



The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith

Minister for Skills

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Lord Storey
House of Lords
London
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Tuesday 7th October 2025

Dear Mike,

I'd like to thank you for the interesting debate on Amendment 451 to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, concerning the use of non-school (unregistered) alternative provision.

When used effectively, non-school alternative provision offers tailored support that meets individual needs and helps re-engage children in education, supporting future regular attendance in school. However, in some areas, inadequate oversight is putting already vulnerable children's safety and the quality of their education at risk. Too often, children whose needs could be met in school are instead placed in unsafe, low-quality settings with no clear plan for returning to mainstream education.

That is why we have published a comprehensive set of measures to raise standards across the sector. These measures form part of our response to last year's consultation, *Strengthening Protections in Unregistered Alternative Provision*, and are accompanied by new voluntary national standards and guidance to support early implementation.

The measures are designed to improve safety and quality without undermining access to tailored, specialist support. They include

- The planned introduction of new mandatory national standards for non-school alternative provision, with voluntary standards and guidance published now to support local areas in testing and embedding these arrangements.
- A clear expectation that placements in non-school alternative provision should be time-limited, focused on re-engaging children with education, and preparing them for successful transitions back into school.

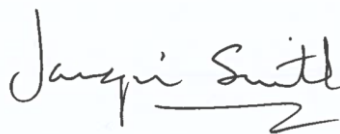
- A strengthened role for local authorities, who, under our plans, will be responsible for quality assuring provision against the new standards, while schools will ensure that placements meet individual needs.
- Under our plans, Local authorities will no longer be able to place children who are not on school registers in non-school alternative provision.

While the consultation also explored oversight of Non-School Alternative Provision delivering Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS), we are not taking forward proposals in this area at this stage. We are instead reviewing current practice and the wider context before making any decisions on future regulation.

Officials are working closely with local authorities, schools, and providers to begin implementing and testing the new voluntary standards. We will continue to engage with the sector to ensure the reforms are proportionate, effective, and deliver meaningful improvements for children.

I hope this letter provides reassurance and clarity on the Government's position. I will place a copy in the House libraries along with copies of the [Strengthening protections in non-school alternative provision - government response](#) and [Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards - GOV.UK](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jacqui Smith', with a stylized flourish underneath.

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