

Report for: Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

Item number: 8

Title: **Suitable Accommodation**

Report

authorised by: Beverley Hendricks, AD, Children's Services

Lead Officer:

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

1.1 To provide an update on update on semi-independents for UASC and CIC 16 plus.

1.2 Definition of unregulated and unregistered placements

- Unregulated provision is allowed in law. This is when children (usually over the age of 16) need support to live independently rather than needing full-time care. Ofsted do not currently regulate this type of provision. However, within the ILACS framework, Ofsted will investigate this area of practice to ensure it is robustly managed, is subject to effective quality assurance and overseen by senior managers.
- Unregistered provision is when a child who's being provided with some form of 'care' is living somewhere that is not registered with Ofsted. This is illegal. Once a provider delivers a care element as well as accommodation, they must register as a children's home. It's an offence not to.
- An unregulated placement also becomes unregistered if the child placed there is under 16 years old. If, when they turn 16 years old and children have care needs it will remain unregistered, if they do not have care needs it will become a legal unregulated placement.

1.3 From 28 October 2023, Local Authorities will no longer be permitted to place looked after children aged 16 and 17 in provision that is not registered with Ofsted as supported accommodation.

1.4 Ofsted began registering providers from 28 April 2023. The Regulations and guidance must be complied with for the purposes of registration and as soon as providers and managers are registered with Ofsted. If a complete application for registration with Ofsted has not been made before 28 October 2023, it will be an offence for providers to carry on or manage a supported accommodation service for 16 and 17 years old on or after that date.

1.5 Across the UK there was 4000 YP in semi-independent units – this equates to 600 units.

1.6 The Regulations set out standards (“the Quality Standards”) that must be met by supported accommodation. The Quality Standards describe outcomes that each young person must be supported to achieve while living in supported accommodation. Each standard contains an overarching, aspirational, outcome statement with young people at its heart, followed by a set of underpinning, measurable requirements that providers and settings must achieve in meeting each standard.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Children under 16 years of age should not be placed in a setting that is unregulated and should only happen in extra ordinary circumstances where other placements are not available. If a placement of this type is needed; it is expected that each child’s circumstance is reported and considered by senior managers at Directorate levels within the organisations and the following issues covered.

2.2 From the 4th of September 2023 the placements team were directed not to make any new placements of 16 and 17 years old with providers who had not provided indicated that they would be applying to Ofsted.

3. Reasons for decision

3.1 It will be illegal for local authorities to accommodate 16- and 17-year-olds children in unregistered provisions as of 28th October 2023.

4. Background information

4.1 According to the latest data, there were 5,980 children looked after (CLA) aged 16 to 17 living independently or in semi-independent living accommodation at 31st of March 2021. This is equivalent to almost a third of all CLA aged 16 to 17 (32%). Of these children, there is a higher proportion of children aged 16 to 17 in these placements who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) (32% living independently and 34% in semi-independent accommodation) compared to the national average for 16- to 17-year-old CLA (18%). Therefore, approximately 1,914 children aged 16 to 17 living independently or in semi-independent accommodation are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

4.2 Ofsted have sent notification to all LAs advising of the following:

- Ofsted has no power to waive regulations but will take a pragmatic approach in the current circumstances.
- Ofsted would not want any children to move unnecessarily while recent applications are processed.
- Ofsted’s priority is to process incomplete applications from existing providers as quickly as possible to a registration decision.
- Any other action taken will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.3 Preparing Semi-independent Providers for Ofsted Regulations

4.3.1 Commissioning worked in collaboration with the providers to ensure that they are kept abreast of the upcoming changes.

4.3.2 Regular information was forwarded to providers on upcoming virtual and face to face training offered through the Sector Awareness and Provider Preparedness Programme.

4.3.3 Regular forums were held to help providers understand the significance of compliance in the new regime and to give ongoing support when practicable, these were held both face to face and virtual. Provider given support with paperwork, as many documents have been purchased as off the shelf policies and must be tailored to the organisation.

4.3.4 All providers delivering semi-independent accommodation were required to re-register on Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) effective from the date the new regulation comes into effect. Commissioning worked with the DPS team to review and modify the system to reflect the new regulations.

4.3.5 Placements manager to have oversight of any children or young people who may need an unregulated /unregistered placement, and for any child not to proceed to an unregistered placement without approval from the Assistant Director.

