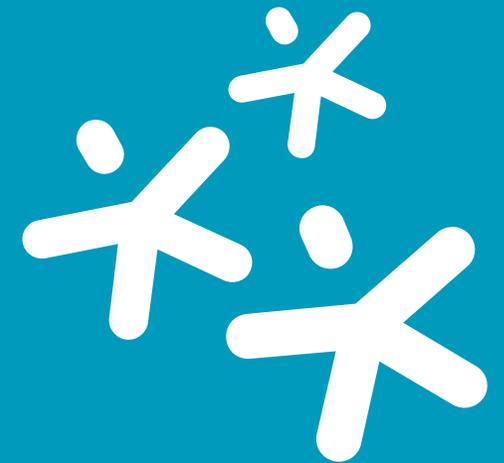


Webinar February 18 2026

Helen Humphreys HMI
Senior Specialist Advisor



Agenda



Children's Wellbeing and
Schools bill

Reforms

Consultation

Registration Prioritisation Policy



Intentional homelessness

Local care leaver's offer

Engaging in Reform

Single Unique identifier

Family Group Decision Making

Use of Agency Workers

Regional Care Cooperatives

Community-based provision

Staying Close

Multi Agency Child Protection Teams

Rebalancing ILACS

LA Location Assessment

Changes to Registration

Provider Oversight

Market Measures

Cross Remit

Education Outcomes and VSH

UK Domiciled

Priority Application Process

Financial Oversight

Profit Cap

Corporate parenting

Strengthening the role of Education

Unregistered powers

Mandatory Reporting

Children's Well Being and Schools Bill



Broad piece of legislation



Royal Assent possibly April/May



Creation of secondary regulations



Financial Oversight



Provider Oversight



New type of Provision



Unregistered Provision



Amendment to serve notices by email

Unregistered Provision

It is an offence under S11 of the Care Standards Act 2000 to operate without registration

Currently our only power is to carry out a criminal investigation and prosecute

We have some active criminal investigations ongoing and have some cases which have progressed to court proceedings

The Bill will grant us powers to fine providers who operate unregistered provision, following a criminal investigation.

Provider Oversight

- The Bill will grant us powers to contact and take action against a group of homes, that have a 'parent undertaking'
- We will be able to take action against the 'group', for example serve one notice on the group rather each individual home, if the concerns related to a matter at the group level
- Serve an improvement notice and require an action plan
- Only include providers with a 'parent company'
- Local Authorities are not included in the scheme

Financial Oversight



The Bill grants the DfE powers to create a financial oversight scheme, so that the DfE can monitor the financial aspects of the providers who qualify to be part of the scheme



Ofsted will not be part of this scheme, other than to provide the same information that we routinely collect and share with the DfE now, or is published.

New Type of Provision to deprive children of their liberty



Children are placed in secure accommodation under S25 of the Children Act, on 'welfare grounds' for a specified time. The order is made by the court.



Local Authorities can apply to the court for a Deprivation of Liberty order, which deprives children of their liberty and can impose other conditions. The orders are permissive and the use of the orders has escalated over the last few years.



The number of children deprived of their liberty via inherent jurisdiction has increased from 100 in 2017/18, to over 1,300 in 2022/23. Most of these children have multiple needs, and many are living in unregistered CHs

Relevant Accommodation



This measure will allow for children to be deprived of their liberty in provision other than a SCH under a statutory framework under S25 of the Children Act 1989



This will create a statutory basis for a court-authorized deprivation of liberty which provides care and treatment, where it is needed to keep a child safe.



The orders will not be time limited, but will better protect children's rights and the CHs will allow restrictions to fluctuate with their needs to keep them safe while remaining in the same accommodation, with access to health and community links

Summary Notes January 2026

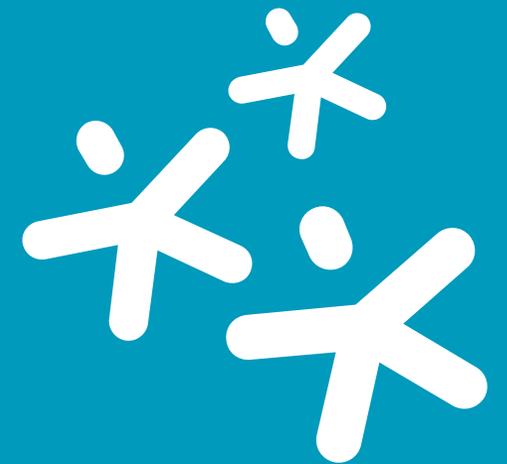
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695e578a8ab0677c14afdfc9/childrens_wellbeing_and_schools_bill_2024_policy_summary_notes.pdf

SCCIF and ILACS reform

- Ofsted will be consulting in the summer on proposed changes to the inspection frameworks for 2027
- We encourage you to take part in the consultation
- It is proposed that there will be a children's version.



