

OFFICIAL



Eleanor Schooling, National Director Social Care
Social Care Policy Team
Ofsted

By e-mail: socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk

9 September 2016

Dear Eleanor and team,

Subject: Future of social care inspection consultation

Thank you for inviting submissions from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) and others regarding the consultation on the future of social care inspection. I am writing to you in an open letter as we would like to share our views with stakeholders.

To provide some background on the YJB and our interest in your consultation; the YJB is the non-departmental public body which oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales. Our vision is for every child and young person to live a safe and crime-free life, and make a positive contribution to society. To progress towards this ambitious vision, the YJB and the youth justice system works in partnership with other organisations and agencies supporting children and young people. You can find out more about the YJB at www.gov.uk/yjb.

The YJB does not have comments to make on the full breadth of your consultation questionnaire but, given the opportunity to respond, we would seek to highlight the following key points. The YJB was also represented at the Ofsted national consultative forum meeting in July where views on the consultation were discussed.

As a general point, the YJB is particularly concerned that looked-after children are more likely to enter the youth justice system than other children and concerted efforts by all relevant organisations and services are needed to address this.

We welcome inclusion in your proposed principles of social care inspection of the “experience and outcomes of children” as we believe this will help focus services on outcomes rather than processes.

We recognise the drive for, and potential benefits of, greater consistency of inspection across all the social care settings Ofsted inspects, including secure children’s homes. We think a common inspection framework approach would be a positive step in helping ensure all providers work towards the same aims for children and young people. We are supportive of the approach providing there remains a clear focus on the unique requirements and provisions of each

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

T 020 3334 5300 F 020 3334 2250 E enquiries@yjb.gsi.gov.uk W www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice

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setting. Secure children's homes must continue to have targeted inspections, alongside the common inspection framework, which fully recognise the distinct provision they offer. This is also important when considering the role of designated children's services officers in supporting the safety of children and young people in custody. The new inspection approach must also cover these functions.

In addition, we welcome your proposal to ensure read across to your inspection framework for Secure Training Centres. Further to this, we would request that your partnership with HM Inspectorate of Prisons enables you to consider their inspection approach in under-18 young offender institutions and how read across might be achieved across the young people's secure estate. It would be extremely beneficial to the YJB to be able to take a holistic view of delivery across the under 18 secure estate and it's different providers, while recognising the unique function that each of the three different aspects of the sector provide.

We know you will be aware of Charlie Taylor's review of youth justice, which had been due to report in July but may now be made available in the autumn. The review, if its proposals are taken forward by the new ministerial team at the Ministry of Justice, could stand to radically reform the youth justice system, including the youth secure estate. Charlie Taylor's interim report in February this year set out a vision for secure schools. If this were to go ahead it is reasonable to assume that Ofsted will have new inspection responsibilities to take on. Careful consideration of how to inspect secure schools, or any new kind of secure establishment, with social care and education aspects to consider, would of course be needed and the YJB can offer support with that process.

Finally, we understand that you are also considering how self-auditing could work in social care settings. The YJB has required Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to conduct self-audits over the past three years and we feel this has worked well. I attach as an annex to my letter some high level information which may be of interest to you regarding the YJB's approach to YOTs' self-audit.

If you would like to discuss my comments please do feel free to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon Lord McNally
Chairman
Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

E: Lord.McNally@yjb.gsi.gov.uk
T: 020 3334 5306

Encl: Youth Offending Team Self-Audit