



# Children Act 1989

## 1989 CHAPTER 41

### PART VII

#### VOLUNTARY HOMES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

#### **59 Provision of accommodation by voluntary organisations**

- (1) Where a voluntary organisation provide accommodation for a child, they shall do so by—
- (a) placing him (subject to subsection (2)) with—
    - (i) a family;
    - (ii) a relative of his; or
    - (iii) any other suitable person,on such terms as to payment by the organisation and otherwise as the organisation may determine;
  - (b) maintaining him in a voluntary home;
  - (c) maintaining him in a community home;
  - (d) maintaining him in a registered children's home;
  - (e) maintaining him in a home provided by the Secretary of State under section 82(5) on such terms as the Secretary of State may from time to time determine; or
  - (f) making such other arrangements (subject to subsection (3)) as seem appropriate to them.
- (2) The Secretary of State may make regulations as to the placing of children with foster parents by voluntary organisations and the regulations may, in particular, make provision which (with any necessary modifications) is similar to the provision that may be made under section 23(2)(a).
- (3) The Secretary of State may make regulations as to the arrangements which may be made under subsection (1)(f) and the regulations may in particular make provision which (with any necessary modifications) is similar to the provision that may be made under section 23(2)(f).

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*Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).*

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- (4) The Secretary of State may make regulations requiring any voluntary organisation who are providing accommodation for a child—
  - (a) to review his case; and
  - (b) to consider any representations (including any complaint) made to them by any person falling within a prescribed class of person,in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (4) may in particular make provision which (with any necessary modifications) is similar to the provision that may be made under section 26.
- (6) Regulations under subsections (2) to (4) may provide that any person who, without reasonable excuse, contravenes or fails to comply with a regulation shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.

## **60 Registration and regulation of voluntary homes**

- (1) No voluntary home shall be carried on unless it is registered in a register to be kept for the purposes of this section by the Secretary of State.
- (2) The register may be kept by means of a computer.
- (3) In this Act “voluntary home” means any home or other institution providing care and accommodation for children which is carried on by a voluntary organisation but does not include—
  - (a) a nursing home, mental nursing home or residential care home;
  - (b) a school;
  - (c) any health service hospital;
  - (d) any community home;
  - (e) any home or other institution provided, equipped and maintained by the Secretary of State; or
  - (f) any home which is exempted by regulations made for the purposes of this section by the Secretary of State.
- (4) Schedule 5 shall have effect for the purpose of supplementing the provisions of this Part.

## **61 Duties of voluntary organisations**

- (1) Where a child is accommodated by or on behalf of a voluntary organisation, it shall be the duty of the organisation—
  - (a) to safeguard and promote his welfare;
  - (b) to make such use of the services and facilities available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the organisation reasonable in his case; and
  - (c) to advise, assist and befriend him with a view to promoting his welfare when he ceases to be so accommodated.
- (2) Before making any decision with respect to any such child the organisation shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ascertain the wishes and feelings of—
  - (a) the child;
  - (b) his parents;

- (c) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him; and
- (d) any other person whose wishes and feelings the organisation consider to be relevant,

regarding the matter to be decided.

- (3) In making any such decision the organisation shall give due consideration—
  - (a) having regard to the child's age and understanding, to such wishes and feelings of his as they have been able to ascertain;
  - (b) to such other wishes and feelings mentioned in subsection (2) as they have been able to ascertain; and
  - (c) to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

## **62 Duties of local authorities**

- (1) Every local authority shall satisfy themselves that any voluntary organisation providing accommodation—
  - (a) within the authority's area for any child; or
  - (b) outside that area for any child on behalf of the authority,are satisfactorily safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children so provided with accommodation.
- (2) Every local authority shall arrange for children who are accommodated within their area by or on behalf of voluntary organisations to be visited, from time to time, in the interests of their welfare.
- (3) The Secretary of State may make regulations—
  - (a) requiring every child who is accommodated within a local authority's area, by or on behalf of a voluntary organisation, to be visited by an officer of the authority—
    - (i) in prescribed circumstances; and
    - (ii) on specified occasions or within specified periods; and
  - (b) imposing requirements which must be met by any local authority, or officer of a local authority, carrying out functions under this section.
- (4) Subsection (2) does not apply in relation to community homes.
- (5) Where a local authority are not satisfied that the welfare of any child who is accommodated by or on behalf of a voluntary organisation is being satisfactorily safeguarded or promoted they shall—
  - (a) unless they consider that it would not be in the best interests of the child, take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that the care and accommodation of the child is undertaken by—
    - (i) a parent of his;
    - (ii) any person who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him; or
    - (iii) a relative of his; and
  - (b) consider the extent to which (if at all) they should exercise any of their functions with respect to the child.

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- (6) Any person authorised by a local authority may, for the purpose of enabling the authority to discharge their duties under this section—
- (a) enter, at any reasonable time, and inspect any premises in which children are being accommodated as mentioned in subsection (1) or (2);
  - (b) inspect any children there;
  - (c) require any person to furnish him with such records of a kind required to be kept by regulations made under paragraph 7 of Schedule 5 (in whatever form they are held), or allow him to inspect such records, as he may at any time direct.
- (7) Any person exercising the power conferred by subsection (6) shall, if asked to do so, produce some duly authenticated document showing his authority to do so.
- (8) Any person authorised to exercise the power to inspect records conferred by subsection (6)—
- (a) shall be entitled at any reasonable time to have access to, and inspect and check the operation of, any computer and any associated apparatus or material which is or has been in use in connection with the records in question; and
  - (b) may require—
    - (i) the person by whom or on whose behalf the computer is or has been so used; or
    - (ii) any person having charge of, or otherwise concerned with the operation of, the computer, apparatus or material,to afford him such assistance as he may reasonably require.
- (9) Any person who intentionally obstructs another in the exercise of any power conferred by subsection (6) or (8) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.