

Children's Homes

National Minimum Standards

FORMAL CONSULTATION DRAFT

**This is a copy of the Draft Standards for Children's Homes in England:
They were launched in Sept 2009, the consultation process ended in
December 2009.**

We understand the new Standards will be published in March 2011.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This document contains the National Minimum Standards (NMS) applicable to providers of children's homes. The NMS together with the regulations such as the Children Homes regulations 2001 form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 (CSA) for the conduct of children's home providers.

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

Values

- Looked after children deserve the best experiences in life, from excellent parenting and education to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents, skills and interests, in order to have an enjoyable childhood and successful adult life. Stable placements, emotional wellbeing and support for children to help them move on successfully are essential elements of this success.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family that can meet their developmental needs. Where possible this should be with their birth family, but where this is not consistent with their welfare every effort will be made to secure an alternative stable home where the child will feel loved and valued.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- Children's wishes and feelings are important and will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.
- Every child has his or her wishes and feelings listened to and taken into account. Where they are not acted upon, the reasons for not doing so are explained to the child. The child's wishes and feelings and how they are acted upon, or, if applicable, the reasons they are not acted upon, are recorded on the child's case record.
- Each child is treated as an individual rather than primarily as a member of a group, and is given personalised support in line with their individual needs, taking their current wishes and feelings fully into account. Children receive individual help, guidance and support when needed or requested

- Children’s ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made.
- The significance of contact for looked after children, and of maintaining relationships with birth parents and the wider family including siblings, half-siblings, and grandparents, is recognised as is the carers role in this.
- The particular needs of disabled children and children with complex needs will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made about them.
- Children in residential children’s homes will be given the opportunity for as full an experience of a supportive family environment as possible and those working in residential children’s homes will be enabled to achieve this.
- The central importance of the child’s relationship with their carer/s will be acknowledged and the work of the wider team around the child will be undertaken in a way that strengthens and supports the role of the carer/s.
- Carers will be recognised as a core member of the team around the child with an important contribution to make in planning and decision making about the child.
- Carers will be provided with the support services needed to provide the best care for the child and will be told what support the registered person will make available to them.
- Carers will be provided with opportunities for training and development that they need to develop themselves in their role as carers and provide the best care for the child.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in children’s homes is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children: this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) and Adoption Support Agencies (ASAs).

How the Standards fit with the Every Child Matters Outcomes

The Government’s aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution

- Achieve economic wellbeing.

Ofsted's inspection of children's homes against the provisions of the Regulations and Standards will be carried out within the context of the five Every Child Matters Outcomes, and consideration will be given to whether the service ultimately contributes to helping children meet these outcomes.

Legal status of the standards

The National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes are issued by the Secretary of State under section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The Secretary of State will keep the standards under review and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

They are 'minimum' standards, rather than 'best possible' practice. Many providers will more than meet the National Minimum Standards and will aspire to exceed them in many ways. Minimum standards do not mean standardisation of provision. The standards are designed to be applicable to the wide variety of different types of children's homes, and 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.

Although the standards are issued for use by Ofsted in regulating children's homes, they will also have other important practical uses. They may be used by providers and staff in self-assessment of their services; they provide a basis for the induction and training of staff; they can be used by parents children and young people as a guide to what they should expect a provider to do, and they can provide guidance on what is required when setting up a children's home.

Structure and approach to inspection

The National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes focus delivering on achievable outcomes for children and young people.

Each standard is preceded by a statement of the outcome to be achieved by the provider. The full set of numbered paragraphs must be met in order to achieve compliance with the standards. The standards are intended to be qualitative, in that they provide a tool for judging the quality of life experienced by services users, but they are also designed to be measurable. Services will normally show that they are meeting the headline statement of outcome by following the standards below. However, these do not have to be followed to the letter if the service can demonstrate, and Ofsted is satisfied, that the standards are being met in a different way. Such variation/flexibility may be appropriate in services with specific purposes, for example the provision of

short breaks for disabled children or schools which are children's homes. The exception is where standard refers to a requirement set out in regulations in which case the regulation must be met.

In all cases, when Ofsted makes an inspection judgement it will take into account the supporting standards and the judgement will:

- be focused on the outcomes for children and young people being cared for;
- be based on the interests of the children and young people;
- be an individual decision based upon a recognition of the uniqueness of the service;
- remain consistent with the outcomes;
- follow a consistent inspection methodology and reporting format across the country.

The Care Standards Act 2000 provides that these National Minimum Standards are linked to the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3967). However, other regulations and/or primary legislation will also be relevant to providers. This introduction should not be taken as a general guide and is not an exhaustive legal reference. The National Minimum Standards do not override the need for services to comply with other legislation such as the Children Act 1989 and legislation covering health and safety, fire or planning regulations.

It is intended that the standards will be used, both by children's homes providers and by Ofsted, to focus on securing positive welfare, health and education outcomes for children and young people, and reducing risks to their welfare and safety. All providers and staff of children's homes 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.

STANDARDS AROUND THE CHILD

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

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 11. Promotion of welfare. 15. Contact and access to communications. 34. Review of quality of care.

OUTCOME

- Children’s views, wishes and feelings are known by staff and are reflected in all aspects of their care except where it would not be in the best interest of the child to do so.
- Children are helped to understand why, within reason, when their views, wishes and feelings are not reflected in their care and understand how to complain and get help and support.
- The views of others with an important relationship to the child are gathered and acted upon where appropriate.

Standard

1. Children are encouraged and supported to have a real say in decisions affecting them and to become active in making decisions about their lives. They are informed regularly and frequently on progress and developments, or lack of progress, on decision making or changes affecting them.
2. Positive suggestions for change or improvement are actively encouraged from children and seriously considered, with feedback given on the outcome and the reasons for it. The registered person takes these wishes and feelings into account in monitoring staff and also the operation and development of the home.
3. All carers understand the importance of listening to the views of the children in their care, and are trained and supported in listening and responding to children’s views, and in mediating and complaint resolution.
4. Children have an input to decisions that is proportionate to understanding rather than age. The views and feelings of very young children and those not able fully to understand the issues involved should still be sought and taken into account as far as is possible. Assessment of a child’s current understanding in relation to input to any decision is based on:

- a. understanding of the question posed,
 - b. understanding the reasons for anything that is proposed,
 - c. understanding the choices available,
 - d. reasonably understanding what will happen if each of the choices is taken,
 - e. ability to weigh reasonably between major choices,
 - f. ability to give a personal opinion rather than solely repeat what others say, and
 - g. ability to keep to one view rather than constantly changing their mind.
5. Children are consulted, and their views taken fully into account, about any significant proposed developments or changes in the nature, provision or operation of the home.
 6. Children are frequently and fully consulted about their views, wishes and feelings on all aspects of their care including day-to-day matters, and these are taken into account before decisions are made and not taken for granted. No child is assumed unable to communicate their views.
 7. Support is provided for any child for whom English is not their first language (or who use alternative methods of communication), enabling them to communicate their needs, wishes and concerns, and to communicate with staff and other children within the home.
 8. Appropriate support is provided for children who are refugees and for asylum seeking children, taking into account the particular circumstances of each child's flight from his or her country of origin and the advice of specialist agencies where necessary.
 9. Children's wishes and concerns are acted upon unless there is good reason not to. Children understand how their views have been reflected and where significant wishes or concerns are not acted upon the reasons for it. The views obtained are documented, particularly where the children communicate non-verbally.
 10. The views of parents of children at the home and of contact officers in the responsible authorities are sought regularly on children's care at the home and on the operation of the home. Feedback is provided on how these views have been reflected.
 11. Consultation and feedback is appropriate to each child's understanding, with suitable means provided for any child with communication difficulties. Staff are aware of each child's preferred method of communication,
 12. Where consultation with and involvement of a child's family is inappropriate, or is not in the interests of the child it is explained to children why this is so, and consultation takes place with significant others or an independent visitor, as appropriate.

13. Each child has at least one person, independent of the home and the child's placing authority, whom they may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the home (such a person may for example be an advocate, children's rights officer, adult family member, personal adviser, befriender, visitor acting on behalf of an organisation carrying on the home, independent visitor, or mentor).
14. Children know their rights to advocacy and how to access help, advice and support from an advocate. Children know how to contact Ofsted and the Children's Rights Director.
15. Each child is helped to contact their social worker, leaving care worker, placing officer, Independent Reviewing Officer, or other case worker if they wish to contact them, and to speak to them in private, without needing to seek permission or explain what they wish to discuss. Children can communicate electronically or in writing with these workers.
16. Where a child is visited by any person listed in the previous paragraph above, or their solicitor or a visiting officer of Ofsted, they are able to speak with that person alone and in private.
17. The registered person ensures that children at the home know how to raise any concerns or complaints without fear of any adverse consequences of making a complaint, and ensures that they receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised. Steps are taken to ensure that children with communication difficulties have full access to making a complaint and complaints are addressed seriously and without delay with feedback to the complainant.
18. A full response to the complaint is provided within 28 days, complaints are recorded and children or others who have made the complaint are kept informed of progress.
19. The registered person regularly reviews the records of the consultation with children and others and any complaints from children or others to ensure appropriate action is being taken. Procedures, policies and the care in the home are revised where necessary.

STANDARD 2 – Promoting positive behaviour and relations with staff and others

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 17. Management behaviour, discipline and restraint.

OUTCOME

- Children have the support and encouragement they need to behave appropriately taking into account their individual circumstances.
- Children’s behaviour is managed appropriately.
- Children can enjoy sound relationships with staff and others in the home based on self- esteem, self- worth and mutual respect.

Standard

Helping children understand their behaviour and responding to children appropriately

1. Staff communicate clearly, appropriately and positively with children and help children to understand their own behaviour and how to behave appropriately.
2. Staff know how to encourage and do encourage children to become more aware of how they are feeling; express their emotions more richly and fully through their words, face, voice, tone and body language; gain strategies for managing their feelings; and use this understanding to behave more appropriately, make better choices, learn more effectively and build better relationships with others.
3. Expectations of behaviour for both staff and children are clearly understood by those living and working at the home. Children are encouraged to develop a proper awareness of their rights and responsibilities.
4. Children are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement of positive behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour. All staff receive training in positive care and control of children. Training is regularly refreshed.
5. Staff set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries. Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries.

Staff are sensitive to gender issues especially when dealing with children of the opposite sex.

