

Frequently Asked Questions

Supported Accommodation

How does this FAQ work?

- This FAQ is based on questions that were sent in by both supported accommodation providers and local authority representatives for the Q&A panel at the conferences in London and Manchester at the end of April.
- Where questions are on similar themes or have similar answers, the NCB have generalised and collated these to cover the most crucial points.
- The other more nuanced or specific questions, and questions about the support offered through our programme, have been separated and will either be sent to Ofsted or addressed on our website.
- The questions have been divided into four different themes.
- If you have a question about the registration process, or any other area related to the new regulations and quality standards that has not been answered here, please email Ofsted directly at eyregulatoryandsocialcare@ofsted.gov.uk

Theme: Registration

Q1: Who needs to upload a DBS certificate as part of the registration process and what kind of DBS certificate do they need?

The following people must upload a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate as part of the SC2 form:

- the person applying to be the registered service manager,
- individual providers and partners; nominated individuals,
- directors of organisations who are involved in running the supported accommodation service.

The name on the DBS must match the name you give on the SC2 form.

Before submitting your application, you must have either:

- applied for a DBS check through the Ofsted Capita service, dated within the last 3 months, or

- an enhanced DBS check through another organisation, and a subscription to the DBS update service

The level of DBS certificate each person requires depends on what their day-to-day role involves. You should read the DBS guidance on eligibility to help you decide on the level of check each person requires.

People who are eligible to obtain an enhanced check with barring information must do so. Those who are not eligible will need 'a criminal record certificate', which is also known as a standard DBS certificate.

In the form Ofsted will ask you to agree to let them check your DBS status. You must agree in order to continue with your application. Ofsted also strongly recommend that you subscribe to the DBS update service. If you have previously applied for a DBS check through Ofsted, contact them to check that they will still accept it as current.

Q2: Do supported accommodation providers need to be fully compliant with all areas of the regulations before starting the registration process?

Providers need to be confident that they can meet the requirements of the regulations when submitting their application. Ofsted will evaluate their capacity to meet those requirements during the registration process. Ofsted began accepting applications to register on 28 April and are now arranging registration visits. Ofsted strongly recommend that applications are submitted as soon as possible, to avoid the risk of operating illegally from 28 October 2023.

Q3: In the application forms, what information will I need to prepare and what questions will I be asked?

Ofsted has published guidance about the registration process [here](#). It is important that applicants read about what Ofsted needs to process an application, before applying.

When they have read this, applicants can go to detailed information about the [SC1](#) and [SC2](#) application forms before starting the application itself. These pages tell applicants what information they will need to prepare and supply through the application forms.

If applicants have questions about any stage of the application process, please contact the applications team at sc.suppacc@ofsted.gov.uk who will be happy to help resolve queries.

Q4: If supported accommodation providers are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), do they also need to be registered with Ofsted?

Supported accommodation is very unlikely to be an appropriate option for children who require help and support with personal care, have limited unsupervised time and whose care plan is for ongoing care and accommodation beyond the age of 18.

Unless a provider supports, or intends to support, looked after children or care leavers aged 16 and 17 and they are placed under s22C(6)(d) or s23B (8) (b) of the CA, then there is no requirement to register.

Q5: What does it mean if a supported accommodation service has not registered with Ofsted by 28 October 2023?

In order to legally operate, providers must be registered to provide support accommodation, or have an application to register accepted by Ofsted as complete, by 28 October 2023.

From the same date, local authorities will be prohibited from placing looked after children or care leavers aged 16-17 year old with providers that are not registered with Ofsted, or with providers which have not had an application to register accepted by Ofsted as complete.

Q6: When will we be sent the suitability questionnaire and health declaration forms as part of the SC2 form?

The Ofsted applications team will send the suitability questionnaire and health declaration forms to those who are required to complete them, once they have received the SC2 from that person.

Ofsted are making arrangements for the suitability questionnaire and health declaration forms to be available as soon as possible to download from the online application pages. Meanwhile, they will be sent out manually by email.

Q7: At what stage will we receive a unique registration number (URN)?

Applicants will get their Ofsted URN at the point the application is accepted, and Ofsted ask them to pay the fee. The payment stage completes the initial application stage which then moves on to the registration visit from an inspector.

Q8: Is it possible to re-use information and documents across different registrations? For example, statement of purpose.

The information you provide must relate to the service provided by each registration, and to the children and premises operated under that registration.

You can re-use information across different registrations if the services provided by all the registrations is the same, and they meet the requirements of what they must contain as outlined in the regulations.

Q9: How will we receive communication from Ofsted throughout the registration process and notify them of changes to the service in future?

A confirmation email is sent from Ofsted at every stage of the registration process.

