



Department  
for Education

# **Residential holiday schemes for disabled children**

**National minimum standards**

**August 2013**

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# Introduction

This document contains the National Minimum Standards (NMS) applicable to providers of Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children (HSDC). The NMS together with the Regulations such as the Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children (England) Regulations 2013 (the HSDC Regulations) form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 (CSA) for the conduct of HSDC providers.

The values statement below explains the important principles which underpin these standards:

## Values

The child's welfare, safety and needs should be at the centre of their care.

Every child should have his or her wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account.

Each child should be valued as an individual and given personalised support in line with their individual needs and background in order to develop their identity, self-confidence and self-worth.

The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account.

A genuine partnership between all those involved in HSDC is essential for the NMS to deliver the best outcomes for children: this includes the Government, local government and other statutory agencies.

## Legal status of the standards

The National Minimum Standards for HSDC are issued by the Secretary of State under section 23 of the CSA. The Secretary of State will keep the standards under review and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

Minimum standards do not mean standardisation of provision. The standards are designed to be applicable to different HSDCs. They aim to enable, rather than prevent, individual providers to develop their own particular ethos and approach based on evidence that this is the most appropriate way to meet the child's needs. Many providers will aspire to exceed these standards and develop their service in order to achieve excellence.

The standards are issued for use by Ofsted, who take them into account in regulating HSDCs. They will also be important in other ways. The standards may be used by providers and staff in self-assessment of their services; they provide a basis for the training of staff; they can be used by parents, children and young people as a guide to what they should expect as a minimum a provider to do, and they can provide guidance on what is required when setting up a HSDC.

## **Structure and approach to inspection**

The NMS for HSDC focus on delivering achievable outcomes for children. Each standard is preceded by a statement of the outcome to be achieved by the provider. The standards are intended to be qualitative, in that they provide a tool for judging the quality of life experienced by children and young people who attend HSDC, but they are also designed to be measurable. Providers will normally show that they are meeting the headline statement of the outcome by following the standards below. However, these do not have to be followed exactly if the provider can demonstrate, and Ofsted is satisfied, that the outcomes are being met in a different way. The exception is a requirement set out in regulations in which case the regulation must be met. The standards outline in the legislation box what the regulatory requirement is which underpins the standards.

Across all its work, Ofsted has three core statutory responsibilities under section 117 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006: to ensure that inspection supports improvement in the services Ofsted inspects and regulates; that it is centred on the needs of users; and that it promotes the effective use of resources.

There are four elements to Ofsted's function as a regulator: registration; inspection; compliance; and enforcement. The purpose of Ofsted's inspection of social care is to assess the quality of care being provided for children, young people, and where appropriate their families. Inspection focuses on the outcomes which they are being supported to achieve. It tests compliance with the relevant regulations, and takes into account the NMS.

Following inspection, inspectors will make a number of judgements including a judgment on the overall effectiveness of the service inspected. They will make recommendations for improvement, including any action required to ensure that provisions fully meet the NMS. For HSDC, Ofsted will set requirements to be fulfilled in order to remedy any identified failure to meet the relevant regulations. Any identified failure in meeting the requirements of regulations may lead to consideration of enforcement action. Conditions of registration may be imposed.

## **The wider context**

The NMS support the HSDC Regulations. Registered persons must comply with those Regulations.

It is intended that the standards will be used, both by providers, and by Ofsted, to focus on securing the health and welfare of children, and reducing risks to their welfare and safety. All providers and staff should aim to provide the best care possible for the children for whom they are responsible, and observing the standards is an essential part, but only a part, of the overall responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of each individual child.

## **References to ‘child’**

Throughout the NMS for HSDC, we use the term ‘child’ or ‘children’. We have done this for ease to make the Standards easier to read and more comprehensible. However, any references to the term ‘child’ or ‘children’ in the NMS are to be read to include any person who is living or is accommodated at a HSDC (other than staff/staff and/or providers).

The term ‘employee’ has also been used throughout this document. References to ‘employees’ include any paid and unpaid persons.

# Child-focused standards

## Standard 1 – The child’s wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them

### The Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 10. Promotion of welfare; 12. Contact and access to communications; 30. Review of quality of care

### Outcome:

**Children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all circumstances; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.**

**The views of others with an important relationship to the child are gathered and taken into account.**

- 1.1 Children’s views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the scheme and important decisions or changes in the child’s stay, unless this is contrary to their interests.
- 1.2 Children understand how their views have been taken into account, and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon, they are helped to understand why.
- 1.3 All children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support.
- 1.4 Children can take up issues in the most appropriate way with support and without fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress.

