

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Date created or revised: 0823
Date of next review: 0825

Regulation 44 and 45: Procedures and Supporting Guidance

*SES Turnstone Ltd (7972485) and SES Avocet Ltd (4926028) are
subsidiary companies of Specialist Education Services Topco Ltd (13159680)*

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1. REQUIREMENTS OF REGULATION 44 AND 45

1.1 CHILDREN'S HOMES REGULATIONS 2015: REGULATION 44 VISIT ON BEHALF OF THE REGISTERED PROVIDER:

Management visits to Children's Homes, known as Regulation 44 Visits, are carried out under Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Independent person: visits and reports

44.—(1) The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.

(2) When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—

(a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and

(b) to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

(3) A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.

(4) The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

(a) children are effectively safeguarded; and

(b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

(5) The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

(6) If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report—

(a) details of the conflict of interest; and

(b) the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit.

(7) The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

(a) HMCI;

(b) upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;

(c) the placing authorities of children;

(d) the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and

(e) the responsible individual (if one is nominated).

The focus of the visits is to ensure that the day-to-day care provided is of an appropriate standard. This is achieved through a combination of the Visitor's own direct observations, conversations with children and young people resident in the home, conversations with adults working in the home and visitors, and the reading

of key records and reports which together provide important insights into the ways in which the home operates on a daily basis and how appropriate care and control is provided.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF REGULATION 44 VISITS IN INFORMING REGULATION 45 REPORTS

Regulation 44 visits also contribute to, and inform, the Registered Manager's Review of the Quality of Care (Regulation 45)

Review of quality of care

45.—(1) The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.

(2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—

- (a) the quality of care provided for children;*
- (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and*
- (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.*

(3) After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).

(4) The registered person must—

- (a) supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and*
- (b) make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.*

(5) The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

At SES establishments the Registered Manager will produce a Reg 45 Report for the SES Principal / Deputy Principal every three months. It will report on regulatory requirements and take a view of 50% of the young people’s care plans against Quality Standards. This means that by the end of the six months period all young people’s care plans will have been monitored against the quality standards and regulatory requirements will have been addressed. Each report will respond to previous action points from preceding reports and give action points from the current reporting period, including any actions resulting from Reg 44 visits. Once the Reg 45 Report has been finalised it will be sent to a Director who will forward the final version to the administration team for distribution to Ofsted and placing authorities.

SES believe that by exceeding the minimum regulatory timescale for the Reg 45 report, the Registered Manager’s are able to consistently implement the highest

possible quality of care for young people.

1.3 ISSUES IN RELATION TO THE DUAL REGISTRATION OF SPECIAL SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S HOME

The Regulations and Quality Standards are designed to apply to stand alone children's homes. Residential special schools are also subject to the revised National Minimum Standards (NMS) in force from 1 September 2022 and their own inspection framework. NMS Standard 3 requires visits by an independent visitor 6 times per year with a written report, supplemented by a head teacher report annually.

Both Avocet House and Turnstone House are dual registered and as such have to respond to Ofsted inspections under 'social care' and 'education'.

Reg 44 visits therefore ensure compliance with Residential Special Schools NMS and Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

SES runs integrated, holistic provision that does not conform to 'standard' provision. It is more complex. Therefore, the SES Principal / Deputy Principal have overarching responsibility for the quality of each provision, with a built-in monitoring and reporting function to the Directors through a Principal's Termly Report. This report integrates monitoring and reporting functions from the Registered Manager and Head of Education.

An SES Operational Director is responsible for quality assurance across both establishments

2. **PROCEDURES FOR VISITS**

2.1 PLANNING

- Visits should take place each calendar month.
- Visits will normally be unannounced (at least 50% annually), and times of day will vary, depending when the children and young people are likely to be present.
- Visitors should read the previous report before visiting, paying particular attention to which children and young people were seen, and what the recommendations were.
- Visitors should receive copies of any Ofsted inspection reports.
- Visitors should ensure that they have a full and complete understanding of the Regulations and Quality Standards for Children's Homes and any other relevant national guidance pertaining to Residential Child Care issues.

