

Message from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care, 31 July 2020

To children's social care providers and local authorities:

Life is beginning to feel like 'two steps forward - one step back', as we learn of possible further lifting of restrictions going on hold, millions of people in the north of England facing local lock down and the prospect of travelling to places such as Spain, Italy and France looking less likely. But two steps forwards and one step back is still a net increase of one day forward! I think we need to remain as positive as we can!

One very positive step we can all take, and it will be a focus of our return to inspection, is looking at our anti-racist practice. Black Lives Matter has resonated with us at Ofsted and we are working within each remit and with colleagues across the organisation to review our equalities work with a particular focus on anti-racism to ensure we have a strong enough focus both internally and in our practice as a regulator and inspectorate. I know you too will be investing your efforts to make sure we all make a real difference in our practice.

Making local authorities aware of assurance visits to children's social care services carried out by Ofsted

Last week we shared the letter sent to all DCS explaining our [plans](#) for assurance visits of registered social care providers from September 2020. The letter suggested that local authorities may wish to revisit their commissioning frameworks to take into account that we will not be making graded judgements about providers at these visits.

To help with this, we are planning on letting local authorities know which children's social care services we have completed an assurance visit on. We intend to do this as part of the monthly data we already share with local authorities. This will allow them to know whether we have recently published an assurance visit report for them to read on our website to help with their commissioning decisions.

Inspection outcomes of the largest children's social care providers

We have recently published [statistics](#) on providers of children's homes and independent fostering agencies. This was accompanied by a [press release](#).

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 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.