## Standard 2 – Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

### The Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 14. Behaviour management and discipline; 15. Restraint; 16. Policies and records

### Outcome:

**Children enjoy sound relationships, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.**

- 2.1 The scheme has high expectations of all children and staff.
- 2.2 There is an environment and culture that promote positive behaviour that all staff understand and implement.
- 2.3 The scheme has a clear written policy on managing behaviour, which includes supporting positive behaviour, de-escalation of conflicts, discipline, control and restraint, that all staff understand and apply at all times.
- 2.4 All staff and volunteers understand, share and implement the HSDC's ethos, philosophy and approach to caring for children.
- 2.5 Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, in a way that is appropriate to their age and abilities.
- 2.6 Sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children.
- 2.7 Staff and volunteers understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the emotions and behaviours presented by children and understand how past experiences and present emotions are communicated through behaviour.
- 2.8 Staff and volunteers are supported to manage their responses and feelings arising from working with children, particularly where children display challenging behaviour or have difficult emotional issues. Staff and volunteers are supported to understand how children's experiences can manifest in challenging behaviour.
- 2.9 Children do not identify bullying as a problem at the scheme. Staff and children understand bullying is unacceptable. Staff working in the holiday scheme understand their role in helping to prevent and counter bullying by any adult or child at or working during the scheme.

- 2.10 Staff and volunteers on the scheme are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying, to act proactively and intervene positively, engaging with those who bully as well as those who are bullied.
- 2.11 Methods to de-escalate confrontations or potentially violent behaviour are used wherever appropriate to avoid the use of physical restraint. Restraint is only used in exceptional circumstances, to prevent injury to any person (including the child who is being restrained) or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person (including the child who is being restrained).
- 2.12 Restraint is not used as a punishment, nor to force compliance with instructions where injury to any person or serious damage to property are not otherwise likely. Use of restraint is set out in the scheme's behaviour management policy and is in line with any relevant government guidance on restraint and approved approaches to the application of physical intervention and restraint.
- 2.13 Where schemes use restraint, staff are trained in the use of physical restraint techniques and only use the scheme's agreed techniques. Training is regularly refreshed.
- 2.14 Where there has been physical restraint, schemes must be able to call on medical assistance as required and children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner.
- 2.15 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, with a relevant adult. When appropriate, children will be given the right support to discuss incidents of restraint.
- 2.16 Where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home.
- 2.17 Each scheme regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice.

## Standard 3 – Safeguarding children

### The Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 10. Promotion of welfare; 13. Arrangements for the protection of children; 17. Health Needs of children; 26. Notifiable events; Schedule 5 (events and notifications); 27. Fitness of premises used to provide care and accommodation by the scheme

### Outcome:

**Children enjoy sound relationships, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.**

- 3.1 Children's safety and welfare is promoted by the scheme. Children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm (including sexual or labour exploitation).
- 3.2 Staff and volunteers actively promote the welfare of children for the duration of the scheme and should have a clear policy on how to help a disabled child understand issues around safeguarding.
- 3.3 Staff and volunteers make positive relationships with children on the scheme, generate a culture of openness and trust and are aware of and alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate that a child is at risk of harm.
- 3.4 The scheme implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment.
- 3.5 Unchecked visitors are adequately 'chaperoned' when on the schemes premises.

## Standard 4 – Children missing from the holiday scheme

### The Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 13. Arrangements for the protection of children; 26. Notifiable events; Schedule 5 (events and notifications).

### Outcome:

**Children rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly.**

**Children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return**

- 4.1 The care and support provided to children minimises the risk that they will go missing and reduces the risk of harm should the child go missing.
- 4.2 Children are helped to understand the dangers and risks of leaving the holiday scheme without permission and are made aware of where they can access help if they consider running away or get lost.
- 4.3 Staff and volunteers inform the child's parents and actively search for children who are missing, including working with police where appropriate.
- 4.4 Written records kept by the scheme when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the scheme, and any action taken in the light of those reasons.

## Standard 5 – Promoting good health and wellbeing

### The Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: [17. Health needs of children](#); [18. Medicines](#); [28. Fire precautions](#); [Schedule 3](#).

### Outcome:

**Children stay in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and mental health is promoted.**

- 5.1 Children are encouraged to participate in a range of positive activities that contribute to their physical and emotional health.
- 5.2 Children have prompt access to doctors and other health professionals, including specialist services, if needed.
- 5.3 Staff and volunteers have received sufficient training on health and hygiene issues and first aid with particular emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases.
- 5.4 Staff and volunteers receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs.
- 5.5 Medicines which are kept on premises used for the purpose of a HSDC are stored safely and are accessible only by those for whom they are intended.
- 5.6 Prescribed medication is only given to the child for whom it was prescribed, and in accordance with the prescription. Children who are able and wish to keep and take their own medication, can do so safely.
- 5.7 There is a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children while they are accommodated.
- 5.8 Premises used for the scheme have any physical adaptations or equipment needed to provide appropriate care for children.