2.2 UNDERTAKING THE VISIT

- On arrival the visitor should introduce themselves and the purpose of their visit to the person in charge, and follow the home's signing in procedures.
- The visitor should ascertain which children and young people are in, and request that they are informed of the visitor's arrival, and the purpose of the visit.
- Explain how they intend to carry out the visit.

- Find out if there is anything happening of which they need to be aware.
- Visitors can arrange a follow up visit to see people absent on the first occasion.
- The visitor will aim to gather feedback from parents in 75% of the annual reports, and social workers in 50%.

The Visitor should not look around bedroom areas alone if young people are around and should not enter individual young people's bedrooms without their permission. A young person might be asked to show the Visitor round the building as this can provide both an opportunity for talking privately with the young person and gaining their views about the accommodation and care.

2.3 SPECIFIC THEMED VISITS

From time to time, in liaison with the Directors, specific themes may be pursued in relation to strategic development issues whilst completing a standard Reg 44 visit. This will be in addition to any Regulation 44 requirements and reflects the Directors wishes to extend developmental quality assurance beyond that required by statute and guidance.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 MONTHLY REPORTS

The Visitor should attempt to convey a flavour of life in the home.

The **significance** of findings on such matters is important to address. The emphasis should be on an assessment of the findings in each section with positive points as well development points. The Visitor will need to bear in mind the need to explore issues raised rather than just record them. The emphasis should be on the **impact** on the care of young people.

Providing evidence of good practice is important e.g. how young people treat each other and adults; how they treat their surroundings; evidence of involvement in how home is run; how staff relate to the young people.

It is important to use information from one visit in a subsequent visit to explore impact on young people e.g. a comment from a young person may lead to a later visit exploring a particular aspect of practice in the home. In such a way a more in-depth perspective can be built up.

The report should relate what the Visitor thinks of the home's performance. It is important that any significant concerns should be checked with the Registered Manager for clarification. Where facts are in dispute these should be resolved before the report is finalised. Differences of interpretation may still be reflected in the final document.

References to young people are made using their initials.

3.2 ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE REPORT

The report must be completed within 2 weeks of the visit, and sent to the Registered Manager with a copy to the SES Principal / Deputy Principal and the Directors (who will distribute the report and place a hard copy on file).

A copy of the report **must** be sent to Ofsted no later than the end of the month that follows the month in which the visit took place.

The person undertaking the visit should be properly informed of its purpose and have access to the reports provided for the previous 6 months.

It will be the responsibility of the Registered Manager to address any outstanding issues arising from the report. It is expected that the Registered Manager will report to the Executive meeting (Also known as Strategic Management Team Meeting, comprising of SES Principal / Deputy Principal, Registered Manger, Head of Education) on the 1st Monday following the receipt of a Reg 44 Report. This will take place irrespective of the content of the Reg 44 Report. Any issues arising will either have been dealt with and reported back or will be dealt with at that meeting. Should the regular executive meeting be removed from the diary for any reason the RM must diary a briefing meeting with the SES Principal or Deputy Principal within 48hrs of receipt of the report. Any urgent or major issues should be the subject of **immediate** discussion between the Registered Manager and the SES Principal / Deputy Principal.

If the visitor has to raise urgent concerns regarding the care of an individual or a group, this should be done directly with the Registered Manager (or by telephone or email to the Registered Manager) and if they are not available, to the SES Principal / Deputy Principal.

