

People and Health Overview Committee
14/9/23

**Ofsted Regulation of Supported
Accommodation for 16- & 17-year-olds**

What is supported accommodation?

- A form of accommodation or semi-independent living for 16- and 17-year-olds who are ready to live with more independence and who do not need significant levels of care
- It can be offered to:
 - Children in care
 - Care leavers
 - 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless to the council
- Aims to support young people to develop their independence and prepare for adult life whilst keeping them safe in a homely and nurturing environment:
 - Offer stability and consistency
 - Enable access to local services (including education and healthcare)
 - Facilitate development of relationships with local community

Reasons for the policy change

Quality

- Lack of national guidelines or standards on how supported accommodation should be managed or the experience of individuals managing this provision – leading to variable quality

Suitability

- Nationally growing numbers of children in care were being placed in this type of provision, including some aged under 16 years and those not ready for independence
- Increased use nationally as a result of a lack of provision for children with complex needs

Desired Outcomes

- Children in the right setting:
 - No children under 16 in an unregistered setting
 - Children who require significant levels of care do so in an appropriate registered setting (not supported accommodation)
- Improved quality, experiences and outcomes for young people
- Greater clarity on type of support offered
- Improved leadership and management

Our approach to Supported Accommodation in Dorset

- We do not place children under the age of 16 in provision not registered with Ofsted
- Primarily we support children in care to remain in foster care or residential children's home until 18th birthday and beyond
- We will consider supported accommodation for our children in care when it:
 - Supports the path to independence
 - Follows a care plan review
 - Is approved by a Service Manager
 - Is ratified by their Quality Assurance Reviewing Officer (sometimes known as an Independent Reviewing Officer – IRO)
- We put in place:
 - Enhanced visiting requirements
 - Senior manager oversight and visits to supported accommodation providers

What are the new requirements?

- All supported accommodation providers must register with Ofsted by 28th October
- Inspection by Ofsted will commence in April 2024
- Identify which category of supported accommodation they are delivering:
 - Supported accommodation in a self-contained unit
 - Shared or group living limited to children in care and care leavers
 - Shared or group living not limited to children in care and care leavers
 - Supported accommodation provided by an individual or individuals in a private residence
- Identify a registered manager with the required skill and experience to manage the provision
- Write a statement of purpose setting out the support that will be offered by the provision
- Set out how 4 standards will be met:
 - Protection standard
 - Accommodation standard
 - Support standard
 - Leadership and management standard

Progress towards registration in Dorset

- In house services

- supported lodging service run by the council's fostering service and must register with Ofsted
- Registered manager identified
- Policies and procedures in place
- First stage of registration documents submitted

- Externally commissioned services

- All providers are aware and have acknowledged requirement to register
- Weekly oversight on progress in place
- Meetings with all providers in August
- No providers currently identified where we need to move children due to lack of activity to register
- Continue to review progress to plan for any moves that may be required
- When placing new young people in supported accommodation we check registration status and intention to register prior to placement

Financial Implications

- Grant from Department for Education to support costs incurred by regulations
- Inhouse provision
 - Direct cost of registration for in-house provision (£5,500)
 - Indirect costs:
 - Oversight and quality assurance
 - New processes
 - Preparation for Ofsted Inspection
- External provision
 - Potential to increase fees as a result of increased cost due to regulations
 - Monitoring

Recommendation

Recommendations

- 1.The People and Health Overview Committee is invited to comment on the approach to implementation of the national policy and the progress to date.
- 2.The People and Health Overview Committee recommends to Cabinet that this approach is adopted by the council.

Reason for Recommendation:

- To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and any subsequent regulation / statutory guidance