## Standard 6 – Providing a suitable physical environment for the child

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 27. Fitness of premises; 28. Fire precautions

### Outcome:

**Children stay in an environment that is safe, pleasant and suitable for activities and a holiday.**

- 6.1 Each scheme is carried on at premises that supports its aims and objectives for children and young people.
- 6.2 Staff and volunteers are provided with written guidelines on their health and safety responsibilities. The accommodation provided must be suitable to the particular needs of the disabled children, which may include suitable aids, adaptations and other suitable equipment.
- 6.3 Risk assessments of the whole HSDC environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children, are recorded in writing and regularly reviewed.
- 6.4 There is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practised so they know what to do in an emergency.

# **Standards of the provider of a holiday scheme for disabled children**

## Standard 7 – Statement of Purpose

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 3. Statement of Purpose; 4. Review of Statement of Purpose; Schedule 1

### Outcome:

**Children, staff, and the placing authority are clear about what services and facilities the HSDC provides.**

**The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose.**

- 7.1 The scheme has a clear Statement of Purpose which is available to and understood by staff and reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. It is available to the child, employee and any parent or person with parental responsibility.
- 7.2 Children have information about the scheme, in a format that is meaningful for them, so they can be clear about this. This could be in makaton, words, pictures etc.
- 7.3 The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.
- 7.4 The registered person approves the Statement of Purpose and reviews it annually.

## Standard 8 – Fitness to provide or manage the holiday scheme

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 5. Fitness of registered provider; 6. Appointment of manager; 7. Fitness of manager; 8. Registered person –training requirements

### Outcome:

**The scheme is provided and managed by staff and volunteers who have appropriate skills and experience to deliver an efficient and effective service.**

- 8.1 The registered provider and registered manager of the scheme:
  - have business and organisational skills to manage the work efficiently and effectively.
- 8.2 The registered manager (or registered person, where the registered person is an individual and there is no registered manager) has:
  - at least two years' experience relevant to working with children with complex needs; and
  - at least one year's experience supervising and managing professional staff.
- 8.3 Appointees to the role of registered manager who do not have the management qualification should enrol on a management training course within six months, and obtain a relevant management qualification within three years, of their appointment.
- 8.4 The responsibilities and duties of the registered manager and the person to whom they are accountable are clear and understood by both parties. The registered manager is notified in writing when the person to whom they are accountable changes.
- 8.5 The registered manager exercises effective leadership of the schemes staff and operation, such that the HSDC is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers sound, good quality care that meets the individual needs of each child attending the scheme.

## Standard 9 – Suitability to work with children

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 5. Fitness of registered provider; 7. Fitness of manager; 13. Arrangements for the protection of children; 22. Fitness of employees; 23. Employment of staff; Schedule 2

### Outcome:

**There is careful selection and vetting of staff and volunteers working with children accommodated by the HSDC, and monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children.**

- 9.1 All people working in or for the HSDC are interviewed as part of the selection process and have references checked to assess suitability before taking on responsibilities.
- 9.2 The registered person can demonstrate, including from written and electronic records, that it consistently follows good recruitment practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance, in staff recruitment and carers selection. This includes the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. All personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate these good practices.
- 9.3 The scheme has a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working (including as staff) for the scheme which includes:
  - identity checks;
  - DBS Disclosures, including the level of the Disclosure, the unique reference number, and the outcome of the check including whether the individual is barred (in line with eligibility to obtain such checks);
  - checks to confirm qualifications which are a requirement and those that are considered by the scheme to be relevant;
  - at least two references, including one from a current or recent employer (if any) and, where possible, a statement from each referee as to their opinion of the person's suitability to work with children; and
  - where the person has lived outside of the UK, such further checks as are considered appropriate where obtaining a DBS Disclosure is not sufficient to establish suitability to work with children.

- 9.4 The record must show the date on which each check was completed and who carried out the check. The DBS Disclosure information must be kept in secure conditions and be destroyed by secure means as soon as it is no longer needed. Before the Disclosure is destroyed, records need to be kept as described above.
- 9.5 The registered person's system for recruiting employees includes an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed including circumstances in which an application is refused in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability are declared or discovered through the recruitment process.
- 9.6 Staff members, volunteers and others subject to the above checks do not normally start work on the scheme until all the checks required in the HSDC Regulations are completed.
- 9.7 There is a whistle-blowing policy which is made known to all staff and volunteers. This makes it a clear duty for such people to report to an appropriate authority any circumstances relating to the operation of the HSDC which they consider likely to significantly harm the safety, rights or welfare of any child on the HSDC.