If the visitor has to raise concerns that fall outside the scope of Regulation 44, the visitor should in the first instance raise this directly with the Registered Manager. If the visitor judges this not to be appropriate due to the nature of the concern, then it should be reported by a telephone call or email to the SES Principal / Deputy Principal.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 REGULATION 44 REPORT FORMAT

4.2 REGULATION 45 REPORT FORMAT

4.3 SUPPORTING GUIDANCE

4.1 REGULATION 44 REPORT FORMAT

**MONTHLY INDEPENDENT VISITOR'S REPORT
CHILDREN'S HOMES (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2015**

Name of service	
Ofsted Unique Registration Number	
Name of Independent Visitor	
Date of Visit	
Start Time	End Time
Asked for ID	Asked to sign in

Registered Manager	
Staff on Duty (including designation)	
Registered occupancy	
Actual occupancy	

Number of YP admitted since last visit	
Ages	
Gender	
Admitted from	
Number of YP discharged since last visit	
Discharged to	

STAFF VACANCIES AND NEW APPOINTMENTS

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SAFEGUARDING

AREA REVIEWED	NUMBER	COMMENTS
Notification of significant events.		
Referrals to LADO/LSCB since last visit		
Non-RPI serious incidents		
Number of YP involved		
How many RPI recorded		
How many YP involved (YP/RPI)		

Sanctions and Consequences		
Unauthorised absences and number of YP involved		
< 6hrs		
6 – 12 hours		
12 – 24 hours		
24 – 48 hours		
Complaints made by young people since the last visit?		
Complaints made by parents/community/other agencies since last visit		
Bullying incidents since last visit. How is the service monitoring and following these up?		
Are the young people being effectively safeguarded? Comment on how the service has responded to any events and is contributing to the well being of the young people.		

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

<i>FIRE SAFETY</i>					
Date of fire drill	Number of CYP involved	Number of staff involved	Time	Duration	Comments
Dates of weekly fire alarm testing					

ACCIDENTS			
Date	YP initials	Accurately recorded	Comments

SPECIFIC HEALTH ISSUES

--

USE OF MEDICATION

--

REPORT ON PREMISES AND ANY HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS NOTED

--

STAFFING ISSUES

Is there a supervision matrix available?	
Were all supervisions completed in the calendar month	
Is there a training matrix in place?	
What training has taken place this month/is planned	
Have all staff completed induction and all mandatory training?	
Observation of staff and young people's interactions	
Dates of staff meetings since last visit and comments on topics discussed	

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION

Dates of YP meetings and issues covered	
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Discussion with YP as part of monitoring visit to include comment on contact with family and friends during this period.	
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DISCUSSION WITH STAFF

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DISCUSSION WITH OTHERS

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ACTIONS TAKEN ON RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT THE LAST VISIT

Action Number	Action Required	Current status

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS VISIT

Priority – high – within 7 days of visit, medium – within 14 days of receipt of report, low – before next visit

Action number	Action required	Priority

<p>SIGNED:..... REGULATION 44 VISITOR</p> <p>PLEASE PRINT..... DATE.....</p>
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<p>MANAGER'S COMMENTS AND ACTION PLAN</p>

4.2 REGULATION 45 REPORT FORMAT

Reporting Period: From xxxxxxxxx To xxxxxxxxx			
Date Compiled xxxxxxxxx			
REGULATION 45 SCHEDULE 6 & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS			
HOUSE NAME		URN NUMBER	
Date Statement of Purpose last reviewed?		Date Young People's guide last reviewed?	
INITIALS OF CHILDREN CURRENTLY IN THE HOME			
NUMBER OF CHILDREN ARRIVING OVER THE PERIOD OF THE REPORT			
LA notification			
NUMBER OF CHILDREN LEAVING OVER THE PERIOD OF THE REPORT			
LA notification			
Any changes to Care status?			
Any Court proceedings?			
Number of young people placed OOA			
Or over 20 miles			
Placed in accordance with Statement of Purpose?			

