



APPENDIX 2

Restarting Routine Inspections (COVID-19)

August 2020

Following the suspension of routine inspections in March 2020 due to COVID-19, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) have now outlined their interim plans for a phased return to routine inspections. These interim arrangements will run initially from late September until the end of December 2020. There is potential to extend this if measures for responding to and recovering from COVID-19 continue into 2021.

Focused visits have been identified as an appropriate way to hold local authority Children's Services to account but will not make a graded judgement. These visits differ slightly from usual focused visit arrangements in that they will have a broader scope, with a particular focus on the quality of decision-making; fieldwork will take place over three days; and the size of the inspection team is increased, including one schools HMI.

Scope – Focused visits will evaluate the quality and impact of decision making in three areas:

- Help and Protection
- Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Impact of Leaders

As part of the Focus Visit the role of the Schools HMI will be to evaluate:

- The educational progress of children in care
- Children missing in education
- Electively home-schooled children
- How the local authority has promoted school attendance
- Partnership working between schools and the local authority
- The effectiveness of the virtual school

- The experiences of car leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Across all areas Inspectors will be looking at:

- What has happened for children & families in the 6 months before the visit – their experiences
- Child-centres practice that has been carefully risk assessed to result in best possible decisions for children in the context of the pandemic locally
- Evaluating & seeking assurance about quality & impact of practice within a challenging context, when circumstances may have resulted in decisions that may have been different to those taken in normal times
- Give credit to evidence of practitioners & managers doing the right thing for children in the circumstances
- Understand how any of the changes to regulation set out in The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 have impacted on the experiences of children and families

Further details of the Focused Visit Inspection along with indicative timetabling can be found in the Ofsted guidance note.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services>