Department of Health
An Roinn Sláinte
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GUIDANCE CIRCULAR ADDENDUM

Guidance on Maintaining Age Ratios in Jointly Commissioned Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects	**Circular Reference: FCPD Communication 03/2019 Addendum** **Date of Issue: 31 July 2019**
For action by: Chief Executive, HSC Board Director of Social Care and Children, HSC Board Chief Executives, HSC Trusts Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts Chief Executive, RQIA **For information to:** Chief Executive, NIHE Director of Social Housing Policy and Oversight, DfC Director of Housing Supply Policy and Delivery, DfC Deputy Director of Social Housing Policy and Oversight, DfC Chief Executive, Council for the Homeless NI Chief Executive, NICCY Director Fostering Network Northern Ireland Director, Include Youth Chief Executive, VOYPIC	**Related documents** FCPD Communication 03/2019: Guidance on Maintaining Age Ratios in Jointly Commissioned Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects Standards - Leaving Care Services in Northern Ireland Standards for Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects in Northern Ireland (2012) FCPD 01/2015: Guidance on conditions to be considered on the continued placement of an 18 year old in a registered children's home (2015) **Superseded documents** N/A **For immediate implementation** **Enquiries** Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to: Looked After Children and Adoption Policy Unit Department of Health Room A3.7, Castle Buildings Stormont Estate BELFAST BT4 3SQ ☎ 028 90 765604 ✉ Brenda.shields@health-ni.gov.uk **Summary of contents** This guidance provides further clarification for commissioners and providers of supported accommodation for young adults on the maintenance of age ratios in compliance with Statement of Purpose and agreed service contracts in supported accommodation projects.

Addendum to Guidance Circular FCPD Communication 03/2019 - Guidance on Maintaining Age Ratios in Jointly Commissioned Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects

Background

1. The Department issued a circular (FCPD Communication Circular 03/2019) on 1 February 2019 to provide clarification for commissioners, providers and inspectors of supported accommodation for young adults on the occupancy split, in terms of age, which should be maintained within this type of project.

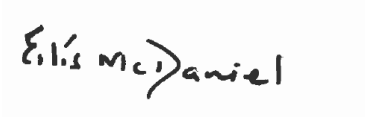
2. **The purpose of this Addendum is to emphasise that the circular was not intended to signal that supported accommodation projects can or should operate on a 50/50 children to adults percentage basis.** The point being made was that any project which routinely accommodates more children than adults will require it to be regulated as a children's home, making it subject to registration and inspection by RQIA.

3. By way of reminder, I would in particular draw your attention to paragraph 7 of the Circular 03/2019 which states:

   'As supported accommodation projects meet the accommodation needs of children (those who are aged 16 or 17) and young adults (those who are aged 18-21+), that is, young people in a mixed age-range, this accommodation is not intended to be provided wholly or mainly for children aged 16 or 17. Accommodation provided wholly or mainly for children under the age of 18 is classified as a Children's Home and is subject to standards, regulatory and inspection regimes specific to children's homes.'

4. First and foremost, a supported accommodation project must operate in accordance with its Statement of Purpose and within the terms of an agreed service contract between the commissioner and provider. Any departure from that will require the Statement of Purpose to be reviewed and probably revised and may require an adjustment to contract.

5. You are asked to note the content of this Addendum, to cascade to staff within your organisation as appropriate and ensure that it is adhered to in full.



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