6. The registered person has a clear written policy, procedures and guidance for staff based on a code of conduct setting out how staff should encourage positive behaviour and the control, disciplinary and restraint measures permitted in response to negative behaviour. All staff follow this policy in practice.
7. The registered person ensures that staff have clear written information on the following:
 - the child and his/her family to enable staff to protect the child, other children for whom they have responsibility and themselves
 - the support available to staff to enable them to safeguard and promote the welfare of the individual child, other children for whom they have responsibility and themselves
 - safe caring guidelines, appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the individual child and children in the home, which are discussed with everyone in the home, where appropriate the child's social worker, cleared with the child's social worker and explained clearly and appropriately to the child
 - about ways to promote structure and boundaries for the child and positive approaches to discipline and responding to the child's behaviour
 - that makes clear the importance of children being able to influence staff's approach to their personal behaviour management, e.g. by identifying trigger points.
 - that makes clear that corporal punishment is not acceptable and that this includes smacking, slapping, shaking and all other humiliating forms of treatment or punishment
 - that makes clear children are not to be punished for the misdeeds of others, e.g. by 'group punishments' where not all children punished were involved in the misdeed and do not take part in the punishment or restraint of other children.
8. Disagreements between staff and children are dealt with reasonably.
9. The home's approach to encouraging positive behaviour, including measures of control, discipline and restraint, are made clear to the placing authority, child, parent/s or carers before or, in an emergency placement, at the time the child is to move into the home.
10. Control, disciplinary and restraint measures are based on establishing positive relationships with children. They also encourage reparation and restitution and reduce the likelihood of negative behaviour becoming the focus of attention.

11. The registered person ensures staff receive support on how to manage their responses and feelings arising from dealing with children who may have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and exhibit very challenging behaviour, including being able to debrief after incidents.
12. The home and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child. Children respect each others need for privacy. Staff supervision is not intrusive on personal privacy, and during private personal activity (e.g. dressing, showering) amounts to supervision not watching.

Building protective friendships and countering bullying

13. The registered person and the staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. There is a policy on countering bullying, which is clear, appropriate to the home, known to children and staff and is implemented and effective in practice.
14. Children are encouraged to build a community where they feel responsible for including their peers and can develop and practise the skills associated with building positive relationships, being able to make, break and sustain friends without hurting others. They are supported to learn and practice the skills of assertiveness so they become more able to resist negative peer pressure and are taught strategies to help them resolve conflicts before relationships are damaged or ill feeling escalates into bullying.
15. Staff actively promotes the involvement of all children in the home's social group, counters isolation of individuals by others, nurtures friendships between children, and supports those children who for any reason do not readily 'fit in' to the resident group.
16. Anti-bullying practice is effective in minimising bullying: children do not report significant or increasing levels of bullying.
17. Children are individually helped to establish appropriate protective friendships within the group, and to minimise any bullying reactions from others arising from any perceived differences from the norms of the child group. Children who are bullied are supported, and children who may bully others are given help to understand their bullying behaviour and how to avoid it.
18. The incidence and nature of bullying is regularly monitored, including input from children, resulting in counter-bullying action.
19. Regular risk assessments are carried out to identify times and places with a high risk of bullying and children who are particularly vulnerable to bullying, resulting in counter-bullying action.

20. Each child can spend time alone away from other children if they wish.

Physical intervention and restraint

21. Staff are clear about how to exercise appropriate control over children who are displaying very challenging behaviour in the interests of the child's own welfare and the protection of others, and do this in practice.

22. Children with a disability or challenging behaviour must not be subject to special measures to monitor, or to restrict, their movements if that is possibly avoidable.

23. Any measures to monitor, or to restrict the movements of, a child must be:

- Reasonable
- The minimum necessary
- Justified solely on the grounds of safeguarding the child or other people from likely significant harm
- Only used as a last resort if other reasonable measures (e.g. increased staff supervision) are not possible
- Must be approved by the child's responsible authority
- Administered by a health professional currently involved with the child's care or treatment, be part of the child's approved care plan, take account as far as is possible of the child's wishes and feelings, and be regularly and frequently reviewed.

24. Staff are trained in de-escalating problems and disputes to reduce the likelihood of violence and the need for physical restraint.

25. All staff are trained in the use of restraint techniques and only use the home's agreed techniques. Training is regularly refreshed.

26. Physical restraint is not used expect to prevent likely serious injury or likely serious damage to property. Restraint is never used:

- as a punishment
- as a means to enforce compliance with instructions
- or in response to challenging behaviour which does not give rise to reasonable expectation of injury to someone or serious damage to property. (For schools which are children's homes, this does not prevent the use of restraint in circumstances permitted by s550A of the Education Act 1996, while the child is receiving education.)

27. Where there has been physical intervention, the child will be encouraged to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner within 24 hours.

28. The registered person's policy on the use and techniques of physical restraint and other forms of physical intervention, and the circumstances in which they may be used, is consistent with any relevant government guidance on approved methods of restraint and physical intervention.
29. All children are given an opportunity to discuss incidents and express their views. When disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to write or have their views recorded and sign their names against them if possible in the records kept by the home. A similar and separate record of any sanctions will also be kept in the same way.
30. All staff involved in incidents of restraint are given the opportunity for formal debriefing and are able to feedback their views on the incident.
31. A record of the use of restraint on a child by an adult is kept in a separate record which includes the name and age of the child, the date, time and location, details of the behaviour requiring use of restraint, attempts to avoid the use of restraint, the nature of the restraint used, the duration of the restraint, the name of the staff member(s) using restraint, the name(s) of any other staff, children or other people present, the effectiveness and any consequences of the restraint, any injuries caused to or reported by the child or any other person, any medical attention given, details of any debriefing of any staff and children involved, and the signature of a person authorised by the registered person to make the record. The record is either a dedicated bound and numbered book or an electronic equivalent record keeping system.
32. The registered person will regularly monitor the record books to monitor compliance with the home's policy, procedure and guidance and to identify any patterns and any implications for the care of individual children and current care practice.
33. The home has procedures and guidance on police involvement in the home, which have been agreed with the local police and which staff are knowledgeable and clear about.

STANDARD 3 – Promoting diversity and positive identity and potential through individualised care

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 11. Promotion of welfare. 20. Health needs of children.

OUTCOME

- Children are supported to have a positive identity of themselves and to receive care which is personalised to meet their needs.
- Each child's background, gender, religion, racial origin, cultural background, linguistic background, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, abilities and interests, are promoted so that all children have the chance to maximise their potential.

Standard

1. All children are given personalised support in line with their needs and wishes and children identified as having particular needs receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.
2. The registered person works in partnership with the responsible authority for the child:
 - to support staff
 - work closely with social workers to implement the care plan for the child
 - to enhance the child's confidence and feeling of self-worth.
3. Staff training covers how to boost and maintain the child's feeling of self-worth.
4. The registered person ensures that professional services are provided where necessary to help children develop a positive identity in relation to gender, disability, religious, racial, cultural or linguistic background or sexual orientation.
5. Appropriate support is provided for children who are refugees or asylum seeking children, taking into account the particular circumstances of each child's flight from his or her country of origin and the advice of specialist agencies where necessary.
6. The registered person ensures that staff and services value diversity and promote equality.

7. Placement decisions consider the child's needs in terms of background, gender, religion, racial origin, cultural background, linguistic background, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, abilities and interests. Preparation and training to staff ensures that they can respect this and support and help the child deal with all forms of discrimination.
8. The registered person ensures, in consultation with parents as appropriate, the provision of individually appropriate personal, health, social and sex and relationship education for each resident child, including disabled children.
9. Staff can demonstrate in day-to-day decision making, an appropriate balance between the needs, wishes, and preferences of each child living in the household and the group as a whole.
10. The deployment of staff in the home facilitates continuity of staff providing care to individual children. Where children require personal care, their choices of which staff provide that care are maximised.

Meals, clothes, money and allowing the child to develop their own tastes and choices

11. Children should also have the opportunity to shop for and prepare their own meals. Children are regularly consulted about the choice and quality of food available and feedback on whether their views are taken into account in future provision.
12. Children are provided with food with regard to their cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and dietary needs and choices (including the choice of vegetarian meals).
13. Children are provided with a personal allowance appropriate to their age and understanding. The allowance is distributed or withheld in a fair and transparent manner and they are allowed to spend their own money, including pocket money, in any reasonable way they wish.
14. Children are encouraged and enabled to choose their own clothes and personal requisites and have these needs fully met.
15. Children are able to exercise choice and independence in the clothes and personal requisites that they buy, and to buy these through normal shopping arrangements.
16. Cultural, racial, ethnic or religious expectations regarding the choice of clothes or personal requisites are supported and positively promoted.

17. Children are able to keep their clothing and personal requisites and toiletries for their own exclusive use except where not appropriate. Young women have their own supply of sanitary protection and do not have to request it from a central stock.

STANDARD 4 - Protecting from abuse and neglect (see also standard on allegations)

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 16. Arrangements for the protection of children.

OUTCOME

- Practice protects children from significant harm, including abuse and accident.

Standard

1. There are systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of children and to ensure that children are protected from abuse and other forms of significant harm, which are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff), are understood by children and parents, are consistently implemented, and are effective in protecting children from harm.
2. The registered person ensures the provision of training for all staff, (including ancillary staff, agency staff and volunteers) in skills to care for children who have been abused, recognising signs of abuse (including its recognition in non-verbal children) dealing with disclosures or suspicions of abuse, safe- care skills, skills to support positive behaviour and ways of boosting and maintaining the child's self-esteem.
3. For children's homes offering placements to disabled children, disability-specific training is provided which focuses on the ways in which disabled children are vulnerable to abuse. This training is included in induction programmes for new staff, including temporary or agency staff, and is ongoing for the staff group in keeping with the aims and objectives of the home.
4. Staff supervision of children (including ability of children to contact staff when not with them) gives satisfactory protection from harm.
5. The registered person and staff have routine links with other agencies concerned with child protection e.g. the placing authority, schools, hospitals, general practitioners, etc. and do not work in isolation from them.
6. Procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required in order to protect children and minimise the risk of abuse whilst the child is living in the home. Guidance is appropriate to the home and its current child group, is known to staff, and is implemented

consistently and effectively in practice. This includes:

- making a full assessment of children's histories and any experience of abuse
- observing contacts between children
- supervision of children
- supervision and support of staff
- recognition of possible involvement of children in prostitution
- confidentiality
- physical contact between staff and children
- one to one time alone by staff with children
- administering medication.
- supervising adults visiting or working in the home or having contact with children within the home (even if not there to work with children, and including tradespersons and contractors working on the premises)
- enabling children to report to appropriate staff concerns about potential risk to themselves, with appropriate response and without reprisals.

STANDARD 5 – Children Missing from Care

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 16. Arrangements for the protection of children. 30. Notifiable events.

OUTCOME

- Children are supported so that they don't feel the need to leave the home without authority.
- Procedures are in place to protect children who are absent without authority and to facilitate their safe return.

Standard

1. Children who are absent without authority or are considered to have potential to be absent without authority, are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.
2. An evaluation of whether a child is likely to run away from the home should be carried out on every child entering the home and an appropriate response is in place.
3. All children should also be counselled in the dangers and risks to leaving the home without permission. They should also be made aware of where they can access help if they consider running away. Procedures should address any concerns and reasons of the child which may lead a child to go missing, and aim to reduce the risk of harm if the child does go missing.
4. Where children are considered likely to go missing or children that have gone missing from their previous placements, the registered person has agreed procedures to monitor the child and a strategy has been put in place to prevent incidents of the child going missing from the home. Procedures may include behavioural and/or therapeutic approaches to change the child's behaviour and the registered person should support the staff in understanding what these are and how they can help the child. Any such measures must be used as agreed and recorded in the child's Placement Plan and in their care plan.
5. Children who are absent from the home without consent are protected in line with the home's written policy and guidance.