4.4 Haringey's UASC and CIC 16 plus in Semi Independent Accommodation (SI)

4.4.1 As of 8th January 2024, Haringey data shows the following:

- According to our data as of 08/01/2024 there are 131 young people 16+ in semi-independent accommodation.
- We have placements with 28 SI providers who supply a range of accommodation of which 10 providers support UASC.
- 44 CiC aged 16- and 17-year-olds are accommodated with 16 SI providers of which 14 SI providers have a complete registration with Ofsted.
- We received notification from 1 provider at the end of November advising that they would be withdrawing their Ofsted application, and this affected 1 YP who will be moving to alternative accommodation. Another provider is still in the process of progressing to a complete application and commissioning have been in regular communication with the provider, we have 3 YP placed with this provider. Ofsted requested the provider to make amendments to the application which was completed and resubmitted.

4.4.2 There are commissioning arrangements in place with two key providers with a block booking arrangement in place.

- **Irish Causeway**, a housing association providing low-cost housing for unaccompanied minors, this provider supplies three properties, with 20 bed spaces. Irish Causeway is the single largest provider for 18 + UASC cohort in Haringey.
- **Atlantic Lodge** provides 5 bed spaces locally for care leavers.

4.5 Standards for Supported Accommodation Providers

4.5.1 The Ofsted Regulations prescribe four Quality Standards which must be met by supported accommodation:

- The leadership and management standard (see regulation 4)
- The protection standard (see regulation 5)
- The accommodation standard (see regulation 6)
- The support standard (see regulation 7)

4.5.2 Commissioning works in partnership with providers to ensure that the services that are commissioned are of high quality, safe and deliver positive outcomes to the children, young people, and families in Haringey.

4.5.3 Quality assurance officers conduct annual monitoring visit to SI Providers.

4.5.4 The purpose of these visits is to evaluate the quality of the service and to ensure that they are meeting the standards and expectations of Haringey and the services delivered are in line with Ofsted Quality Standards for SI provision.

4.5.5 Visits will be done once a year and officers will review, staff files, young people files, assess the quality of the accommodation alongside reviewing other relevant documents. Following the visit, a report will be drafted, and a rating will be provided using RAG rating matrix **RED, AMBER, GREEN**. Providers rated RED or AMBER will have actions noted for completion within a specified timescale. A report will be generated at the end of each quarter to update Senior Management.

4.6 How CIC and UASC are supported with their educational needs

4.6.1 The Virtual School's current number of Care Leavers is 115. There are 82 Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET) and 33 are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET).

4.6.2 The Virtual school continues to support education through Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings up until the age of 18 at which point the young person can withdraw consent and we cease our PEP meetings; however, if they do not withdraw consent, support is continued until they complete their post-16 Education.

4.6.3 For young people out of an educational placement, due to the time they came into care and general college admission points we offer tuition of up to ten hours per week. Currently, there are four young people receiving tuition, and out of the four two are UASC. We do not receive stable funding from DfE for our post-16 cohort, so we often deploy the pupil premium grant (PPG) for statutory education to support our post-16 offer.

4.6.4 In the academic year 2023-2024, we have received additional funding for post-16, and a portion has been used to fund salaries and purchase laptops through allocating funds to Young Adults Services (YAS) to support the post-16 offer.

4.6.5 We offer Advice and Careers guidance through Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) surgeries, which are held twice a year at the key transition points.

4.6.6 For our young people who are NEET, we hold weekly NEET panels and update our tracking and monitoring of our young people in conjunction with external partners, YAS, and Early Help.

4.6.7 28 of our post-16 cohort have EHCP plans; 8 are NEET, and they are supported by the NEET panel. There are fortnightly meetings with SEND and the Virtual school to track and discuss the education of post-16 students with EHCP, and when possible, combine their Annual Review with a PEP meeting.

4.6.8 There has been recent work with local colleges to streamline the process for our young people with EHCPs to ensure they know the young person has an EHCP plan and are in Care or Care Leavers. We continue to forge strong links with external Local Authority SEND Teams to ensure that our Post-16s living outside the borough, are supported in their education and that EHCP statutory requirements are met.

5 Contribution to strategic outcomes

N/A

6 Use of Appendices

N/A

7 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A