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 **On-call Policy and Procedure**

Relevant Regulations and standards

Regulation 40- Notification of Serious Events

**Policy Aim-**

Shropshire Council Residential Children’s Homes operate a 24 hour / 365 day on call system. This system is for the use of all Residential Children’s Home staff including agency workers.

The on-call system is staffed by an allocated Registered Home Manager, Deputy Manager or other person designated by the registered manager with required knowledge and experience to fulfil the role.

The on-call system is primarily a telephone advice, support and notification system but a variety of other tasks and duties may also be required as/when they arise.

The on-call system is strictly for use outside of ‘normal working’ hours, i.e. after 17.00pm weekdays and during weekends/bank holidays.

**Additional reading and relevant policy/guidance-**

*Protection of children and Safeguarding Policy*

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**1. On-Call Manager Responsibilities**

The on-call manager must:

* Ensure that they have the on-call facility switched on, charged and with them at all times;
* Avoid locations with little or no network coverage for the on-call phone;
* Ensure that they have knowledge of or access to relevant Child or Young Person Risk Management plans;
* Be fit and able to fulfil the role at all times;
* Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
* Have access to and be able to drive an appropriate vehicle if required;
* Ensure the on-call facility is handed over to the next on-call manager;
* Handover any issues or concerns to the Registered Manager of the home;
* Be aware of contact details for the relevant home and staff.

**2. Advice and Support**

The on-call managers’ primary function is to provide advice and support to Residential Care Workers and Shift Leaders that are on shift and working with our children and young people. Every member of staff has the right to contact the on-call manager for this purpose.

The team on duty should assess whether the situation needs reporting to the on-call Manager, or whether it is a routine matter that can be handled by the home’s management team the next working day.

Thought should be given as to whether direction is already in place in regards to the issue, concern or risk in the Child or Young Person’s relevant plans and whether strategies within this plan have been followed.

Staff will need to make a clear judgement as to whether a situation is serious enough to report and as such will need to exercise reasonable judgement and share in the responsibility for managing unexpected situations.

When considering whether a situation should be reported to the On Call manager, it is expected that the team on duty should first discuss it between themselves to identify if there are any solutions or risks.

In challenging and difficult circumstances that require managerial assistance the on-call manager can provide:

• Reassurance and support;

• Objectivity;

• Talking through a problem to find a solution;

• Advice or guidance;

• Direct instructions;

• Clear planning.

**3. Notifications**

The on-call manager should be notified in the following circumstances:

* Any situation where a Child or Young Person accommodated suffers an injury serious enough to warrant medical attention or admission to hospital, this should include any incident of self-harm. This includes serious or persistent self-harming or attempted suicide;
* Any situation that may be considered a Child Protection or Safeguarding issue;
* Any situation where children have been reported as “Missing” to the Police or if the Child or Young person is absent and deemed “High Risk”;
* Any situation where a serious complaint is made against a member of staff that may require a manager to be involved in deciding immediate action;
* Any situation where there are particular staffing problems e.g. non-availability of staff.
* Any situation where a member of staff suffers an injury during the course of their work that requires medical attention or admission to hospital;
* Any situation that is likely to attract media coverage e.g. car thefts and car crashes, disruptions in the local community;
* Any situation where staff on duty are considering calling the police in order to manage a situation or report a crime (on-call manager may be notified following the call if the call was made in an emergency);
* Any situation that warrants the intervention of the emergency services;
* Concern that a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;
* Any concern that a Child or Young Person could be at risk of immediate and Significant Harm;
* Death of a Child or Young Person.

There may be other serious circumstances that the member of staff on shift feels that the on-call manager should be contacted or informed immediately. If this is the case, then they should do so without delay.

Dependent on the severity of the incident and in line with legislation the on-call manager may be responsible for notifying the following people:

* Registered Manager of the Home
* Responsible individual
* Emergency duty team
* Regularity authority (Ofsted)
* Health and Safety Executive
* The Secretary of State

There may be other serious circumstances that the on-call manager feels that a member of the senior team should be contacted or informed immediately. If this is the case, then they should do so without delay.

**4. Direct Support to Homes**

In some serious cases it may be required of the on-call manager to attend one of the homes.

The on-call manager should decide whether to do this based on their own assessment of the circumstances.

The on-call manager should ask themselves the following questions:

• Can the situation be safely managed without my presence?

• is my presence likely to help the situation?

• Will my presence allow me to support the staff team more effectively?

• How knowledgeable, skilled and experienced are the staff in the home?

• Is there an alternative to my presence such as available support from other homes or reallocation of staffing resources?

• Will the issue or situation be solved or over by the time I arrive?

• Do the staff team need extra support and guidance given the circumstances?

If the on-call manager believes that their presence will not offer any more support than they are already able to offer via the telephone, then they should not attend the home.

If the on-call manager believes that their assistance is required, they should attend the home and make alternative arrangements of the continuity of the on-call system if they are covering multiple homes.

In the case of staff absence the on-call manager should only attend the home if all other options have been explored including:

* The staff team currently on shift being flexible to meet the needs of the home;
* The home’s Care Team and Bank staff have been contacted asked whether they can cover the absence;
* Other home’s availability to cover has been discussed with their on-call manager;
* Other arrangements can be made to effectively care for the Child or Young Person.

**5. Police Intervention**

The registered manager or on-call manager should be contacted before making calls to the police unless urgent emergency assistance is required.

The police should only be called:

• When an individual chooses to bring charges against a young person for a criminal offence as is their individual right;

• When following strategies as set out in the young person’s risk assessment / management plan;

• When the on-call manager takes the decision themselves, over and above decisions being taken by staff team on shift due to an assessment of the circumstances.

**6. Appropriate Adult**

There may be times that our young people are arrested for criminal activities. As part of any police investigation a young person will require an appropriate adult to support them.

Where this duty is required out of hours the on-call manager will be responsible for co-ordinating this service and if necessary provide the service.

For legal and logistical reasons some individuals may not be able to carry out the duty.

The following individuals should be considered for this duty in the following order:

• Staff member from the home;

• Another staff member from another home (ideally who is familiar with the young person);

• On-call manager.

Where the only remaining option is the on-call manager; consideration should be given to the distance required to travel and whether any of the other on-call managers are closer and more easily able to carry out the duty.