6. The home's procedures are compatible with the local police missing person's protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the home is located.
7. The written procedures of the home identify action to be taken when a child is absent without authority cover the following areas:
 - searching for any child missing or believed to have run away from the home
 - reporting missing children to the police, to the child's responsible authority and to others (including parents), subject to consultation with the placing authority (this will include risk assessment of the likely danger to the child), timing of reporting children missing to the police, their responsible authority and others
 - action to obtain information about the whereabouts of a missing child and to try to ensure the safety and welfare of that child
 - the collection and return of missing children when found
 - action to be taken on the child's return
 - allowing for any individual arrangements based on the needs of the child as agreed in his/her Placement Plan.
8. The procedure specifically addresses action to be taken in the event of children who are in care as a result of a care order or are voluntary accommodated under s. 20 of the Children Act 2009 or as a result of a care order (s. 31 of the Children Act 1989).
9. On return to the home, the child is seen by his/her social worker or a person independent of the home, as far as is practicable when the child feels ready to meet them, to consider the reasons for the absence without authority and events that have occurred to them while missing. Where this is not possible, the reasons are recorded and agreed with the responsible authority. Any reasons given for being absent are considered in relation to how the child is cared for and the child's Placement Plan and the responsible authority's care plan. Any concerns arising about the home or the placement are addressed as far as is possible.
10. Any report from a child that s/he went missing because of abuse at the home is referred immediately to children's services in the area where the home is located for consideration under Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) procedures, and appropriate action is taken to protect the child concerned and other children as necessary.
11. The registered manager must also make sure that every child's responsible authority has been fully informed as soon as possible that referrals about child protection concerns have been made.
12. Written records are made of the circumstances of all incidents of

absconding, all action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons.

13. All staff are aware of, and do not exceed, the measures they can take to prevent a child leaving without permission under current legislation and government guidance.

STANDARD 6 - Promoting good health and wellbeing

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 20. Health needs of children.

OUTCOME

- Children live in a healthy environment where their good health and wellbeing is promoted, their health needs identified and services are provided to meet their needs.
- Children develop positive social and emotional skills, a sense of self-worth, positive self-esteem and their individual needs are met.

Standard

Supporting children and enabling them to participate in decisions about their health and wellbeing

1. Children are provided with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to the needs and wishes of each child and agreed wherever appropriate with parents. This is appropriate to the child's age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about their own health needs.
2. Each child is provided with guidance, advice and support, appropriate to the child's age, needs, culture and wishes, and agreed wherever possible with parents, in relation to health, personal care and social issues including alcohol and illegal substance abuse, smoking, solvents, sex and relationship education, HIV infection, hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases, and protecting oneself from prejudice, bullying and abuse.
3. There should be consultation with the child (about the health care plan and any aspects of care), and where the child is of sufficient understanding with respect to the capacity of the child to give informed consent.
4. Staff protect children's dignity at all times and children are regularly consulted on what type of support they would like to see provided.
5. Children with potentially embarrassing health problems (e.g. bedwetting) are supported in managing the problem and avoiding embarrassment.

Understanding and meeting the individual child's health needs

6. The physical and emotional health needs of each child are identified and action is taken to secure the medical, dental, optical, psychological and other health services needed to meet them. Each child or young person receives health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development.
7. Before a placement begins, the registered person is provided with as full a description as possible of the health needs including the mental health of children, and clear procedures governing consent for the child to receive medical treatment. It is the responsibility of the responsible authority to record this information in the Placement Plan and for the registered person to make sure carers have a copy of this information in the home. If full details of the health needs are not available before placement, a high priority is given to ensuring that the information is obtained and that the Placement Plan is revised to take account of the information and the revised version is agreed with the registered person.
8. The Placement Plan includes information about the child's state of health and identified health needs and is regularly updated during the placement and moves with the child. In most cases, carers should be given the child or young person's health plan as it is the carer who has day-to-day responsibility of making sure a child's health needs are met. This plan should be drawn up in conjunction with a health care professional, and with the child's parents whenever practicable.
9. Each child has a clear written health plan (within their Placement Plan) covering:
 - medical history
 - any specific medical or other health interventions which may be required
 - any necessary preventive measures
 - allergies or known adverse reactions to medication
 - dental health needs
 - any hearing needs
 - any optical needs
 - records of developmental checks
 - specific treatment therapies or remedial programmes needed in relation to physical, emotional or mental health
 - health monitoring required of staff
 - the involvement of a child's parents or significant others in health issues.

10. The registered person requires carers to provide information about the child's health needs for the planning and review process.

Access to health and specialist services

11. Children and young people have prompt access to doctors and other health professionals when they need these services (and, if of sufficient understanding, whenever they reasonably request them) and that each child is registered with a local GP and dentist where they are living.

12. The registered person ensures the home has good links with health agencies, is well informed about local health services such as CAMHS and sexual health services in the area it covers and takes this into account when deciding on admissions. The registered person helps staff to secure services for the child when necessary. The responsible authority in conjunction with the registered person is responsible for ensuring that placement arrangements ensure that the child continues to receive the specialist health care services they need.

13. Children with particular health needs or a disability including physical or sensory impairment or learning disabilities are provided with appropriate support and help.

Responsibilities and delegation

14. The registered person makes clear to the staff their role in terms of helping to promote the health of any child living in the home. Each home should:

- keep a written record of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children during their placement
- ensure staff have basic training on health and hygiene issues and first aid, with particular emphasis on health promotion and communicable diseases
- register a child with a doctor if they are not already registered and ensure that they access a dentist in their area
- take the child to any health appointments, including dental and optician appointments, when required. Children, subject to their age and understanding, can choose whether or not they are accompanied by their carer when being seen by a doctor, nurse or dentist, and, as far as is practicable, to see a doctor of either gender if they wish
- understand the delegation of responsibility for meeting the child's health needs including consent for medical treatment, and ensure that any treatment which is prescribed or included in the child's Placement Plan or (where applicable) care plan is implemented

(within the capabilities of the staff), taking the child's wishes into account

- help the child/ren to access the services that she/he needs
- make clear the need to protect children's dignity
- complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for every child accommodated at the home when requested
- understand and give attention to health issues in everyday care of the child, including the importance of a nutritionally balanced diet, exercise and rest, sexual health, personal hygiene, and as appropriate, make sure that the child or young person is encouraged to be health conscious and understands how some lifestyle choices (smoking, alcohol and drug abuse) can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing
- ensure staff have child specific training if looking after children with complex health needs;
- ensure that the child has someone in the home who can act as an advocate when necessary on their behalf so that each child has a voice in their health care.

Administering medication and treatment

15. First aid, minor illness treatment and administration of medication given at the home (other than by a registered nurse, doctor or dentist) are given only by competent designated staff (e.g. by or under the supervision of a qualified first aider or, where the home has one, a nurse).
16. Staff are trained in the use of first aid and first aid boxes are provided within the home.
17. Prescribed medication is only given to the child for whom it was prescribed, in accordance with the prescription or instructions from the pharmacy, and is not kept for general use for other people (children or staff) or added to 'stock' for such use.
18. Children are given medication or treatment as prescribed for them, any refusal to take medication or prescribed treatment is recorded and, if frequent, reported to the prescribing practitioner.
19. Children keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so, and are able to lock their medication somewhere not readily accessible to other children.
20. The registered person has secured, and follows, qualified medical or nursing advice in a written protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to children.
21. Other than prescribed, or widely available non-prescription

“household”, medication and treatments, the registered person ensures that specific therapies are only used by staff or visiting therapists with any child with the continuing agreement of the individual child’s responsible authority or a responsible person. Also with the agreement of the child (if the child has sufficient understanding), and if the safety and effectiveness of the therapy are known to be supported by published evidence.

22. Specific therapies are only used by, or on the directions of, a person with a current recognised and sufficient qualification in the therapy, which the registered person has itself verified with the awarding body or register. Any use of a specific therapy by staff (even if qualified in that therapy) is supervised by a person outside the home and not involved in its management, who is sufficiently qualified and experienced in the therapy concerned. (A ‘specific therapy’ is a technique intended to relieve a physical, social, emotional, behavioural, psychological or cognitive problem of a child, the use of which requires skills or knowledge beyond those normally expected of a parent, teacher or care worker).
23. If a person is employed to work as a nurse at the home, that staff member holds a current registration as a nurse, and the registered person has confirmed on appointment that they are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The title of ‘nurse’ is not used for staff not so registered. If a person is employed as a nurse, that nurse should have access to a named senior nurse or doctor for professional guidance and consultation.

Storing medication appropriately and record keeping

24. Prescribed and ‘household’ medication, other than that kept by individual children keeping their own medication, is kept securely (e.g. in a locked cabinet whose key is not accessible to children), and there is a clear policy with written guidance, which is appropriate for the home and its child group, known by staff and children, and is implemented and effective in practice, for storing, disposing and administering medication.
25. A written record is kept by the home of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children, giving name, date, time, medication/treatment (including dosage), reason for administration (if not prescribed), which is signed by the responsible member of staff and is regularly monitored by an appropriate designated senior member of staff. A record is also kept of when and why prescribed medicines are not administered or are refused (and any frequent refusal is reported to the prescribing practitioner), when medication ceases and how and when medicines are disposed.

26. Any adverse reactions to treatment or medication are recorded and, if significant, reported to the prescribing practitioner.
27. When staff carry out skilled health tasks for children these are carried out only on the written authorisation of the prescribing doctor or responsible nurse in relation to the individual child concerned, and by staff authorised by the prescribing doctor or a nurse responsible for the tasks concerned. Records are kept of all such tasks carried out.
28. The registered person has obtained, and retains on file, prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for each child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication.

STANDARD 7 - Leisure activities contributor i.e. volunteering etc. engaging with the community

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulation: 18. Education, employment and leisure activity.

OUTCOME

- Children are able to enjoy their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities.
- Children are able to make a positive contribution to their home and their wider community.

Standard

1. The registered person ensures that staff and carers give each child, (including disabled children, children whose first language is not English and children with health needs) encouragement and help to find, develop and pursue individual interests and hobbies.
2. Children are provided with support which enables them to access as wide a range of activities as is possible for them. Children, are helped to take part in a range and choice of enjoyable, appropriate, leisure activities, and looked after children do not have fewer such opportunities than others.
3. There are ample opportunities for children to enjoy a range of appropriate leisure activities, and the registered person allocates sufficient financial resources to fund leisure activities and trips. Children shall be regularly consulted on the range of leisure activities they wish to undertake.
4. The registered person and staff work in partnership with the child's social worker and wherever possible the child's parents in accessing the appropriate support and services to facilitate a child's involvement in activities.
5. The registered person works in partnerships with schools and colleges to develop the child's school based interests and out of school interests.
6. Children are encouraged and given opportunities to take part in activities and leisure interests which take account of their race, culture, language, religion, interests, abilities and disabilities. Birthdays, name

days, cultural and religious festivals are celebrated where appropriate, and children participate with staff in planning these events together. Support is available to enable disabled children to enjoy a range of activities within and outside the home.

