

[Press release: Ofsted launches new social care common inspection framework](#)

A range of children's social care settings will be subject to the same [social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\)](#) from 1 April 2017, Ofsted announced today.

Last year Ofsted published a [consultation on the principles for children's social care inspections](#), with a new common inspection framework and proposals for a new approach to the inspection of local authority children's services. The online consultation received more than 200 responses, the vast majority of which supported the proposals. Ofsted also piloted the SCCIF and held face-to-face meetings with many interested people and groups.

From 1 April, the following three principles will link all our inspections of children's social care providers:

- to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives
- to be consistent in our expectations of providers
- to prioritise our work where improvement is needed most

At present there are several variations in the inspection guidance for social care providers across the range of settings, and differences in the criteria used by Ofsted to make judgements on each type of service.

The experiences and progress of children are central to the new SCCIF. The framework will support inspectors to focus on the difference the provider makes to the lives of children and other service users.

The SCCIF does not mean a one-size-fits-all approach to inspection. The framework is tailored to reflect and address each distinct type of children's social care provider. These are:

- children's homes, including secure children's homes
- independent fostering agencies
- voluntary adoption agencies
- residential family centres
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children
- boarding schools and residential special schools
- the residential provision of further education colleges

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

Ofsted and social care professionals have a shared goal: to give all children the best possible chance in life. The intention of our three principles is exactly this. I am pleased that sector leaders and providers responded so positively to our consultation on the

framework, and we will continue to engage with them as we implement and evaluate it.

Eleanor Schooling, Ofsted National Director of Social Care, said:

The SCCIF is an important step forward in Ofsted setting out clearly and consistently what we think matters most to children's lives wherever they live or receive help.

For the first time, we are setting out the same expectations for all social care establishments and agencies while still recognising the unique work that they do. We think this not only makes it clearer and more consistent for providers but also sets out how our inspections will consistently focus on the difference providers are making to children's lives.

Ofsted also sets out its future plans for the inspection of local authority children's services. These plans will be subject to piloting over the coming months, ready for implementation in January 2018. This will introduce proportionate inspections every three years, with a graded judgement, and focused visits between inspections to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and support local authorities to deliver good and better services.

The [social care common inspection framework and response to consultation document are available to download](#). There is further information in '[The social care common inspection framework: questions and answers](#)'.