## Standard 10 – Sufficient staffing of the holiday scheme

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 21. Staffing of holiday schemes for disabled children

### Outcome:

**There are sufficient staff and volunteers who have the relevant experience and training to meet the needs of the children.**

- 10.1 The overall number, competence and deployment of staff and volunteers can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children accommodated by the scheme.
- 10.2 Records of staff and volunteers working at the scheme demonstrate the staffing level.
- 10.3 Employees who are placed in day to day charge of the scheme have a substantial relevant experience of working on HSDC.
- 10.4 All employees are at least 18 years old.
- 10.5 Employees know who is sleeping in the premises each night.

## Standard 11 – Training and development of staff

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 21. Staffing of holiday schemes for disabled children; 22. Fitness of employees; 23. Employment of staff

### Outcome:

**Children are looked after by staff and volunteers who are trained and competent to meet their needs.**

- 11.1 Employees receive high quality training commensurate with the needs of the children using the scheme. This will enable them to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional developments to look after the children accommodated at the HSDC.

## Standard 12 – Employee support and supervision

**Underpinning Legislation:**

**HSDC Regulations: 23. Employment of staff**

**Outcome:**

**Employees are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to children.**

- 12.1 Employees are easily able to access the advice needed to provide a holiday service for children and young people.

## Standard 13 – Handling allegations and suspicions of harm

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 13. Arrangements for the protection of children

### Outcome:

**Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children, the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.**

- 13.1 Employees understand what they must do if they receive an allegation or have suspicions that a person may have:
  - behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - behaved towards a child in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children.
- 13.2 The scheme ensures that the required actions are taken, or have been taken, in any relevant situation of which it is aware.
- 13.3 The scheme's procedure is in line with Government guidance and requirements including the duty to refer information to statutory bodies. It is known to employees and children.
- 13.4 The scheme's protection procedures, and how employees will be supported, should there be an allegation, are made available to them. The provider takes any comments on these procedures into account.
- 13.5 The scheme has a designated person responsible for managing allegations. This designated person has responsibility for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of the local authority in which the scheme is currently operating and for keeping the subject of the allegation informed of progress during and after the investigation.
- 13.6 Allegations against people that work with children are reported by the designated person to the LADO of the local authority in which the scheme is currently operating. This includes allegations that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant or that have also been reported directly to the police or Children and Family Services.

- 13.7 A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a particular member of staff or volunteer, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, a record of any action taken and the decisions reached, is kept on the person's confidential file and a copy is provided to the person as soon as the investigation is concluded. The information is retained on the confidential file, even after someone leaves the organisation, until the person reaches normal retirement age or for ten years if this is longer.
- 13.8 Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

## Standard 14 – Managing effectively and efficiently and monitoring the holiday scheme for disabled children

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 29. Visits by the registered provider; 30. Review of quality of care; 32. Notice of changes, Schedules 5 and 6

### Outcome:

**The scheme is managed ethically, effectively and efficiently, delivering a service which meets the needs of its users.**

- 14.1 The registered person regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the scheme to ensure compliance with the scheme's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring.
- 14.2 Management of the scheme ensures all employees work is consistent with these Regulations and NMS, the home's policies and procedures.
- 14.3 Managers, staff and volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- 14.4 Clear arrangements are in place to ensure appropriate management of the scheme when the registered manager or person is absent.
- 14.5 The registered person ensures copies of inspection reports by Ofsted are available to all staff, the children and the children's parents/carers and on request to responsible authorities.
- 14.6 Visits to the scheme carried out under Regulation 29 include relevant checks set out in Regulations and guidance and checks of any disciplinary measures and use of restraint and records of missing person's reports.
- 14.7 The registered provider's written report of a visit carried out under Regulation 29 is lodged at the Scheme's administrative offices for the manager and volunteer to read and to respond.
- 14.8 The registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they identify or which is raised with them.
- 14.9 The registered person has provided the scheme with a written procedure for considering complaints and responding to representations and complaints in accordance with legal requirements and relevant statutory guidance.

## Standard 15 – Records

### Underpinning Legislation:

HSDC Regulations: 24. Children’s case records; 25. Other records; 30. Review quality of care; Schedules 4 and 6

### Outcome:

**Records are clear, up to date and stored securely.**

- 15.1 The scheme has and implements a written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the registered person’s files and information to be kept on the child’s files. Records may be kept in electronic form. Staff and volunteers understand the nature of records maintained and follow the scheme’s policy for the keeping and retention of files, managing confidential information, and access to files (including files removed from the premises). There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed.
- 15.2 Children and their parents / placing authority understand the nature of records maintained and how to access them.
- 15.3 Information about individual children is kept confidential and only shared with those who have a legitimate need to know, or are entitled to see, the information.
- 15.4 Entries in records are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising and distinguish as far as possible between fact, opinion and third party information.
- 15.5 Information about individual children is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. Children are actively encouraged to read their files, other than confidential or third party information and to correct errors and add personal statements.



Department  
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