7. Leisure interests and areas in which a child has talents or abilities are included within the child's Placement Plan, and where applicable at care planning meetings and reviews. Consideration is given as to how they will be encouraged and financially supported.
8. There is a proper balance between free and controlled time in the structure of the day (taking into account the school day for those homes that are schools). Activities reflect the choices of the children, and children are allowed to do nothing in particular at times.
9. Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment to enable children to develop their emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills. Where provided they are of suitable design condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.
10. Children should as far as possible be granted the same permission to take part in normal and age appropriate peer activities as would normally be granted by the parent to their peers.
11. Children are encouraged and enabled to make and sustain friendships with children of their own age outside the home. This may involve friends visiting the home, and reciprocal arrangements to visit friends' homes. This includes children being able to stay overnight in friends households based on a reasonable assessment of risk (but without the requirement for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks) in line with Government guidance.
12. Transport used by the home is not marked in such a way as to distinguish it from an ordinary car or bus. This does not prevent schools which are children's homes from having the name of the school on the car or bus.

STANDARD 8 – Promoting educational achievement

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 18. Education, employment and leisure activity.

OUTCOME

- The education and achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to achieve their educational potential.
- Staff are supported to encourage, support and take an interest in the child's education and help them reach their potential in and out of school and college and are involved in discussions and decisions regarding the child's education.

Standard

1. The registered person gives their full support in assisting the local authority carry out its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children including those below compulsory school age and relevant and former relevant children.
2. The registered person gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person so that they are encouraged to attain her/his full potential, particularly through the delivery of the personal education plan or individual education plan.
3. The registered person actively promotes the expectation that:
 - Looked after children of pre-school age will have the opportunity to benefit from early years education provision where appropriate. The registered person will support the local authority and staff in ensuring that provision suitable for the child is secured in such a setting where appropriate. Pre-school education should be in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.
 - Looked after children of school age will have a full-time place in a local mainstream school (e.g. foundation, community, voluntary aided or controlled) unless the circumstances of the child, such as special educational needs, make such provision unsuitable. The registered person will support the local authority and staff in ensuring that a full-time education in such a setting is secured where appropriate.
4. The registered person keeps a copy of each child's most up-to-date personal education plan and uses this information to provide support

for the needs of the children in their care.

5. The registered person ensures that their staff provide an environment in which education and learning is valued, and promotes partnership working between all those involved in helping the child achieve the best possible education outcomes, including the staff, social worker, and the school, etc.
6. The registered person should ensure that staff understand the importance of education to a child's development and is supported to help meet the child's education needs, including through training about how to engage effectively with the education system.
7. The registered person should ensure that, in line with the care plan and in conjunction with the birth parent where appropriate, staff are expected to have education-related responsibilities which are laid out in the Placement Plan. These include:
 - identifying where responsibility lies for financing all school costs, including school uniform, school trips, school equipment and out of school activities, and for providing consent for school arranged outings and school journeys
 - an expectation that they will contribute to the assessment of the child's educational needs and progress for the planning and review process
 - helping the staff to contribute to the delivery of any personal education plan or individual education plan
 - making sure the child attends his/her education setting and understanding the level of monitoring likely to be needed for the child's school attendance
 - arrangements for travelling to and from school
 - knowing the dates of national examinations such as SATs, GCSE, AS, and A levels, and any other examinations the child may intend taking
 - understanding that the registered person has a "parental responsibility" under the Education Act 2006 to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a good standard of full-time education suitable to age and aptitudes
 - signing the child's home-school agreement
 - providing children with facilities that are conducive to study, learning and being able to do homework, and children are actively encouraged and supported in doing so – this includes provision of books, computers, electronic media, music, internet resources, newspapers, magazines, information about current affairs, and toys and games according to age, library membership and support to take part in educational and recreational activities
 - giving children appropriate help with homework, school, college or course work. Children actively encouraged and supported to take part in extended services provided by their school or college - including participation in school trips, sport, music and cultural activities

- reading with the child where appropriate
 - going to parents' evenings and open days
 - receiving the child's annual report (and any other reports which the school provides on the child); and discussing the contents of the report(s) with the child and, where required, the child's teacher
 - discussing with teachers about the child's educational progress and knowing who the designated teacher is at the school attended by the child
 - acting as an advocate on the child's behalf and supporting the child's access to additional funding, such as the personal education allowance, as appropriate
 - making arrangements in consultation with the local authority for children in their care if they are not in school, including structured occupation during school hours
 - supporting the staff and the local authority in making arrangements for children for whom they are responsible who are of compulsory school age, if they are not registered as a pupil at a school, to receive a suitable full- time education
 - ensuring that the child is given the necessary support to make applications in pursuit of further and higher education where appropriate.
 - Supporting the staff to liaise with schools, careers service, job centre, employment agencies and local employers as appropriate.
8. The registered person will actively support the local authority in arranging for the education and training needs of children who have been excluded.
9. For children of compulsory school age who are not in school (or a Pupil Referral Unit), the registered person has in place an educational programme during normal school hours; and works with the placing authority and the education authority in the area where the home is located to secure appropriate full-time educational provision.
10. The registered person maintains regular contact with schools attended by children in order to monitor each child's educational progress and attendance. Where children are thought to be especially vulnerable or prone to frequent absences during the school day, this involves daily contact with the school. Where there is continued absence from school, or a worrying pattern of absence, the registered person initiates both a review of the Placement Plan and (where applicable) care plan of the child, and of the relevant current care practice of the home.
11. The registered person has an education policy which is clear about how it intends to promote and support the educational attainment of children throughout the time they live in the home.

STANDARD 9 - Promoting and supporting contact

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 15. Contact and access to communications.

OUTCOME

- Children are able to maintain constructive contact with their siblings, half-siblings, families, legal guardians, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives.
- The registered person/manager makes sure staff and carers understand the need for contact with relatives and friends for a child or young person in their care to take place, arrangements are appropriate and visits are properly supervised and monitored.

Standard

Supporting the child to communicate and have contact with siblings, half-siblings, family and friends

1. Children are provided with practical support for constructive contact with parents, family, legal guardians, previous foster carers or carers and other significant people, and are encouraged to maintain contact.
2. The registered person makes sure that each child or young person in the home is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and any court order. Any restrictions on contact not determined by a court order or the child's care plan are only for the protection of the child from significant risks to their safety or welfare, and are clear to all concerned.
3. Any restriction on communication by the child must have been agreed by the child's responsible authority, and must take the child's wishes and feelings into account. If the child was not placed by a local authority or voluntary organisation, any restrictions on communication by the child must have been agreed with the child's parent or a person with parental responsibility for the child.
4. All contact arrangements and any restrictions on contact are kept under regular review and the provider ensures that the child's responses to contact arrangements are recorded specifically:
 - Reactions both positive and negative.
 - Length and severity of reaction.
 - Any emotions /wishes expressed by the child.
 - Whether any or all of the contact was supervised or not.

This information is routinely provided to the social worker responsible for the child's care.

5. Appropriate forms of contact are planned for each child where contact is to be maintained, including where appropriate electronic forms of contact rather than, or as well as, personal visits. Contact by visits, telephone, including mobiles, e-mail if available and letters are all facilitated where there are no restrictions. Arrangements are also established and maintained for a child to receive, and give, news to family members and friends where both parties wish.
6. Children can contact family members without telling the registered person where this is consistent with the care plan/court order. Children's written or electronic communications with their parents, family members and any legal guardians are not censored, listened to or read by staff.
7. The registered person makes sure that:
 - children are provided with access to a landline phone at the home, enabling them to make and receive calls at reasonable times with family members in private (subject to any restrictions in the court order/care plan), if they do not have ready access to a mobile or internet phone
 - the child's wishes and feelings are sought and taken into account on all matters relating to contact
 - contact or visits with family members are not cancelled or prohibited as part of any settling down period, training, therapy, disciplinary or behavioural programme
 - children can be visited by family members at any reasonable time agreed with the child and registered person, and can meet them in private unless supervision is necessary to safeguard them or other children
 - it minimises any need to separate siblings or half- siblings
 - where possible and appropriate staff take the child to contact and minimises the use of unfamiliar escorts, particularly for very young children.
8. The registered person ensures there are clear procedures, in the Placement Plan, setting out how appropriate contact arrangements for each child in the home are to be established, maintained, monitored and reviewed, including any arrangements for supervision of contact and the role of staff in supporting contact arrangements. The child's social worker must make the contact arrangement, including clarifying whether or not contact needs to be supervised and who should supervise, prior to any date on which contact for the child is due to take place.

Contact and placement decisions

9. Consideration should be given to supporting contact where children are in different placements and/or still with the birth family.
10. Arrangements for maintaining contact are taken into consideration whenever a child is placed at a distance from their home, especially if they are placed outside the area of the authority responsible for their care. The views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person are sought and given weight in all decisions and arrangements for contact.
11. Consideration is given to the need to sustain links with all those in the child's network and not just their immediate family. This may include friends and neighbours, significant relationships formed in schools and out of school activity clubs.

Support and training for staff in facilitating contact

12. Staff training and development stresses the importance of staff helping a child to maintain appropriate contacts and covers the skills required to encourage and facilitate such contacts.
13. The registered person provides help and support to staff in managing any difficult contact issues that may arise e.g. helping the child understand why siblings may still be with birth parents and deal with feelings of divided loyalty.
14. The registered person ensures staff are clear about what decisions about contact can be delegated to them in line with the child's care plan.
15. The registered person is clear about financial support to cover costs for transport or other costs involved in ensuring contacts take place at the desired frequency and in the most suitable place.
16. Written guidance and support is implemented and provided for staff which clarifies:
 - the rights of children, parents and others to maintain contact
 - where it is necessary, to supervise visits in order to safeguard the child or other children in the home
 - when and how to encourage parents, relatives and friends to take part in activities in the home.
17. The above standards are not required for short breaks. For children in short breaks the responsible person must know how to contact parents if necessary in an emergency and maintain such contact as has been agreed in the care plan.

STANDARD 10 - Providing a suitable physical environment for the child

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 31. Fitness of premises.

OUTCOME

- The premises of the home provides the child with adequate space in a suitable location for the child where there is access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which will promote the child's development.

Standard

1. The home can comfortably accommodate all who live there. It is warm, adequately furnished and decorated, and is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene and is maintained in good order throughout. Outdoor spaces which are part of the premises are safe, secure and well maintained.