Ofsted will be in touch if there are problems with the application, such as missing information or documents.

Providers will be required by regulations to notify Ofsted of certain changes to the service, such as acquiring a new property. This is done through an online form called the SC3, which is available on Ofsted's [registration guidance pages](#) for supported accommodation.

Q10: How does the registered service manager (RSM) role work?

Each registration must have a registered service manager (RSM) who is able to meet the requirements.

It is up to you what your management structure looks like, and where the RSM sits within that structure. The key thing is that the RSM is able to carry out the requirements of the role in full.

NB: If your RSM goes on annual leave, you do not need to report this to Ofsted.

Guidance on what to do if your RSM is absent for 28 days or more is in our registration guidance [Reporting changes to a supported accommodation service](#).

Theme: Fees and costs

Q11: How is the Department for Education supporting local authorities and supported accommodation providers with the additional expenses incurred by the new regulations and registration?

The Department for Education is investing over £123million over the next three years to support local authorities to respond to the changes in regulation, and offset the costs associated with the reforms.

The first instalment of this funding, totalling over £14.5million was paid directly to local authorities in April 2023. Further information, including the individual allocations to each local authority, are available in the grant letter [published here](#).

Q12: What are the fees that supported accommodation providers will need to pay as part of the registration process and in future?

Providers will need to pay a registration fee when they register with Ofsted. This has already been set and can be found in the registration guidance [Registering a supported accommodation service](#).

From 2024, you must pay an annual fee to maintain your registration. The fee amount will be reviewed every year by the Department for Education (DfE). Ofsted will publish the agreed fee in 2024, once the DfE has set it.

A fee is likely to be payable if a provider applies for an additional category to be added to their registration. Providers informing Ofsted that they have opened or closed premises will not incur a fee.

Theme: Quality standards and regulation

Q13: How will Ofsted evaluate whether a supported accommodation provider is offering support or care, given the fluctuating needs of young people?

Ofsted take the same view as the [DfE's Guide to the regulations](#), i.e. that children's needs cannot be easily categorised under 'care' or 'support' and that a rigid distinction between the two is not helpful.

Supported accommodation is part of the continuum of care and support for looked after children and care leavers. Supported accommodation should be 'flexible enough to accommodate temporary increases in support for children who would otherwise manage well in this type of provision' (p9).

In turn, Ofsted will take a sensible approach to determining whether the level of support is appropriate, taking account of individual children's circumstances and needs. Ofsted expects supported accommodation to be caring, kind and nurturing.

However, if a child has high or complex needs (for example, if their liberty is restricted, or if they require a high level of ongoing care and supervision), it is not likely that supported accommodation would be an appropriate option for them.

Q14: How will supported accommodation providers notify Ofsted of serious incidents?

Notification requirements are set out in regulations [The Supported Accommodation \(England\) Regulations 2023](#).

Providers are only obliged to notify Ofsted of incidents once they are registered.

There is an incident notification form which will be available online.

Any staff can report incidents on the Ofsted form but will need to provide the name of the registered service manager and, for organisations, the Nominated Individual.

Q15: What is considered an 'emergency' placement?

The regulations do not define 'emergency' accommodation. All supported accommodation within the scope of the regulations must be registered, whether placements are made in an emergency or in a more planned way.

Theme: Inspections and site visits

Q16: What will inspections look like?

Ofsted will consult extensively on the proposals for inspection this summer (including the benchmarks for quality and how Ofsted make judgements) before publishing inspection guidance early next year.

Ofsted are committed to getting the regulatory balance right. The regulations give Ofsted the powers to intervene, when necessary, on behalf of children but Ofsted believe that the quality standards and regulations allow for a suitably flexible and proportionate approach, critical in such a diverse and dynamic sector. But Ofsted still have high expectations of quality.

Ofsted have recruited new inspectors who will work alongside existing inspectors, initially as part of a central registration team. All will be suitably qualified and trained and will have a track record of securing better outcomes for children in support or care settings, with relevant knowledge of best practice and relevant legislation.

Q17: Will planning permission and licensing be inspected during the property visit and how will Ofsted account for the responsibilities of landlords?

Ofsted will not routinely ask to check evidence of planning permission but will ask providers to confirm that premises can meet the needs of children according to their statement of purpose, without the need for any additional planning permission, building works or conversion. For more details, please see the registration guidance: [Registering a supported accommodation service](#).

Ofsted understand that some providers will have limited control over the actions of landlords and will take that into account during registration and inspection but expect providers to do all they can to secure good outcomes for children.

Ultimately, the key question is whether providers are able to meet their responsibilities under the regulations, notwithstanding the circumstantial constraints.