using the new form. However, we have also had a small number of queries from settings where they have not been able to successfully use the new form. The most common issues have been where providers have been trying to use old links and also where they are using an old version of a web browser. The attached document provides some guidance that may be useful if you are having difficulty submitting the form. If after reviewing the document you are still unable to submit using the new form, please provide a screenshot of the page if possible when emailing us so we can fully and quickly investigate your problem.

Online form unavailable this weekend

We are updating our database from 5pm on Friday 26 June until 8am on Monday 29 June 2020. This means the online form for telling us about serious incidents is unavailable during this time.

If you need to use this form over the weekend, please wait until the morning of Monday 29 June when the form is available again. Waiting until 29 June to complete the form will not count as a delay in contacting Ofsted.

Sending independent visitor reports and quality of care reviews to Ofsted

We shared this message with you previously. For the reasons set out below we would like to re-iterate it.

Social care providers are required by regulations to send certain reports to Ofsted when they have been produced. These include independent visitor reports for children's homes under Regulation 44 and quality of care reports for independent fostering agencies under Regulation 35.

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 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 and your independent visitor sends the reports to Ofsted, please pass this message to them on our behalf.

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

Best wishes,
Yvette.