A safe environment and avoiding hazards

2. Staff preparation and training cover health and safety issues and they are provided with written guidelines on their health and safety responsibilities. The children's home and immediate environment is free of avoidable hazards that might expose a child to risk of injury or harm.
3. The provider/manager takes positive steps to ensure that safety is promoted by staff in the home and the home provides an environment suitable for the child, including:
 - taking reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises both inside and outside are minimised and proper steps are taken to avoid accidents
 - ponds, drains, pools, and any natural water are made safe to the child dependent on the child's age and understanding
 - there is sufficient equipment available for the needs of the children living in the home e.g. high chairs, safety gates, car seats
 - gas, electrical and other appliances and fittings conform to safety requirements and do not pose a hazard to children
 - electric sockets in areas accessible to children are fitted with socket

- covers where the age or understanding of the children requires it
- a fire blanket and smoke alarms which conform to BS EN safety standards are provided and maintained in good working condition
 - the staff have devised and practised an emergency escape plan
 - any vehicle used to transport the children is properly maintained, conforms to legal requirements and drivers have a valid license and appropriate insurance. All children are restrained in an appropriate car seat or seat belt
 - any animals on the premises are safe to be in proximity of children and do not pose a health risk
 - where the home is offering placements to disabled children, where appropriate, suitable aids and adaptations and any special furniture or equipment required are provided
 - any aids or adaptations needed to the home are carried out by suitably trained and qualified person
 - attention is paid to the requirements of specific impairments and the environment is adapted appropriately.

Bedrooms

4. Each child has if possible a single bedroom, or if not possible, their own area in a double bedroom (or in a home which is a school, a personal area of a shared bedroom for no more than four children of similar age or stage of schooling). In a home which is not a school, children only share a bedroom if they have agreed to share with the other child. Staff take into account any potential for bullying or abusive behaviour before agreeing to sharing of bedrooms.
5. Bedrooms are not shared by children of different genders, or children of significantly different ages (other than siblings where this is appropriate). The choice of whether a child has a separate room or shares is made only after careful consideration of all available facts.
6. Any request by a child to change bedrooms is given urgent consideration and agreed if feasible.
7. Children accommodated in emergency provision (subject to a home's Statement of Purpose allowing such a placement) are not placed in a shared bedroom (other than with siblings) until an assessment has been carried out to ascertain their views and the views of those who already sleep in the bedroom.
8. Bedrooms are not shared between children and staff or adult visitors. Staff have separate sleeping in rooms, and do not sleep in children's common areas of the home.

Bathrooms and washing facilities

9. Baths, showers and toilets are of a number and standard to meet the needs of the children, including disabled children.
10. Children's privacy is respected when using the toilet or washing and children do not have significant concerns about the privacy or standards of toilets, washing, showering or bathing provision, and are not denied use of a toilet at any time.
11. Toilet and washing provision is kept in good working order, properly equipped (e.g. with toilet paper, sanitary provision for girls requiring it, soap and hand drying provision), clean and with an adequate supply of temperature controllable hot water to hot water outlets.
12. Hot water accessible to children under 8, or children with disabilities which place them at risk from excessively hot water, is maintained at no more than 43°C at taps and other outlets accessible to them.

Preparation of meals, food and drink

13. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan, shop for and prepare meals.
14. Food preparation and dining areas and facilities are clean and suited to their purpose.
15. Regular and sufficient meals are available for children, with a reasonable range and choice of food and drink, and children have access to snacks and drinks at reasonable times in between mealtimes. Children have access to good quality drinking water (away from toilet or washing areas) at all reasonable times of the day and night.

STANDARD 11 - Preparation for a new placement or a move (including back to parents, etc)

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: To be agreed

OUTCOME

Children are welcomed into the home and leave the home in a planned and sensitive manner which makes them feel loved and valued.

Standard

1. Whenever possible, children are given information about the home before arrival, and any information they reasonably need or request about the placement (including photographs if they wish). Wherever possible, children are able to visit the home prior to a placement decision being made.
2. Children are encouraged and enabled to bring favourite possessions into the home.
3. There are procedures for introducing children to the home, the staff and the children living there which cover planned and, where permitted emergency/immediate admissions.
4. Children are provided with verbal and written information which is appropriate to their age and understanding when they go to the home. This is to help them understand any rules and expectations people living and working in the home have, how they will be consulted about decisions taken about their lives and how the household runs.
5. Both the needs of the child concerned, and the likely effects of their admission on others in the home, are taken into account in decisions on admission to the home.
6. Each child can remain in the home until moving on is in their best interests (taking their wishes and feelings into account) or they reach the known upper age limit or stage for the home, unless this is impracticable or is against the welfare of others.
7. The children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs the home can reasonably expect to meet. Carers are monitored on the basis that they provide children with care that reasonably meets those children's needs, taking the children's wishes and feelings into account, actively promoting individual care, supporting those children's safety, health, enjoyment, education and preparation for the future.

8. The registered person does not admit children in an emergency unless this is explicitly included as a function of the home in its Statement of Purpose, and the home is at the time of admission able to provide a bedroom and appropriate facilities in the home. A review is initiated as soon as possible, and never more than 72 hours later, after any emergency admission to consider whether the child admitted in an emergency should remain at the home, or whether it is in that child's interests to move to a different placement.

STANDARD 12 – Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 11. Promotion of welfare.
Children Act 1989 – Sections 22, 61 & 64

OUTCOME

Children receive care which helps to prepare them for and support them into adulthood so that they may enjoy good future life opportunities.

Standard

Consulting with the child and taking their wishes and feelings into account

1. The child's readiness to make a move to greater independence will be regularly considered as part of the statutory care planning process involving regular review of their care plan chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer.
2. In providing services and support to enable a child to develop their self-care and independence skills the registered person takes account of the child's wishes and feelings. Leaving care plans take into account the religious, racial, linguistic and cultural background of the young person.
3. Staff help children in their care develop the skills, competence and knowledge necessary so that each child is well grounded and prepared to take on greater responsibilities for themselves as they make the transition to adulthood.
4. The registered person has in place effective arrangements to liaise with the child's responsible authority about the progress of the child's readiness to move to any future accommodation where they would expect to take on greater responsibility and personal independence.
5. The registered person supports staff to contribute to the development of the care plan or the Pathway Plan for care leavers and works collaboratively, where appropriate, with the young person's social worker or personal adviser in implementing the plan.
6. The care plan or the Pathway Plan for care leavers is written in consultation with the young person, taking their wishes and feelings about the preparation that they will need to make any move to greater

independence fully into account. The young person should indicate in writing that they agree to the plan and be given a copy.

Training, development and support to enable staff to support the child

7. The registered person supports staff to ensure there are comprehensive arrangements for supporting young people to prepare them for making the transition to any accommodation where the young person will be expected to assume more independence and responsibility for their own care. Arrangements specify the support and assistance they will need to receive to enable a successful transition into adulthood, and which is implemented in practice. Arrangements are consistent with the young person's Placement Plan and any care plan, which is consistent with and also informs the Pathway Plan and any transition plan for children with disabilities and special educational needs.
8. The registered person has a policy and practical arrangements in place enabling children to remain with them into legal adulthood, for example so that he or she may develop appropriate life skills before being required to move to more independent accommodation. This policy is agreed with the responsible authority at the start of a placement.
9. The Placement Plan includes information about any expectations there might be of the home to provide accommodation/support to the child following their reaching legal adulthood at age 18.
10. The registered person ensures staff receive training and support to enable them to provide effective support and guidance to all children in their care as they make the transition to greater responsibilities as they approach legal adulthood. Particular attention is paid in preparing children for leaving care to the continuing needs of the young person to:
 - develop and maintain relationships with others
 - understand their sexuality and establish positive, caring social and sexual relationships
 - develop self-esteem
 - prepare for the world of work and or further or higher education
 - know about entitlements to financial and other support after leaving care, including benefits and support from social care services
 - deal with accommodation issues and problems after leaving care
 - develop practical daily living knowledge and skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes, personal self-care, and staying healthy
 - develop practical personal budgeting knowledge and skills.

11. Staff understand that they need to provide all children with age and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning the skills necessary to prepare them for the responsibilities of adulthood, so that children are effectively prepared for the time when they will no longer be looked after. Staff have access to clear written guidance about what is expected of them. This should cover:

- providing opportunities to children in their care to manage money, plan their finances and understand about the costs of utilities and other services
- supporting children to develop the range of self-care skills that will be needed as they make the move to greater independence – including capacity to budget for, plan and prepare nutritionally balanced meals; time management and an understanding of the expectations necessary to manage in the world of work; self-care and social presentation
- enabling children to develop basic housekeeping and household maintenance skills – e.g. by providing them with the opportunity to do their own laundry and participate in routine household cleaning and other tasks.

12. The registered person, in agreement with the responsible authority, implements the leaving care plan and any aspects of the care plan or of the Pathway Plan which are the responsibility of the home. These leaving care plans clearly outline the arrangements for:

- education, training and employment
- securing suitable safe and affordable accommodation
- support necessary for disabled young people
- developing the financial skills necessary so that the young person is able to manage their budget, so that they know about universal entitlements to financial and other support enabling them to set up and maintain independent accommodation if applicable, including arrangements for claiming welfare benefits where this is identified as a need and they qualify
- general and specialised health education and health care, and other specialist services such as counselling
- maintaining existing important networks as defined by the young person, which may include the children's home
- creating new networks of advice and support if this is applicable
- leisure pursuits that will enable the young person to enjoy and achieve
- seeking assistance should problems arise, including arrangements to contact support out of office hours and at weekends.

STANDARDS OF THE CHILDRENS HOME PROVIDER

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STANDARD 13 - Statement of Purpose

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 4. Statement of Purpose and children's guide. 5. Review of Statement of Purpose and children's guide.

OUTCOME

- The children, staff and placing authority are clear about the home's purpose, what it can offer and how the child will be cared for.

Standard

Children and young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to be living in the home with.

A clear statement for how the home operates is reviewed, updated annually and available for children, local authorities, parents and others needing such information. This sets out the objectives and any underlying principles or specialism of the home, and what services and care is provided for children including any educational, health, therapeutic services, and other children's services available for children.

The children's home's operation meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose.

1. The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose should be outcome focused and in particular show how the service will meet the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The statement must also provide the information required in regulations.
2. Any proposed significant amendments to the Statement of Purpose, and the annually updated Statement, are notified to Ofsted. The registered person (in the case of a local authority, the elected members) formally approves the Statement of Purpose of the home and reviews it where necessary, at least annually. Those placing children, and the children themselves, should be provided with the amended guide to the service.
3. The children's home policies, procedures and written guidance to staff accurately reflect the Statement of Purpose.

4. The children's guide to the home is in a form (or forms) appropriate to the age and understanding of the children accommodated there. It is provided to children once they move into the home, if not before, and to all staff.
5. The children's guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how to find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, make a complaint, including how to secure access to an independent advocate, how to contact the Children's Rights Director, and how to contact Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors.
6. For some disabled children, young children and those for whom English is not the preferred language, the guide is available when appropriate through suitable alternative methods of communication, e.g. Makaton, pictures, tape recording, translation into another language.
7. The Statement of Purpose is available in a form that can be understood by placing social workers, staff, and any parent or person with parental responsibility for a child. All staff are aware of the contents of the Statement of Purpose, and a copy is easily accessible.

