

Inspections of children's homes

Consultation questionnaire

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Plain English Campaign
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Inspection of children's homes

1. This is a significant period of change for children's homes and an opportunity to improve the life chances of the vulnerable children and young people who live in residential care. We want children's homes to provide the best possible care and experiences, while improving the children's life chances and helping them to successfully manage their lives as young adults.
2. Between December 2013 and February 2014, we consulted on a new inspection framework that had a much stronger focus on the experiences of children and young people. We received 123 responses to our online consultation and secured the views of 207 children and young people. The majority of respondents were in agreement with our proposals. We decided not to implement the new framework at that time because we wanted to align more closely with the full package of regulatory reform led by government. We considered that two rapid changes to the inspection framework would be both destabilising and unhelpful.
3. Now that government has made clear its intentions for the regulations, the quality standards and the new guidance, we are able to consult on an inspection framework. It is fully informed by the previous consultation, takes into account the new regulations and is well informed by the headline responses to the Department for Education (DfE) consultation conducted in September this year.
4. In this consultation we set out how we will make inspection judgements and how we anticipate putting the new quality standards into operation. Professional judgement, accountability and the relationship between the regulatory framework and Ofsted inspections are at the heart of this consultation.
5. We set out our proposed criteria for each of the judgement areas. We want you to tell us if you think we have got these right. We also set out how we intend to ensure that we provide the best scrutiny of those homes that give us the most concern by providing inadequate care. We want to hear your views on this proposal.

This consultation

We want to make sure you understand:

- how we intend to make judgements using the grade criteria in a 'best fit' model
- the relationship between the regulations, the government guidance and the inspection framework.

We would also like your opinions on:

- the grade criteria for each inspection judgement
- our approach to homes judged inadequate.

Your views will help to refine and develop our framework for inspecting children's homes.

This document should be read alongside the full consultation document:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140174.

How to submit your views

There are three ways of completing and submitting your response.

- Complete the online questionnaire:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/childrenshomes
- Download this document from: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140174, complete it on your computer and email your response to socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk with the subject line 'Inspections of children's homes consultation'.
- Print this document, complete it by hand and post it to:

Social Care
Ofsted
8th floor
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

The consultation will be open until **13 January 2015**

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by Ofsted. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, influence policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes please complete Section 1 and the related questions
 No please complete Section 2 and the related questions

Section 1

Which organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Organisation: The Who Cares? Trust _____

Would you like us to consider anonymously publishing your views?

Yes
 No

Section 2

Please tell us in which capacity you are completing this survey (please choose one option):

a child or young person	<input type="checkbox"/>	the parent or carer of a child or young person living in a children's home	<input type="checkbox"/>
the registered provider of a children's home	<input type="checkbox"/>	the registered manager of a children's home	<input type="checkbox"/>
a social worker who places or is responsible for children and young people living in children's homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	local authority Chief Executive	<input type="checkbox"/>
local authority Director of Children's Services or their representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Safeguarding Children Board Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
practitioner in social care		practitioner in education	
practitioner in health	<input type="checkbox"/>	prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please tell us			

Making judgements and using the grade descriptors

Paragraphs 15–20 of the full consultation document explain how we will implement the ‘best fit’ model in our children’s homes framework. We want to make sure you understand how inspectors will use the new inspection framework to make judgements.

Q1a: Is the way we have described making judgements and using the grade criteria in a ‘best fit’ model clear?

Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Q1b: If not, what further clarification is needed?

Comment:

While the explanation is clear, it may not be clear to children and young people. We would suggest that a young-person friendly version of this is created so that children and young people who live in children's homes can understand how decisions are made and how homes will be judged and graded.
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The relationship between the regulations, the government guide and the inspection framework

In paragraphs 21–24 of the consultation document we have set out:

- how inspectors will use the new regulations, quality standards and accompanying guidance and how this will influence inspection judgement
- how the quality standards map into the inspection framework (diagram on page 10).

