

BACKGROUND

In December 2021, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the government would be proceeding with the introduction of mandatory national standards and Ofsted registration and inspection for providers of semi-independent provision that accommodates children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17. The full announcement is available [here](#). This is a landmark change for children's social care, with all providers that accommodate looked after children and care leavers up to 18 in future being regulated by Ofsted. There are currently around 6,500 young people aged 16 or 17 in this type of provision.

The preparedness and awareness campaign

To ensure that the new standards and Ofsted regime are introduced smoothly with minimum disruption to the provider market and local authorities, this proposed provider market awareness and preparedness project will work towards ensuring that providers are ready for when the reforms take effect. This project will initially focus on raising awareness of the reform programme among the provider base, later working across the country with providers to prepare for the requirement to register with Ofsted and the new national standards becoming mandatory.

The first phase of the project will be to build provider **market awareness** of the upcoming reforms so that they are ready for the changes coming into effect. We will use this phase to gather intelligence from the market on how the upcoming changes are likely to impact them, how ready the market is, and what additional support we may need to provide to get the market ready.

This may include: desktop / market research on the existing market (including a better understanding of the split between small / large providers and the different categories of provision), interacting with providers to understand any potential concerns, implementation issues and existing best practice, and will provide a forum for market consultation on various elements of the Ofsted inspection / registration regime. This may be delivered through various methods, including research through tabletop discussions, the collection / review of quantitative data, and virtual and face to face group presentations and roundtable discussions.

We are keen to hear input from potential suppliers on how this phase could best be conducted- including other potential delivery methods or activities that will ensure the provider market is aware of the reforms and what they need to do to get ready for them.

The second phase is a **provider preparedness programme** which we will use to build the sector's knowledge of the new regime and reduce the risk of market disruption by providing implementation support to providers.

This may include: delivering events / conferences to set out the practical implications of the new regime on providers, providing a forum to develop and distribute case studies and share best practice and developing online resources such as "how to guides" and tips, and provide virtual / face to face courses / classes for providers.

This stage may be delivered through group presentations, roadshows and conferences, face to face / virtual sessions and roundtable events and online / paper resources. Again, we are keen to hear input from potential suppliers on how this phase could best be conducted.

Registration – Part 1

The Department for Education (DfE) is using the e-Tendering portal “Jaggaer” to manage this Pre-Market Engagement Event and to communicate with you. All communications with the DfE will be conducted via Jaggaer.

To ensure all communications relating to this Pre-Market Engagement Event are received, you must ensure that the point of contact you nominate in Jaggaer is accurate at all times as the DfE will not be under any obligation to contact any other point of contact apart from the one that you have named in Jaggaer. You are welcome to ask questions or seek clarification regarding this Pre-Market Engagement Event.

If there are any additional participants that you wish to be invited to the pre-market engagement event, please send a message via the e-tendering portal Jaggaer.

If at any time during this Pre-Market Engagement Event you experience technical difficulties or require technical assistance using the e-tendering portal, you should contact the e-tendering helpdesk help_UK@jaggaer.com: supplying a “screen grab” depicting any error messages you have received. Contractors should note that this email address will not be able to answer policy and/or procurement questions.

1-2-1 Registration – Part 2

To register for Part 2, please contact the DfE via the Jaggaer e-tendering system where departmental colleagues will arrange a suitable time slot.

Registration – Part 3

Part 3 is subject to change and will invite all interested suppliers to participate in the final session outlining the full requirements of the procurement. Further information will be published nearer the time.