STANDARD 14 - Fitness to provide or manage the administration of a Children's Home

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 6. Fitness of registered provider. 7. Appointment of manager. 8. Fitness of manager. 9. Registered person – general requirements. 10. Notification of offences. 36. Financial position.

OUTCOME

- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run homes.
- The children's home is provided and managed by those who are suitable to work with children and have the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to deliver an efficient and effective service.
- There is clear management accountability for the care, safety, rights and welfare of children in the home.

Standard

1. The registered provider and registered manager possess the necessary qualifications, including business and management skills and financial expertise, to manage the work efficiently and effectively to ensure that the children's home is run on a sound financial basis including long-term financial viability. They must also have the necessary knowledge and experience of child care and residential work, and carry out their tasks in a professional manner.
2. The manager of the home exercises effective leadership of the home's staff and operation, such that the home is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers sound, good quality care meeting the individual needs of the children at the home.
3. The employer is fair and competent, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and foster carers. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy for foster carers, children and staff which covers all legal requirements.
4. Staff have a copy of:
 - the policies and working practices in respect of grievances and disciplinary matters

- details of the services offered
 - the equal opportunities policy
 - health and safety procedures.
5. The job description of the registered manager clearly states in writing the responsibilities and duties of the registered manager in managing the home, and states the person to whom the registered manager is accountable and who is responsible for ensuring that the registered manager carries out their duties and responsibilities. Any change in the person to whom they are accountable has been notified in writing to the registered manager.

Qualifications

6. The registered manager (or registered person, where the registered person is an individual and there is no registered manager) has a:
- professional qualification relevant to working with children which must be at minimum level 4 (NVQ level 4, or relevant sector endorsed social care foundation degree which is at level 5 or equivalent qualification matching these competencies) or a recognised social work qualification. (Note – this widens pathway opportunities and brings in relevant foundation degrees which now have social care sector specific criteria and will form part of the developing social care professional development framework.)
 - a qualification in management at level 4 (e.g. Leadership and Management for Care Services at Level 4 NVQ or a qualification matching these competencies)
 - at least two years experience of working with children within the last five years and
 - in addition at least one years experience in working at a senior level in a residential setting.

STANDARD 15 - Financial viability and changes affecting business continuity

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 44. Financial position.

OUTCOME

- The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.
- Where the service can no longer maintain provision proper planning is carried out to make the transition for children, and staff as smooth as possible.
- Staff are clear about the agency's payment policies and are satisfied with the timeliness of payments.

Standard

1. The registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resourcing.
2. Where the home, for financial, staffing or other reasons, cannot adequately and consistently maintain provision which complies with Regulations or National Minimum Standards, an effective plan must be established and implemented either to rectify the situation or to close down the service.
3. The registered person must notify Ofsted and all current placing authorities and area(s) authority if closure of the home or substantial change to the home significantly affecting the care, welfare or placement of children, is likely or is actively being considered. The registered person should work with the placing authority and area authority to ensure as smooth a transition for children and staff as possible. Each child affected by likely closure of the home, or a likely substantial change to the home, must be consulted if of sufficient understanding, about the closure or change, the process of closure or change, and about the process of planning for their future, and their views taken into account.
4. Confidential records of a home that closes must if possible be passed to a statutory authority or organisation for safe keeping and for future access by children in accordance with legal requirements.
5. Any person or organisation temporarily responsible for a home in administration or receivership, or in the process of closure or substantial change, must operate the service in the best interests of the placed children under the circumstances that apply,

in accordance with the applicable Regulations and as far as possible, in accordance with these National Minimum Standards.

6. The accounts demonstrate that the home is financially viable and likely to have sufficient funding to continue to fulfil its Statement of Purpose for the next 12 months.
7. The registered provider regularly receives information on the financial state of the home.
8. The home ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.
9. The registered person of the home:
 - has clearly documented financial arrangements for control and supervision of its financial affairs and powers
 - a clearly written set of principles and standards governing its financial management and these are communicated to its managers and accountants.
 - a clearly written set of principles describing the financial procedures and responsibilities to be followed by all staff, consultants, professional experts, directors, trustees and any manager
 - accounts which are maintained and properly audited by a registered accountant.
 - proper financial procedures and there is a reviewing procedure to keep them up to date
 - procedures to deal with situations of financial crisis, such as disclosing information to purchasers and liaising with them to safeguard the welfare of children living at the home
 - publishes its charges for each of its services and has a clear framework for the charging of fees and expenses for any additional services it is asked to provide. The statement is available on request to purchasers and others with a legitimate interest
 - has public liability and professional indemnity insurance for all staff and carers. The insurance policy covers costs arising as a result of child abuse claims against any staff or carers.

STANDARD 16 - Suitability to work with children

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 16. Arrangements for the protection of children. 26. Fitness of workers. 27. Employment of staff.

OUTCOME

- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with children in the home and there is monitoring of such people to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children.

Standard

1. All people working in or for the children's home are interviewed as part of the selection process and have references checked to assess suitability before taking on responsibilities. Telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references. These requirements are the responsibility of Ofsted with respect to those seeking to carry on or manage a children's home.
2. The registered person can demonstrate, including from written records, that it consistently follows good recruitment practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance in staff recruitment and carers selection. This includes Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and, once the relevant legislation is in force, verifying that a person is subject to monitoring, under Independent Safeguarding Authority registration in line with the requirement of the Vetting and Barring Scheme established to safeguard children under the Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. All personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate these good practices.
3. The children's home has a single central record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working (including as volunteers) for the children's home which includes:
 - identity checks
 - where eligible, checks against the list of those barred from working with children
 - when the Vetting and Barring Scheme, referred to above is in force, whether the individual is subject to monitoring
 - CRB Disclosures, including the level of the Disclosure, the unique reference number, and the outcome of the check (in line with eligibility to obtain such checks)

- checks to confirm qualifications which are a requirement
 - at least two references, preferably one from a current employer, and with a statement from each referee as to their opinion of the person's suitability to work with children
 - references
 - checks to confirm the right to work in the UK
 - where the person has lived outside of the UK, further checks as are considered appropriate where obtaining a CRB Disclosure is not sufficient to establish suitability to work with children.
4. The record must show the date on which each check was completed or where possible a copy of the relevant certificate or document verifying information should be retained and the record should show who carried out the check. The CRB Disclosure information must be kept in secure conditions and must 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.
 5. The registered person's system for recruiting staff and others includes an effective system for reaching decisions as to who is to be appointed and the circumstances in which an application should be refused in relation to staff or others, in the light of any criminal convictions or other concerns about suitability that are declared or discovered through the recruitment process.
 6. The registered person ensures that drivers booked by the service to transport children regularly or intensively are not unsuitable to work with children).
 7. The registered person verifies the suitability of all individuals who have the opportunity of regular (e.g. once a month) or intensive (e.g. overnight, on 3 or more days in a 30 day period) contact with children during the course of their work (including voluntary work) in the children's home in line with the requirement of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This includes work which is not child care work such as carrying out building work or cleaning. Where emergency work needs to be carried out as a one- off (and it is not regular or intensive) (e.g. a water pipe has burst in the home) individuals are not left unsupervised with children unless it has been verified they are not unsuitable to work with children.
 8. There is a whistle-blowing policy which is made known to all staff and carers.
 9. Where practicable, children are involved in the recruitment of staff of the home.
 10. The registered person ensures that any staff provided through an agency who work with the children in the home have successfully passed the checks that are required in the Children's Homes

Regulations 2001 within the previous 12 months.

11. Staff members and others subject to the above checks do not normally start work at the home until all the checks required in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 are completed. In every case the appropriate check via the Criminal Records Bureau (and when implemented verification of Independent Safeguarding Authority registration) must have been completed before the person starts work.

STANDARD 17 - Sufficient staffing of the home

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 25. Staffing of Children's Homes

OUTCOME

- Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the children.

Standard

1. The number of staff and overall competence of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, is satisfactory in relation to the fulfilment of the home's Statement of Purpose, the care plans, Placement Plans and needs (including any nursing needs) of individual children in the home, the number and mix of children in the home, and any particular difficulties being experienced by the home. Records of staff working in the home demonstrate the staffing level.
2. Contingency plans are in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels.
3. There are clear arrangements for staff to deputise in the registered person's absence and the deputy to the registered person of the home (or the person designated to deputise for the registered person in his/her absence) has at least one year's relevant supervisory experience.
4. Staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times (e.g. as leaders of staff shifts) have substantial relevant experience of working in the home, are not themselves temporary staff, and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods.
5. Staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure that handover sessions include spending time with individual children.
6. Children are not given responsibility over other children in the home, nor given responsibilities to compensate for any lack of staff in the home. Children who are given responsibility for specific tasks in the home are sufficiently supervised by staff to ensure that they fulfil their roles appropriately, without abuse of the role (e.g. to bully others).

7. The registered person has in place a staff disciplinary procedure which is clear. The procedure clearly separates staff disciplinary processes from child protection enquiries and criminal proceedings, and is known by staff.
8. The registered person makes every effort to achieve continuity of staffing such that children's attachments are not overly disrupted. No more than half the staff on duty at any one time by day or night at the home are to be from an external agency, and no member of staff from an external agency is to be alone on duty at night in the home.
9. Where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public, and this has demonstrated that there is no unacceptable level of risk from such an arrangement.
10. The staff group in day- to- day contact with children includes staff of both genders whenever possible. Where the home's Statement of Purpose makes it explicit that the home uses staff of one gender only, clear guidance is provided and implemented on how children are enabled to maintain relationships with members of the opposite gender to the staff group. Staffing arrangements also take into consideration children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds and any disabilities they may have.
11. Staff know which children and adults are sleeping in the house each night.

STANDARD 18 – Training, development and qualification of staff

Underpinning legislation:

Regulations: 27. Employment of staff.

OUTCOME

- Children are looked after by staff who are trained and competent to meet their needs.
- Staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments.

Standard

1. There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.
2. Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the professional skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the setting.
3. There is a clear plan for the on-going training and appropriate professional and skills development of all staff within the setting working with children & young people which must include induction, level 3 training, post qualifying training and in- service training.
4. The registered person has an induction training programme for all newly appointed care and ancillary staff (including any agency, temporary, volunteer, and student staff), which includes guidance on child protection.
5. All educationalists, psychologists, therapists and other professional staff are professionally qualified and appropriately trained to work with children and young people and their families, and have a good understanding of residential care.
6. Before staff and volunteers start work in the home they are provided with an induction which includes child protection procedures, fire training, medical procedures and recording.
7. All care staff receive a full induction within six weeks of joining the home.