Q2a: Is the way that we have explained the relationship between the regulations, the government guidance and the inspection framework clear?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Q2b: If not, what further clarification is needed?

Comment:

It would be helpful to clarify what is meant in paragraph 23 by requirements.

The diagram on page 10 is not particularly clear. However, it may be clearer if larger and labelled.

Proposal 1: The grade criteria for each inspection judgement

Q3. Do you agree or disagree with how we have described what 'good' looks like for the 'overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home' judgement (paragraph 28)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Q4. If you disagree, are there any criteria you think we should amend and, if so, how? Please provide the criteria reference and your suggested amendment.

Comment:

We welcome the characteristics of good, particularly the inclusion of children being involvement in recruitment and appraisals.

However, we feel that there are a number of additions or changes that could be made to fully describe good experiences and progress as well as some positive aspects of the current framework that have not been transferred to the proposed framework. We have outlined these below:

28c) While being supported is implicit in children being 'able to' we would like to see it made explicit that children should be supported to actively participate in decisions.

28d) We're really pleased to see that the complaints policy must be accessible and understandable. We'd like to be sure that this will be inspected by consulting with the children and young people themselves. However, it is not sufficient to have the policy accessible, but the process itself must be fair and child friendly, with no fear of reprisals. We would also want to ensure that complaints are taken seriously and

result in a clear and timely response. As such we would like to see this reflected in the framework.

Q5. Are there any criteria you think we have missed out? If so, please provide the detail.

Comment:

We do not think that there are sufficient references to listening to the child, and the child being able to make active choices within the home in order to be considered good. Children should feel that they are able to make decisions about the space that they live in, including their bedroom. We would like to see an additional bullet point that refers to homes including children in decisions within the home, for example:

'Children and young people are involved in decisions regarding the running of the home, including but not limited to being encouraged and supported to choose and prepare meals, make decisions about outings that the home may organise and make decisions about the décor of the home and other decisions as appropriate. Children are encouraged and supported to decorate and personalise their bedroom and other areas of the house.'

There should be an explicit reference to children and young people knowing their rights and entitlements, including the care planning process, plans for the future and education. Children and young people should know what they are currently entitled to (including the right to be seen by a social worker alone, pocket money, support at school, financial support at college) but also their rights and entitlements as a care leaver, including financial support and support available for a number of pathways, including university, training and employment. We consider this to be a vital addition to the inspection framework.

There are no references to supporting children who are placed out of authority. While this will be implicit within all inspection criteria, we would like it made explicit that when a child is placed out of authority homes must pay particular attention to meeting the needs of these children.

Q6. Do you agree or disagree with how we have described what 'good' looks like for the 'how well children and young people are helped and protected' judgement (paragraph 32)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7. If you disagree, are there any criteria you think we should amend and, if so, how? Please provide the criteria reference and your suggested amendment.

Comment:

We welcome a lot of changes and additions, in particular welcoming children back into the home after going missing and children not being unnecessarily criminalised.

However, we would suggest a few amendments to the proposed criteria.

32c/d) Children who are absent without authorisation will be absent for a variety of reasons and will require a flexible response from the home. We do not think that this currently reflects instances where young people who are missing/absent from the home are testing boundaries and the flexible response that will be required from the home.

32i) We are concerned that the framework has moved from the assumption of 'no or minimum use of restraint' to restraint only being used in strict accordance with the legislation. We feel that a good home would use no, or minimum restraint in compliance with legislation, rather than merely using it and complying with legislation. We would therefore like to see 'no or minimum use of restraint' included in the criteria. However, we are pleased to see the reference to the use of restraint reducing or ceasing over time.

Q8. Are there any criteria you think we have missed out? If so, please provide the detail.

Comment:

We would like to see included in the criteria that good homes 'support the children and young people living in the home who are involved in the criminal justice system.' We would not expect a home that does not provide that support to be able to be classed as good under this judgement.

Q9. Do you agree or disagree with how we have described what good looks like for the proposed 'impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers' judgement (paragraph 36)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Q10. If you disagree, are there any criteria you think we should amend and, if so, how? Please provide the criteria reference and your suggested amendment.