Young Period for this reporting period
Completed actions from Regulation 45.
Completed actions from Regulation 44.
THE QUALITY AND PURPOSE OF CARE STANDARD
Involvement and Contact with Placing Authority
Risk Assessments
Condition of the Home
THE CHILDREN'S VIEWS, WISHES and FEELINGS STANDARD
PAN Targets
House Meetings
Young Peoples Views about Progress
Buildings and Grounds
THE EDUCATION STANDARD

Education Attendance			
Education Outcomes			
24 Hour Learning			
THE ENJOYMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARD			
Young Persons Finances/ Life skills			
LIFESKILLS			
	%	%	%
FINANCE			
Bronze			
Silver			
Gold			
HOME MANAGEMENT			
Bronze			
Silver			
Gold			
SELF CARE			
Bronze			
Silver			
Gold			
TRAVEL			
Bronze			
Silver			
Gold			
SOCIAL SKILLS			

Bronze				
Silver				
Gold				
Overall	43%	%	%	
Behaviour Programmes				
Activity Planning				
OAA Committee				
THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STANDARD				
Menus				
Therapeutic Input				
Medical Appointments				
Illness to the Home				
Accidents-Children				
THE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS STANDARD				
Contact with Families				

Feedback from Parents
Sanctions/Reparation/Restorative
THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN STANDARD
Liaison with Local Police
Visitors to the Home
Notification of Significant Events
Child Protection Referral
Restraints
Serious Incidents
Health and Safety (Inc.; Fire Drills, Maintenance, Transport)
Missing from Care
THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STANDARD

Complaints
Accidents-Adults
Recruitment
Staff Risk Assessment
Training
Reviewed Documents
Appraisals
Supervision
Disciplinary
Senior Management Monitoring
Case Co-Ordinator Monitoring

Development Plan Progress
Feedback from Staff
THE CARE PLANNING STANDARD
Transition
EHCP, Placement Plan and Care Plan
Development and Learning Documents
Liaison with External Agencies (not police)
Feedback from Placing Authorities / Outside Agencies
Actions to be carried out
REGISTERED MANAGER COMMENTS
Areas for Development
Areas of Strength
Concluding Remarks

4.3 GUIDANCE SUPPORTING MONITORING

The following should act as guidance and reference material when and if applicable. It is not intended to be exclusive or prescriptive, or to dictate areas of scrutiny.

4.3.1 Interviews With Children And Young People

The following lines of enquiry and indicative questions have been informed by the findings of research undertaken by the Children's Rights Director's Office with children living in children's homes. They address the issues that most affect children and young people living in residential care and areas for potential vulnerability.

It is not expected that the Regulation 44 visitor would address all of the issues in each interview, but would use them selectively for example, to 'test out' and 'triangulate' findings from other aspects of the visit; any thematic focus of a particular visit; or follow up of concerns from previous visits including Ofsted inspection.

General

- How was your day?
- How would you describe the general atmosphere at the house?
- Are you happy with / at the home?
- Do you feel well cared for and safe here?
- How well do you get on with the staff? And the other young people?
- What do you like best about living here?
- Is there anything you don't like about living here?

Bullying And Feeling Safe

- Are there any house rules about bullying and the consequences of bullying?
- How much of an issue is bullying here? Why do you think that is?
- Who would you report bullying to?
- What do you expect would happen if you report bullying?
- Do you feel safe generally at the Home?
- How do you keep your own personal possessions safe?

- Do you know how to complain if you are unhappy about something?
- Have you ever made a complaint – were you happy with the outcome? Explore

Behaviour, Rewards And Sanctions

- How are you expected to behave – are there house rules?
- Are there rewards for good behaviour and achievements?
- How do staff respond if you don't follow the house rules?
- What sort of sanctions are used?
- Is restraint ever used here?
- If yes – discuss why? Under what circumstances?
- Do you feel staff are fair?

Education / School

- Do you all go to school / college / education every day?
- What are your favourite subjects?
- What do the staff expect of you?
- How are you encouraged / supported / motivated to go to school / take part in education? • Do you feel well supported – if not what more could be done?
- What are the consequences for not attending?
- Where and when do you do your homework – does that work for you? If not discuss

Hobbies / Interests

- What hobbies and out of school interests do you have?
- How do you pursue these? E.g. clubs; regular attendance etc.
- Is there anything you would like to do but don't / can't? Why not?
- What sort of leisure activities do the staff organise at the home and out of the home?
- How are these decided? Do you have a say in the planning?
- How are you supported to exercise faith, religious beliefs and cultural practices?