- All staff are supervised, and in particular new staff are clear about accountability and reporting lines, and procedures to be followed in relation to emergencies, health and safety, child protection and notification of incidents
 - All existing care staff are qualified to a minimum level 3 (previously NVQ caring for children & young people, NVQ health & social care or from September 2010 Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma) All new staff engaged from April 2011 (when the NMS will be implemented) need to hold level 3 Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma - including social care mandatory units) or be working towards the Diploma within 3 months of employment.
8. Where disabled children and young people require assistance with personal care and may need to be physically handled or moved all staff are trained in appropriate Moving and Handling techniques and are offered annual update training as required.
9. It is illegal for people to smoke in their place of work. In addition staff do not smoke with or in the presence of children accommodated in the home. Only in exceptional circumstances and with the registered person's express permission do staff have a small alcoholic drink whilst on duty (e.g. Christmas lunch).

STANDARD 19 – Staff support and supervision

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 27. Employment of staff.

OUTCOME

- Staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments.
- Children are looked after by staff that are supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

Standard

1. All staff and the registered person, are properly managed, supported and understand to whom they are accountable. Suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the registered person of the agency.
2. A written record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision and is available for inspection by Ofsted.
3. All staff, including the registered person, have received written job descriptions and person specifications related to agencies current Statement of Purpose which state clearly their responsibilities, the duties currently expected of them and their line of accountability. All staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually by their line manager and job descriptions are subject to periodic review.
4. Staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
5. Contingency plans are in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels.
6. Assessments, approvals and reviews of staff and carers are managed and implemented fairly and effectively.
7. Reviews of staff take into account any views of children the service is providing for.
8. Staff are able to access the advice needed to provide a comprehensive service for children and young people. This includes appropriate childcare, medical, educational and other professional and legal advice.

9. There is an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support.

STANDARD 20 – Handling allegations and suspicions of harm

Underpinning Legislation:

OUTCOME

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

Standard

Process for handling allegations and suspicions of harm

1. All children's homes should have procedures for dealing with an allegation that indicates the person may have:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children and all staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation.
2. Each home should have a senior member of staff with designated responsibility for child protection who will be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in dealing with and seeking advice on allegations.
3. Allegations against people that work with children must be reported to the LADO. Even those allegations that on the face of it may appear relatively insignificant must, nonetheless be followed up and examined by someone relatively independent of the organisation. The LADO fulfils this independent role and on receipt of any such allegation, is responsible for liaising with the relevant professionals and the co-ordination and monitoring of subsequent actions.
4. The registered person must also inform the responsible authority.
5. The LADO will advise the reporting officer/employer on next steps to be taken and decide whether or not the matter should be referred to the Police or Children and Family Services.
6. Allegations made directly to the Police or Children and Family Services may become or may already be subject to joint consultation. Such allegations should nevertheless be brought to the attention of the relevant designated officer who

will without delay be responsible for liaison with the LADO. This liaison should take place within one working day of receiving the allegation.

7. Where there is a statutory duty for the allegations to be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for consideration about possible sanctions against the individual, this is done.
8. Information about the procedures to deal with investigations into allegations are made known to staff and children and young people. Child protection procedures should include:
 - the requirement that staff working for the service who receive an allegation of abuse, or who suspect abuse, should avoid asking leading questions or giving inappropriate guarantees of confidentiality as the information may need to be passed on
 - the requirement to make a written record as soon as possible of any allegation or suspicion of abuse or other significant harm they receive
 - the requirement that allegations, incidents or suspicions of likely significant harm are not investigated internally
 - the requirement to report to the police and to the relevant staff in the responsible authority any evidence of children becoming involved in prostitution or sexual exploitation, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in the home, or observed trying to make contact with children outside the home and the need to follow any local interagency protocols on prevention and investigation of child prostitution and sexual exploitation
 - instructions for staff on action to be taken if an allegation or suspicion of abuse becomes known to them involving the homes registered person or the person at the time in day- to- day charge of the home
 - the clear requirement that staff must report to the registered person in the first instance if they have any knowledge or concerns about significant harm or abuse of children. Where this is not appropriate, procedures and policies also include information on how to contact the area authority or Ofsted
 - the requirement to cooperate fully with any statutory child protection enquiry or plan.
9. The registered person's child protection procedures are consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) relevant to the geographical area where the home is based and a copy of these is available to staff and the registered person ensures staff working at the home understand and are knowledgeable about them. The child protection procedures have been submitted for consideration and comment to the local LSCB, and any comments taken into account.
10. The registered person has liaised with the Local Authority Designated Manager for Child Protection¹ (or other senior officer responsible for child protection matters in that department) to seek advice about local procedures and practice, and has discussed how the practices of the children's home relate to these

1 Paragraphs 5.144-5.148 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)

regarding keeping children safe, responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse, methods of control and risk taking. Any conflicts between locally agreed procedures and those of other placing authorities have also been discussed and resolved as far as possible.

11. The registered person collates and evaluates the circumstances, number and outcome of all allegations of neglect or abuse of a child in the home. This information is scrutinised and reviewed regularly by the senior managers of the service.
12. Information about the procedures to deal with investigations into allegations is made known to staff and children and young people.

Support and information for staff subject to an allegation

13. There is written guidance for staff which makes clear the ways in which the registered person will ensure members of staff against whom allegations have been made will have access to information and support whilst an investigation ensues and keeps in contact with staff during an investigation.
14. Investigations into allegations against staff 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. The framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against people who work with children is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children.
15. A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a record of any action taken and decisions reached is kept on a person's confidential file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. This information should be retained on the confidential file, even after someone leaves the organisation, and should be retained until the person reaches retirement age, or ten years if this is longer.

STANDARD 21- Managing effectively and efficiently and monitoring the home

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 37 Notice of absence. 34. Review of quality of care.

OUTCOME

- The Children's Home is managed ethically, effectively and efficiently, delivering a good quality service which meets the needs of its users. The service is adapted in light of information about how the home is operating.
- The **registered person** monitors the welfare of the children the service provides for including consultation with children about their welfare.

Standard

1. There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home and ensuring quality performance. Data requests from Ofsted and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are complied with for example annual data requested on the number of children placed.
2. Information is provided to commissioners of services and others. This includes:
 - charges for each of its services
 - itemised amounts paid for other services which may include health and education.
3. Managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The level of delegation and responsibility of the manager, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined.
4. Clear arrangements are in place to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent.
5. Copies of inspection reports by Ofsted are prominently displayed within the home and made available by the registered person to all members of staff, to children living in the home, to parents, and on request to placing authorities of existing children or those considering placing a child at the home.

6. Action is taken if necessary in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues or events to improve the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and the quality of care provided by the home and its staff.
7. Where the person carrying on the home does not manage the home on a day- to- day basis, they must visit the home at least once a month in accordance with the regulations. After the visit, and within 2 weeks, they must complete a written report on the conduct of the home. A copy of the report is sent to Ofsted and a copy is lodged in the home for the manager and staff to read and respond to.
8. Visits are generally carried out unannounced. They include checks on the home's daily log, records of complaints, disciplinary measures and use of restraint, assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the home, and provide an opportunity for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). Announced visits may be made if the registered person wishes to meet particular people for whom warning of the visit is required.
9. Action is taken by the registered person on recommendations or issues of concern raised in such reports.

Complaints procedure

10. The registered person has provided the home with a written policy and procedural guidelines on considering and responding to representations and complaints in accordance with legal requirements and relevant government guidance. This complaints procedure:
 - enables children, staff, family members and others involved with children of the home outside the home, to make both minor and major complaints
 - ensures children (including those with communication difficulties) know how to make complaints without fear of the consequences of making a complaint
 - precludes any person who is the subject of a formal complaint from taking any responsibility for the consideration of or response to that complaint
 - provides appropriately for the handling of complaints against the manager / the registered person of the home
 - requires a written record to be made and kept of the person making the complaint, date of the complaint, nature of the complaint, action taken and outcome of the complaint
 - does not restrict the issues they may complain about
 - provides for relevant issues to be referred promptly to other procedures, including the local social services authority where

child protection issues are involved

- enables people other than the child to make complaints on behalf of the child, provided the child consents to this
- provides for complainants to be kept informed about the progress of their complaints, given a target by when they will hear about their complaint, and to be provided with details of the outcome, in an accessible format, at the earliest opportunity.
- requires complaint resolution forms to be signed off by the complainant once the complaint is resolved
- includes a procedure for handling external complaints, e.g. those from local shopkeepers, neighbours, the police etc that as far as possible provides for informal non-legal resolutions to issues raised by neighbours and others.

STANDARD 22 – Records – case records for children

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 28. Children's case records.

OUTCOME

- Each child has an up-to-date, comprehensive case file, recording their history and progress, which will contribute to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.
- All records are maintained and kept securely, and are accessible when required.

Standard

1. There is a written policy on case recording which establishes the purpose, format and contents of files, and clarifies what information is kept on the registered person's files and what information is kept on the child's files.
2. The registered person works with the responsible authority to ensure effective integration of information held in the registered person's case files and those of the responsible authority. The registered person provides copies of the records and documents in relation to children placed by a responsible authority immediately, on receipt of a written request. When a child leaves the home placement, the registered person sends all relevant records to the responsible authority.
3. The registered person ensures that staff know why the child is in care and understands the basis for the current placement, its intended duration and purpose, and the details of the child's legal status.
4. The registered person is given relevant information about the child and their family which is needed for the appropriate care and safety of the child, other children in the home and staff.
5. The child's case record is set up and accurate information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their records.
6. Records relating to children placed in the home are in a form which can be readily passed on if a child moves to another placement, or ceases to be looked after or if references are requested on a member of staff.

7. Staff encourage the child to reflect on and understand her/his history, according to the child's age and ability, and to keep appropriate memorabilia. The registered person makes this role clear to staff.
8. The staff are trained and provided with the necessary equipment to record significant life events for the child, and to help the child to keep their own records and souvenirs, including photographs and electronic records. Photos of the child's life at the home are taken regularly and copies given to the child.
9. The registered person helps staff access to all relevant information to help the child understand and come to terms with past events. (Where necessary information is not forthcoming from the responsible authority, a copy of the written request for information is kept.)
10. Each child's file contains the necessary information as detailed in the regulations and children are made aware that they may read their files, confidential or third party information excepted, and are actively encouraged to do so and to correct errors and add personal statements.
11. The registered person ensures that staff store information in a secure manner and understand what information they are expected to keep and what information needs to be passed on to the responsible authority. Information relating to child protection concerns must be transferred to the new providers if a child moves to a new children's home or other provider.
12. Standards 7, 8 and 9 above are not applicable to short breaks where parents give children a sense of their history.

STANDARD 23 - The design and location of the home

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 31. Fitness of premises.

OUTCOME

- Children live in well designed and pleasant homes with adequate space in a suitable location where there is access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which will promote their development.