SCCIF refresh update



SCCIF - principles for change

- We will seek to **align the SCCIF with wider Ofsted changes where appropriate**, including the timing of consultation
- We are **planning some improvements in April 2026** with further changes likely in April 2027, subject to consultation
- We will look to **align significant changes with the DfE timeline on revised quality standards and regulations**
- **We will consider carefully the implications of any changes** to ensure that we:
 - **Maintain and provide an holistic overview** of the experiences and progress of children
 - **enable commissioners to make informed decisions** on the overall quality of provision and its suitability for a specific child
 - **report on the things that matter for children**

Timeline – key milestones

April 2025	Changes in response to the Big Listen – including changes to promote stability for children with complex lives
April 2026	Further expected changes for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to include <u>brief summary</u> of findings • enhanced tariff guidance • onsite surveys of children’s views for some remits • removal of case tracking methodology
May-July 2026	Consultation on wider changes to the SCCIF (to coincide with ILACS consultation) – likely to address outcome structure, revised scorecard, and revised evaluation criteria
April 2027	Implement changes following 2026 consultation

Prioritising registration



Annual Report – stats



As of March 31st, 2025, there were 4010 registered children's Homes and 13 secure Childrens Homes, this number continues to rise



This was a 15% increase (520 homes) from the previous year (3,490) and is the highest number ever registered with Ofsted.



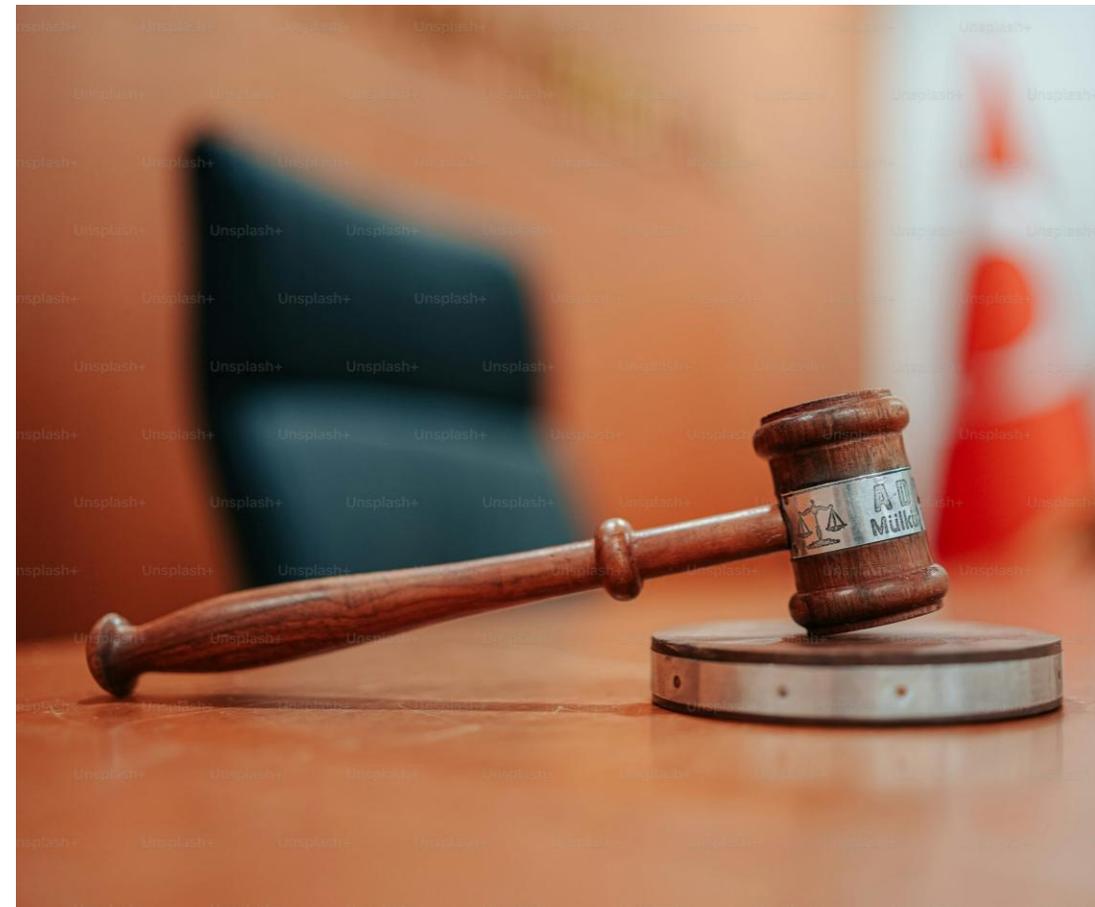
This number continues to rise and on average we receive over 100 (often more) applications to register every month