Health

- What do the staff do to help you to be healthy?
- Diet – do you have any particular needs and preferences and how are these met?
- Self-care and hygiene – what are the arrangements for using the bathroom / showers; do you have choice over your toiletries, clothing etc. – individualised? Choices? Advice and support?
- Arrangements for health checks, eye tests, dentists etc.
- What are the rules regarding smoking?
- What advice have you had about the drugs; sexual health and relationships etc.?

Independence

- How is the Home helping you to become more independent?
- Are you encouraged to help with practical tasks around the home – e.g. doing own washing? Planning, shopping for and / or preparing meals?
- Budgeting – financial planning; saving etc.

Keeping In Touch With Friends And Family

- How do you keep in touch with friends and family?
- Are your contact plans kept to?
- Do you get to visits friends? Have overnight stays? Can you have friends visit you?

Staff And Key Working

- How well do you get on with the staff? How would you describe the staff overall?
- Are there any staff you feel particularly close to? Have a particularly good relationship with?
- Who would you speak to if you had a worry or a problem or a complaint?
(if not mentioned – discuss the relationship with their key worker?)
- How do you see the role of the key worker?
- Do you see and agree with your care plan and the things the Home wants to do for you and help you to achieve?
- Are you ever asked your opinions about the home, and do you have any say in the running of the home? Menus; rules; activities etc.? e.g. house meetings, consultations, etc.

4.3.2 Interviews With Parents/Relatives/Carers

- Are you happy with your child's / young person's placement?
- Is your child / young person happy / safe at the home?
- In what ways do you feel your child / young person is doing well / not so well since living at the home?
- Is there good communication between you and the home? Are you kept informed of your child's progress and any significant issues / events?

4.3.3 Interviews With Staff

- What do you like about working at the home?
- How would you describe the quality of care the home provides?
- Do you feel the home is keeping all its children/ young people safe?
- Do you feel the home is meeting the individual needs of all its children and young people?
- For each child can you give an example of progress / improved outcome they have made since living here?
- Are there any aspects of the care that you feel needs to improve for any child/ young person?
- Is there regular communication between the management and the care staff?
- Do you receive regular supervision, support and the training you need to do the job well?
- Have any young people made complaints / allegations about staff or other adult? If so – what about? How were they dealt with? Explore Outcomes and impact.....
- Explore knowledge and understanding of bullying procedures – any issues? How dealt with?
- Explore knowledge and understanding of behaviour management – use of rewards and sanctions? Examples? Are they used fairly? Are they trained in physical restraint?
- Explore knowledge and understanding of key worker role / care planning / young people's involvement in their plans and reviews etc
- For children with disability explore how well the home is resourced to meet needs? Any specialist training they have had in accordance with the home's statement of purpose?

4.3.4 Interviews With Professionals/Visitors

- What is your observation / experience of the care the home provides?
- Are you happy with the young person's placement (placing authority)

- Is there good communication between you and the home?
- What in your experience does the home do particularly well? And what might it improve if anything?

4.3.5 Physical Condition Of The Home

The building, its location and environment, the condition of the furniture and decoration, the use made of the rooms and the personal space available for individual children can affect the whole atmosphere of a home.

These factors also send a powerful message to children and others of the value that those responsible place upon the children they care for.

The physical environment will have an effect upon the self-esteem of the children living here and will have consequences for their development and behaviour.

It may give a different view of the home if one or two of the children or young people are prepared to show you around. This is also a good way of getting a view of the home from the resident's viewpoint and gives an opportunity to talk privately with the child or young person.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Is heating and lighting within the home adequate?
- What is the state of furniture and furnishings?
- Are there any signs of being a home rather than an institution such as flowers, plants, and photographs?
- Are lavatories, washbasins, baths and showers in good condition and provided in sufficient number? Are they clean?
- Can residents choose between taking a bath or shower?
- Do locks work to provide privacy?
- Is the kitchen, as much like an ordinary domestic kitchen as possible?
- Are residents, with supervision if appropriate, able to use it to make snacks, or prepare drinks or meals?
- Does each child have either a lockable space for personal possessions or a key to their own bedroom door?
- Have individual children personalised their own space with posters, photos or pictures?
- Is there a welcoming area where they can entertain visitors with some privacy?
- Is there a telephone that they can use in private?

