



2018-0043027NZPO

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families
Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Will Calver
Founder & Chair of Trustees, Isabel's Voice

By email: w.calver@isabelsvoice.org.uk

Dear Will,

21st November 2018

Thank you for your email of 28 October, about the regulation of local authority (LA) children's services.

The government has not appointed any organisation or person to complete systematic audits of LA children's services, to monitor their compliance and delivery of legislation related to looked-after children. However, as you are aware, the government has appointed Ofsted as inspectorate of LA children's services. Ofsted inspect LA children's services to ensure services are delivered to a high standard everywhere. Ofsted rigorously evaluates the experiences and progress of children and young people, including looked-after children in each LA. The LA's effectiveness in protecting children is a central focus of Ofsted's inspections.

LA's compliance with legislation related to looked-after children is used to inform Ofsted's inspection of LA children's services. It is, however, just one piece of information that inspectors use in their evaluation of children's services. It is our utmost priority for all children to be kept safe, and where councils fail to provide adequate services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, or care leavers, we have developed a robust approach to intervention. This intervention includes support and challenge from expert government advisers to help LAs improve. Additionally, where Ofsted has identified persistent or systemic failure, we appoint a commissioner immediately to review whether services should be removed from council control.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Clive House
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

Direct T 0300 013 1677
yvette.stanley@ofsted.gov.uk



15 October 2018

Mr Will Calver
Founder and Chair of Trustees
Isabel's Voice

Yvette Stanley
National Director, Social Care

Sent by email to: w.calver@isabelsvoice.org.uk

Our ref: 409435

Dear Mr Calver

Thank you for your email of 3 October 2018 to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have been asked to respond in my capacity as National Director, Social Care.

Further to the response to your earlier queries, it may be helpful if I provide more information about our role as an inspectorate of local authority children's services and how our inspections work.

We do not regulate local authority children's services. Therefore, we do not carry out systematic audits of their compliance with regulations. Our inspections evaluate the experiences and progress of children and young people.

Inspectors look at the experiences of children and the social work practice that helps them. If inspectors find that the local authority is supporting the emotional and mental health of children effectively, they may look at how the local authority achieves this. If assessments and data are a factor, inspectors would say so in their findings.

Equally, if inspectors see that the local authority is not supporting the emotional and mental health of children, they would look at the reasons for this. If poor data or lack of good information from appropriate medical practitioners were the cause, inspectors would say so in their findings.

High-level data on compliance can help inspectors identify possible trends and whether certain activities have happened. However, it is only one piece of information. It does not tell us about the quality of the work done by local authority staff. Nor does it tell whether the right work happened at the right time for individual children. The quality of the work with children is where our focus sits and is what inspectors based their judgements on.