Standard

1. Location is carefully considered at the planning stage for a new home.
2. The home is situated in a location which supports the aims and objectives of the home and can serve the needs of the children living there and support their development. An urban or rural area may be considered appropriate on the basis of the area served and the present and future needs and background of the child. Particular thought is given to the suitability of the location to provide the environment most helpful to each child's development.
3. The home is situated in a location which takes into account, the safety and protection of children living there and the community. The location takes into account the importance of being able to get to schools and education options, employment opportunities, shops, leisure facilities in the community and access to public transport to enable links with family and friends to be maintained, encouraged and developed. The home is situated in a location which takes into account availability of health services.
4. The home is adequately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably decorated and equipped, reasonably secure from unauthorised public access, and adequately cleaned and maintained.
5. Physical restrictions on normal movement within the home (e.g. stairgates or high handles on doors) are used only in relation to a child where the restriction has been agreed within their Placement Plan (and care plan if appropriate) and are used only where necessary satisfactorily to safeguard and promote that child's welfare. Such restrictions for one child do not impose similar restrictions on other children.
6. There are no outstanding requirements or recommendations (other than any being implemented within the timescale recommended by the relevant authority) relating to the home from any of the following

bodies:

- planning authority (district or unitary, borough or metropolitan authority)
 - building control authority
 - fire service
 - environmental health authority
 - Department for Children, Schools and Families or Ofsted.
7. The design, layout and use of the accommodation are such that children's individual care and privacy are not compromised. The design recognises the need for children to have both companionship and privacy and there is sufficient space for children to exercise choice as to where to spend their leisure time.
 8. Children are regularly consulted on whether the building and its facilities and furnishing meets their needs and on arrangements for them to be safe and secure in the local area.
 9. Consideration is given to good relationships with neighbours at the planning stage and thereafter when the home is operational. Thought is given at the planning stage to any aspects of design and location which might assist in maintaining a responsible positive relationship with the neighbourhood.

STANDARD 24 – Physical safety and security

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 22. Use of surveillance. 23. Hazards and safety. 31. Fitness of premises. 32. Fire precautions.

OUTCOME

- Children live in homes that provide physical safety and security.

Standard

1. Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards.
2. Risk assessments (identifying hazards, estimating level of risk to health, safety or welfare from the hazards identified, and identifying action to be taken both to reduce risks to an acceptable level where practicable and to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable risks) are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed. Such risk assessments are carried out in relation to the home's premises and grounds, children's known and likely activities (both permitted and illicit), the potential for bullying and abuse within or outside the home, and where applicable the impact of emergency admissions to the home for both the admitted child and the existing child group.
3. Children and staff know the emergency evacuation procedures for the home, including those for use at night, in case of fire.
4. The registered person implements the requirements of the local Fire Authority, to the timescales agreed. Subject to any local arrangements agreed:
 - at least four fire drills, including evacuation of staff and children from the building and fire drills held at night, take place in a 12 month period, and are recorded
 - there is regular testing of emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment
 - any deficiency identified from drills, tests or visits from the fire safety officer is noted, and action taken as necessary to remedy the deficiency.
5. The local Fire Authority has been consulted about fire precaution measures, and is consulted further whenever any significant extension, change of use or alteration is made to the premises.

STANDARD 25 – Secure Accommodation and Refuges

Underpinning Legislation

OUTCOME

- Children living in secure units or refuges experience positive support with their problems as well as security or refuge, and receive the same measures to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare as they should in other children's homes.

Standards

Secure units and refuges

1. Apart from the measures essential to the home's status as a secure unit or refuge, children resident in secure units or approved refuges receive the same care services, rights and protections, consistent with Regulations and these National Minimum Standards, as they should in other children's homes.
2. There is regular liaison between the secure establishment or refuge and child protection staff of the local authority, to ensure advice on safeguarding matters to the establishment, and, for secure units, knowledge of security issues amongst local authority staff who may be required to carry out child protection enquiries at the establishment.

Secure units

3. The secure unit has clear, appropriate, well known and implemented policies and practice which effectively identify and counter risks of self-harm and suicide.
4. Safeguarding practice, issues and incidents (including self-harm, suicide risks and attempts, allegations or incidents of abuse, and bullying) are regularly reviewed and the outcomes of those reviews recorded and acted upon to reduce risks of significant harm. Such reviews where possible include a person with safeguarding responsibilities within the local authority but outside the establishment or its management.
5. CCTV is used in communal areas to contribute to the protection of

young people from bullying, abuse or malicious allegations.

6. The home has a written policy on the use of CCTV which explains which areas are covered and how CCTV recordings will be used to safeguard children and protect staff.
7. Any CCTV records of any use of restraint, episode of bullying, or incident leading to a significant allegation by a young person against another young person or member of staff are reviewed by representatives of the authority responsible for the establishment and appropriate action is taken.
8. In secure units, regular security searches are carried out of communal areas of the establishment, to reduce the likely availability of potentially dangerous items.
9. Those who drive or escort young people away from the secure unit have been vetted in accordance with these Standards, and are briefed and competent to maintain both welfare and security of the young people concerned.
10. Ofsted and the relevant placing authority are notified promptly if a young person goes missing from a secure establishment, or from an appointment or journey outside the establishment.
11. The Placement Plan for each young person in a secure unit sets out the reasons for their accommodation in security, the support they are to receive in resolving the risks and behaviour that led to their secure accommodation, and the support they should receive on leaving security.
12. Young people in secure units receive any external education, health or recreational services they need wherever feasible without compromising security, and staff assist children in implementing any specialist therapeutic or support programmes required.
13. Young people in secure units have their needs met through group and individual work to assist them to live safely and successfully in their chosen community on leaving security. They are supported by outside professionals where needed to prepare for their success in open accommodation in the future.
14. Staff in secure units check the authorisation to restrict each young person's liberty on their admission.
15. Staff are trained in resettlement issues in order to prepare young people effectively for leaving the secure unit or refuge.
16. Placing authorities for young people in secure units are notified of any lack of post-discharge arrangements or lack of visits to a young

person in security. Records of such notifications are kept for Ofsted consideration at inspections.

17. Young people in secure units only exceptionally wear special clothing, instead of their own clothing, to protect them against self-harm following an adequate and recorded risk assessment of the likelihood of self-harm if they wear normal clothing. Any special clothing preserves the child's privacy and dignity.
18. There are sufficient teaching and learning resources in secure units to support the likely educational needs of current and potential residents of the secure unit.
19. Educational assessment and monitoring are effective within the secure unit.
20. Observation, by any means, of young people locked in bedrooms in secure units does not remove reasonable privacy, and allows reasonable personal privacy during dressing, undressing, washing and using the toilet.
21. Observation hatches or windows in secure units are appropriately covered for privacy when not in use for necessary observation.
22. Records are kept of the approved nature, frequency and reason for observation of each young person, and of significant findings.
23. Gender issues are sensitively managed in the observation of young people.
24. Young people in secure units are only separated from a group against their will and confined on their own, when necessary to prevent likely serious harm to the child or others, or likely and imminent serious damage to property.
25. A record is made and kept of all uses of single separation in secure units, and of instances where a young person themselves elects to withdraw from the group into single separation.
26. The young person in security has the opportunity if they wish to read and add a permanent comment to the record of their separation.
27. There is a means, acceptable to young people, for sending complaints or representations directly and unopened to a designated complaints officer outside the establishment, or to the designated complaints officer of their local authority.
28. The premises are fit for the purposes of providing good care, protecting individuals from harm, and (in secure units) maintaining

adequate security. Security requirements do not compromise adequacy of space and ventilation. Children have adequate space and facilities for inside and outside exercise and activities.

29. Each young person in a secure unit has a single bedroom.
30. There is an emergency call system in the secure unit which is effective in summoning staff assistance when needed.
31. All secure unit staff are trained and competent to provide care and maintain safety and security in a secure environment.
32. Management of each secure unit is effective in, defines clear accountabilities for, and regularly and frequently monitors the unit's care, safety, security, education, and preparation for discharge and subsequent living in an open community.

STANDARD 26 - Notification of significant events

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 43. Notifiable events.

OUTCOME

- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities.

Standard

1. The registered person has a system in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30.
2. The registered person ensures the notification to the parents of the child concerned of any other significant incident affecting their child's welfare, unless such a notification is either not reasonably practicable, or would be likely to place the child's welfare at risk.
3. A written record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following notifiable events.
4. The registered person has a system for notification to the placing authorities of any serious concerns about the emotional or mental health of a child such that a mental health assessment would be requested under the Mental Health Act 1983.
5. The registered person of the home requests a meeting involving the placing authority and others involved in the child's protection or care plan to discuss proposed action following any incident notified under Regulation 30 or any initial steps taken to deal with any emergency. Where a meeting is not held, this is with the agreement of the placing authority.

STANDARD 27 – Placement Plan

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 12. Child's Placement Plan

OUTCOME

Children have their needs assessed effectively and comprehensively, and written Placement Plans outline how these needs will be met and are implemented. Children in the home are appropriately placed there.

Standard

1. The Placement Plan for each child sets out clearly the assessed needs of the child, the objectives of the placement, how these are to be met by the registered person on a day- to- day basis, the contribution to be made by the staff of the home, and how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed in relation to each major element of the plan. Each child is aware of the content of their plan, and their views, wishes and feelings are sought and taken fully into account in drawing up, and in reviewing, the plan. The plan includes:
 - health needs and health promotion
 - care needs including safeguarding and promoting welfare
 - physical and emotional needs
 - leisure needs and hobbies
 - education needs and attainment targets
 - cultural, religious, language and racial needs and how they will be met
 - leisure needs
 - contact arrangements with family, friends and significant others
 - how the child can best be responded to in order to avoid the need for physical restraint
 - preparation for leaving care.
2. Each child's Placement Plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child.
3. The child's wishes and feelings are sought and taken into account in the selection of their key worker.
4. The registered person requests a visit to the child from the child's placing authority if such a visit is overdue.

STANDARD 28 – Reviews

Underpinning Legislation:

Regulations: 12. Reviews.

OUTCOME

- Children's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home.

Standard

1. The registered person contributes effectively to each child's Placement Plan review and statutory review of the child's care plan and ensures that the child participates as far as possible in their review process.
2. Staff assist the child to put forward their own current views, wishes and feelings in each review process, and help to ensure that these are fully taken into account in each child's review.
3. The registered person contacts placing authorities to request statutory reviews if overdue for any child, if a change in the care plan is needed, if there has been a significant change in arrangements for the child's care, or if a major action (e.g. a change of placement) not in the care plan appears likely, if the placing authority has not arranged the review.
4. The registered person ensures that if a child is not visited by their caseworker at the frequency expected by Regulations, or within a reasonable time following a reasonable request for a visit originated by the child, this is raised at the child's next review.
5. Children are assisted to secure the support of an independent advocate to support them in providing their views, wishes and feelings to statutory reviews, where this service is available.
6. The result of all statutory reviews and reviews of Placement Plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified.
7. Written copies of their reviews are made available to children. Where necessary, reviews are translated or communicated in a form best suited to the child.