- Does access to and movement through the building allow people with disabilities, whether children, staff or visitors to use the building easily?
- Are the gardens reasonably tidy?
- Are any tools, machinery and garden chemicals locked away when not in use?
- Do the children use the garden, for play, exercise, growing their own plants or vegetables?

The report should identify:

- Any damage or outstanding repairs
- Any unsafe equipment that needs replacing or repairing
- Progress with the Asset Management Plan (Premises)

The report should comment on the general standards of accommodation, the furniture and fittings and the level of homeliness provided. A distinction needs to be drawn between issues that need to be addressed over a longer period or have implications for the capital programme and those that should be resolved more speedily.

4.4 RECORD CHECKS

4.4.1 Behaviour Management Records

The reparations and sanction record, and restraint record must be inspected on every visit.

These records should provide the visitor with a picture of what has been happening in the home for individual children and the group as a whole since the previous Regulation 44 visit. Look out for such issues as the number of absences without authority, trouble with neighbours, incidents between children and young people in the home etc.

Look for evidence that the records of disciplinary measures or the use of restraints are regularly monitored by managers, and that their comments upon the appropriateness of such actions are recorded.

Track a sanction through the home's daily log or incident book to try to understand the circumstances that led to the sanction. Does the sanction appear fair and appropriate in the light of the recorded incident?

Similarly, read the circumstances leading up to the use of restraint on a child and consider if it was necessary and appropriate.

Visitors should be able to consult the positive behaviour plans when looking at the appropriateness of a sanction or intervention with a particular resident.

4.4.2 Complaints Records

If the home has an open environment where children and young people feel free to express their opinions and staff take seriously what they say, most issues can be raised and dealt with without the need to use the formal stages of the complaint system.

However, there are times when the child needs to make a complaint and see that it is responded to in a fair and just way.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Does every resident have a leaflet explaining how to make a complaint?
- Ask children and young people if the complaints procedure has been explained to them verbally.
- Do the children all have telephone numbers and addresses of people organisations that they can contact for help and advice?
- Do children have access to a telephone, which they can use without being overheard by other children or staff?
- Do they have a phone card or similar to enable them to use the phone?
- Are parents always informed in writing of the complaints procedure?
- Ask how any recent complaints have been resolved. If possible, speak to the child or young person involved to get their view of the response they received.
- Does the home record the compliments it receives as well as the complaints?
- Ask children whom they would talk to if they were unhappy or worried.
- Ask children if they feel 'safe' in the home.

4.4.3 Children's Files And Care Plans

The Children's Homes Regulations require that the responsible authority should arrange that an individual case record be maintained in each children's home on each child in the home.

The case record in the children's home is particularly important because it contains information about a time of their lives when family relationships are under pressure and may need to take the place of memories and knowledge that are usually held within the family.

The file should be able to contain certificates, photographs, school reports and other important papers.

The case record can be significant and positive feature of the child's life. The visitor might want to look at a file if an issue is raised when speaking to residents or staff.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Are the files kept in a secure and locked cabinet?
- Are written entries legible and signed and dated clearly?
- Is the information factual, accurate and clear?
- Is fact separated from opinion?
- Are stigmatising terms avoided?
- Do they contain up to date copies of the Looked After Children forms for each child?
- Is there a copy of the last review meeting?
- How do staff encourage children and young people to participate in their review meeting in whatever way they feel most able?
- Are they aware of the existence of their case file?
- How do they have access to it and contribute to the record if they wish?
- Does the home have a record of where the files have been transferred to when they leave the home?