Comment:

As with the previous judgement, we welcome the characteristics of good, particularly the inclusion of children being involvement in recruitment and appraisals.

However, we feel that there are a number of additions or changes that could be made to fully describe good experiences and progress as well as some positive aspects of the current framework that have not been transferred to the proposed framework. We have outlined these below:

36g) We would like to see the reference to supervision changed to include 'good quality' as in the current framework. While we appreciate that good quality is implicit in the use of the term effective, we feel that it would be better if it were more explicit. We also welcome the focus of supervision and training on meeting the needs of the children and young people in the home. We are pleased to see that the emotional impact on staff has also been recognised and included.

36m) We would like to see the inclusion of a requirement for staff to consult young people on the furniture and decoration of the home. We recognise that this is implicit in the wording but feel it should be more explicit.

We would like to see more clarity around the meaning of the word 'resourced.' The new framework focuses very heavily on staffing and the implication could be that resources refer to staffing rather than equipment and essential and non-essential household goods (for example computers, toys, appropriate furniture).

Q11. Are there any criteria you think we have missed out? If so, please provide the detail.

Comment:

We would like to see a reference included to the importance of staff, leaders and managers knowing the rights and entitlements of children and young people in care. The APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers found in both the 2013 Entitlements Inquiry report and 2014 'one year on' report that professionals often do not know what children and young people are entitled to, and this can be a barrier to children and young people knowing about their rights and entitlements.

Proposal 2: Our approach to homes judged to be inadequate

Q12a. Do you agree or disagree that we should take a risk-based approach in our follow-up to homes judged to be inadequate (paragraphs 40–48)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment:

We agree that a risk-based approach should be taken in response to homes judged to be inadequate. This is important to ensure continuity of care for children living in the homes and reduce the risk of them being removed from the home and their home life destabilises. However, no child should ever be put at risk of harm, and this should remain the case in this issue.

Q12b: Do you agree that in some instances (where the criteria outlined in paragraph 45 of the consultation document are met) inspectors should be able to give an improved inspection judgement without undertaking a further full inspection and where all requirements have been met?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comment:

We are unsure as to when this may occur and therefore are unable to comment fully on these proposals.

However, if this proposal is implemented, it should only happen as long as children's views have been ascertained to ensure that they are happy with the changes that have been made. No inspection grade should be made, or improved without meaningful consultation with the children and young people living in the home.

Any other comments

Q13. Do you have any other comments about this consultation?

We welcome many of the changes to this framework and we are particularly pleased to see many of the suggestions that we made in our February 2014 response included in the new proposed framework.

We would urge Ofsted to ensure that as part of the new framework, children and young people living in the homes, and those who have left the homes, are meaningfully consulted and enabled to take part in inspections in accessible ways. They should be able to feed in their views in a number of ways, and should be able to do so in a confidential way, without fearing reprisals from staff in the home.

What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in Ofsted’s strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

How did you hear about this consultation?

- Ofsted website
- @ofstednews (twitter)
- Ofsted News
- Ofsted conference
- Another organisation (please specify, if known)
- Other (please specify)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had enough information about the consultation topic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

There was insufficient time for us to consult young people on this issue, or support them to respond themselves, due to the short time frame and the consultation period being over Christmas. In order to properly consult with children and young people, the ideal time period would be 12 weeks.

It would also be helpful to have a young person's version of the consultation to disseminate.

It would be good to have a free form to fill in. Having a response form that is locked for editing and therefore unable to run spellcheck makes the response difficult to write and check for errors.

Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that completion of this section is optional, you do not have to answer any of the questions, and all responses are confidential.

Please tick the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age

Under 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	14–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25–34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35–44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45–54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55–64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Ethnic origin

How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian		Mixed ethnic origin	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black		White	
African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any White background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic background	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese			
Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Religion/belief

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other, please state:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6. Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Thank you for taking part in our consultation.