86% of CHs were judged good or outstanding in the inspection year 24/25

Annual report stats

- Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, we carried out the following enforcement actions across all children's homes:
- 75 restrictions of accommodation
- 36 suspensions of registration
- 12 notices of proposal to cancel registration



Registration of children's homes

- We have seen an unprecedented and sustained rise in applications to registers children's homes. In the year June 2024 to June 2025, the total number of children's home applications was almost double the figure for the previous year.
- We have not been able to keep pace with this increase.
- LAs are trying to find suitable homes for their children and young people.
- The answer is not just simply more homes, it's homes in the right place, with providers who will care for children with multiple needs



Prioritisation Policy



To help support sufficiency in the sector, we recently updated our priority application policy for children's homes. The policy explains the exceptional circumstances that may lead to us prioritising an application.



These circumstances can include the need for a home in an area with extremely high demand and insufficient placement options and for homes that can care for children with complex support needs.

Prioritisation Policy



Providers who feel their application may meet the priority criteria should contact the relevant region where their provision is situated. The provider is required to complete a self-declaration for and provide evidence that the local authority confirms the application is needed



Non-priority applications will be dealt with but will take longer to process than they have previously.

Amendments

- We have made the following amendments to the existing published policy:

- We will prioritise applications to register children's homes that are needed urgently because local authorities require:
 - an emergency placement for a named child or children, or
 - **local provision to meet an identified urgent sufficiency need**
- We will continue to consider all applications, but provision that meets the priority categories will be considered sooner.
- We may prioritise applications from local authorities or private providers whose application meets one of the following criteria:
 - **the provision applied for has received capital funding from the Department for Education to develop new children's homes**
 - the provision is being opened exclusively as part of the response to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are being transferred under the national transfer scheme
 - a child who is subject to a deprivation of liberty order from a court is being accommodated in a children's home that is currently unregistered
 - the provision is needed in exceptional circumstances in response to an emergency situation – in this case the Ofsted Senior His Majesty's Inspector (SHMI) in the region will determine whether we can prioritise the application

Exceptional Circumstances

- We have better clarified the criteria for a setting meeting 'exceptional circumstances' by adding the following:

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- applications for children's homes in areas where there is extremely high demand and insufficient placement options; this will be determined using information such as sufficiency data, which may include our [Children's social care in England 2025](#) data
- provision that will offer highly specialist care for children with complex support needs and/or disabled children, for example those leaving secure children's homes or long stays in hospitals
- provision that was historically registered incorrectly and has been instructed to register with an alternative regulator

Timeframe

- We have clarified the time frame that applications will be processed under:

If you give us the right information at the right time and show that you are fully prepared and ready to open, we will make a determination about your priority application as soon as possible. In general, this will usually take a minimum of 2 to 6 months.

We will keep processing all other applications as quickly as possible. We have an exceptionally high volume of new registration applications to process. This means it is likely to take a minimum of 6 to 18 months to reach a decision on new applications.

- We will review this policy regularly. The first review will be in April 2026.

Applying the policy in practice

If providers feel they have an application that meets the priority criteria, **they** should contact their local Ofsted region and speak to a RIM or SHMI about this.

The RIM or SHMI **will not** be able to give any guarantee at that point that the application will be successful.

If the SHMI or RIM feels the application **may meet the priority criteria**, they must send a self-declaration letter to the provider.

The provider **must complete and return** the self-declaration form to the region along with email confirmation from the LA that the application relates to a specific child or children and the LA supports the application.

If a child who is subject to a DOLs is already living in the home, the provider is required to send a copy of the LA commissioning form to Ofsted along with the self-declaration form.

The **SHMI is responsible** for confirming if the priority application meets the policy criteria.

Priority application decisions will also be checked nationally to ensure consistency of approach.

Only then can the region alert the applications team about the application to enable them to allocate it swiftly.

We are managing registration visits using a national approach to ensure fairness and equitability of resources.

Information

- Prioritising social care registration applications: putting the needs of children and young people first – Ofsted: social care
- Registering children's homes in an emergency: priority applications - GOV.UK

FAQs



When making an application a provider should appoint a manager and a responsible individual (not necessarily employ)



Talk to the host local authority about your proposed provision



Consider carefully the location, will you be able to recruit staff locally, will they be able to travel on public transport to your home



Will your children be able to access GPs, dentists, schools and good transport networks



Is the area safe and how do you know?

Ofsted on the web and on social media

www.gov.uk/ofsted

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>

 www.linkedin.com/company/ofsted

 www.youtube.com/ofstednews

 www.slideshare.net/ofstednews

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