

Dialogue

2 October 2023



Introductions and roles/structure South West Social Care

- James McNeilie – Regional Director
- Dominic Stevens – Senior His Majesties Inspector
- Nicola Lownds, Polly Soper, Paula Lahey Regulatory inspection managers
- Team of social care regulatory inspectors and his majesties inspectors
- Regional support team

Children with complex needs in children's homes



- Current research project is running within Ofsted in relation to this
- Child
- Aim is to develop an understanding of:
 - what is meant by the term 'complex needs'
 - what local authorities and children's homes are doing to provide good experiences for these children
 - how local authorities and homes are working together
 - what can be done to improve things further
- Children's homes providers and local authorities were consulted

Some of the findings

- Almost all (91%) of the local authority respondents said that they often or always experience difficulties finding homes for children with complex needs.
- On average, local authorities said that it takes four months to find a stable home for children with these needs. Some reported it can take as long as three years.
- Over three-quarters of local authority respondents said that children with complex needs often or always experience one or more of:
 - unplanned moves
 - out of area placements
 - placement breakdowns
 - homes declining referrals

Barriers that impact children

- Children's homes reported that poor communication and lack of transparency from some local authorities about the child's needs is a barrier to referral decisions.
- Local authorities reported that some homes are not able to deliver the care outlined in their statement of purpose documents.
- Some children's homes also still believe that caring for children with complex needs can result in lower inspection grades. This perception is understandable but it is incorrect. As we have said previously, how complex a child's needs are will not affect how we grade a home. What we do on inspection is recognise where services are adapting and responding appropriately to children.

Judgement profiles 2022/2023

- The proportion of children's homes of all types judged outstanding or good nationally was 79% as at 31 March 2023 (10% outstanding, 69% good). This is a slight increase from 2022.
- 18% of homes were judged requires improvement to be good and 2% were judged inadequate (both decreased from 2022)
- The south west region follows the national trend of judgement profiles
- Currently approx 230 registered children's homes in region

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