

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Cc Vicky Ford MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

19 February 2021

Government failure to ban unregulated accommodation and support children in care

Dear Secretary of State,

NYAS' 'Regulate' campaign has been calling for the government to ban the use of unregulated accommodation for all children in care. The announcement today excludes 16 and 17-year-olds in care, who will be the subject of yet another consultation process later this year.

While we were invited to take part in the task and finish group on this topic led by Sir Alan Wood, it is with disappointment that the group was rarely able to meet. The conclusions drawn by the government in relation to unregulated accommodation do not reflect our position or that of the children and young people who we connected the consultation with.

Almost two years on from then-Children's Minister Nadhim Zahawi promising action on unregulated accommodation on BBC Newsnight, this announcement fails to deliver for the thousands of children who need care and support.

There were 6,190 children living in unregulated accommodation on 31 March 2019. Of these, only 90 were aged 15 and under. Only those 90 will see any benefit from today's announcement, and even then it will not come into force for over six months.

On behalf of the children and young people who NYAS support, I am asking you to consider extending the ban to unregulated accommodation, to make sure it includes all children up to the age of 18. In the interim, the government must set out rigorous measures to safeguard children in unregulated accommodation equivalent to that in registered and regulated children's homes, with the 2015 Quality Standards explicitly stated in all contractual procurement arrangements for such placements.

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The steps that I have outlined above will be vital in safeguarding the rights and welfare of society's most vulnerable children and young people and we call on you to ensure that they are implemented without delay.

Today's announcement fails thousands of children who are in desperate need of care and support. I ask anyone delaying or denying the need for a full ban, "would you be comfortable placing your own child in an unregulated home?"

Yours sincerely



Rita Waters

Chief Executive
NYAS

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