

Message from Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director Regulation and Social Care, 7 May 2020

To children's social care providers and local authorities:

As we head into our second bank holiday weekend in lock-down I continue to be impressed with how responsive, resourceful and committed our children's social care workforce has proved to be. As Government reassuringly talk about passing the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of numbers of people affected by the virus and the Prime Minister contemplates lifting some of the restrictions, we know that a new set of challenges awaits us. For everyone supporting vulnerable children we can anticipate a rise in the need for services and providers to meet over the forthcoming months. I know you will all rise to this challenge and we at Ofsted will continue to do everything we can to support you on our journey to a more normal, but likely extremely busy, life.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children's social care services

The Department for Education (DfE) updated their [guidance for children's social care services](#) on 6 May. This now includes further guidance relating to their recent legislation changes. The guidance includes sections on residential care, fostering and adoption.

Registration with Ofsted as a children's social care provider

We have now updated the rolling COVID-19 update on our gov.uk site with [guidance for providers](#) who want to submit a registration application at this time. This advises of temporary changes to registration processes during the COVID-19 to prevent delays. The guidance should be read alongside the existing 'Guide to registration of children's social care services' and clarifies Ofsted's current position regarding health declaration forms, bank references and personal references.

Children not attending school

In last week's update we referred to some queries we had received from children's social care providers about children with learning disabilities who we had been told by their school that they could not attend because the schools said that they were unable to manage the risks associated with managing the children's behaviour in the context of managing the risks of COVID-19. We suggested that any other providers who found themselves in this situation should contact the child's placing authority and social worker.

It was not our intention to suggest anyone should act at odds with any DfE guidance. We know these are complex decisions and must be made on a case by case basis, where all the relevant agencies work together to come to an appropriate decision which is right for each individual child.

I hope this update is helpful to you. If you have any further queries, please continue to send them to socialcare@Ofsted.gov.uk. As ever, many thanks to you all for your magnificent efforts during this challenging time.

Best wishes,
Yvette.