4.5 DAILY LIFE

4.5.1 Food and Mealtimes

Food is a basic need and can also be an expression of nurture and care. Meals, which consist of enjoyable food eaten in a companionable atmosphere, contribute to a child's sense of being cared for physically and emotionally.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Do the children and young people like the food?
- Look at the menu book. Do the meals reflect a varied and balanced diet?
- How are children and young people involved in planning the menus?
- How are they offered a choice of food and not required to eat what they do not want?
- How are different diets whether for religious, cultural or medical reasons provided without unnecessarily singling anyone out?
- Do staff and residents eat together?
- Are meals sometimes used to mark special occasions such as birthdays, achievements, festivals or surprises?
- Do the children and young people sometimes share in the preparation of food or snacks?
- Are there age appropriate cookery books available?
- Is it possible for family or friends to stay for a meal?
- Is food, including fruit, always available as in most people's homes?
- Do children and young people sometimes take part in food shopping?

4.5.2 Arrangements for Contact with Family and Friends

Children living away from home need to have contact with the people who are important to them – parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. Supporting children's important relationships helps to maintain their sense of stability and continuity and helps them feel valued.

Particular questions to consider are:

- What are the arrangements for looking after visitors?
- Is there a private room to entertain visitors?
- Are drinks and/or snacks made available?
- Are parents helped with fares or other necessary expenses to visit?
- How do residents keep in touch with home? Is it easy for them to telephone home?

4.5.3 Clothing and Personal Items

Shopping is an intrinsic part of everyday life and should be a normal experience for children and young people. Shopping provides them with an opportunity to make choices and to start to understand about money and budgeting.

Department of Health guidance states that there is no place generally for bulk buying or special purchasing arrangements of clothing or personal items in children's homes.

Particular questions to consider are:

- What are the arrangements for buying clothes?
- Do staff accompany younger children to buy clothes?
- Are staff aware of the religious, cultural or racial background which may affect choice of clothing or other personal items?
- Are children and young people able to spend their pocket money as they choose? If they choose unwisely, how is that dealt with?
- Are the young women in the home able to keep a sufficient supply of sanitary protection of their choice so that they do not need to request it continually, or ask for it from male members of staff?

4.5.4 Community Relations

The Visitor should discuss with staff the relationship between the home and the local community including immediate neighbours; links with local community groups (including participation on local committees); and use of local facilities. There should be discussion too of links with local schools and the local police, including contact made with the Police Liaison Officer.

Particular attention should be given to:

- Any incidents that have occurred or complaints that have been received and action taken
- Any activities undertaken in the local community, for example fundraising or voluntary work.

This may overlap with information recorded elsewhere in the report

4.5.5 Recreational Activities

Particular questions to consider are:

- What range of activities are available to children both within and outside the home?
- Does the range of activities on offer reflect the gender, age and ethnic balance of the home?
- Do staff participate in activities with the children?
- What arrangements are made for individuals to pursue interests and to reach their potential in activities?
- How do children get involved with life in the local community?

4.5.6 Arrangements For Religious Observance

The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 requires that each child should, as far as practicable, have an opportunity to attend such religious services and receive such instruction as is appropriate to the religious persuasion to which the child belongs. The child must also be provided with facilities for religious observance such as special diets and clothing.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Are enquiries made into the religious and cultural background of every child and young person as part of planning the admission?
- Is this information recorded on the case file?
- Can staff tell you the religious and cultural backgrounds of the residents?
- What steps are currently being taken to allow children and young people to practise their religion in a manner appropriate to their age?

4.5.7 The Voice of the Child

If children feel they have a say in the way the daily life of the home is organised they are more likely to respect the rules and agreements that support the principles of the home.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Are there regular meetings of staff and residents where issues about the everyday life of the home can be discussed?
- When was the last one held and what was discussed?
- In what other ways is the voice of the child heard?
- Can the visitor join a meeting to talk about their role as a Regulation 44 visitor?

4.5.8 Safety

The visitor will only need to look at issues concerning safety if it comes up during the visit, as it is already a well inspected and monitored area. Visitors should be aware of the fire safety record book, the health and safety reporting requirements, and the responsibilities vested in the registered manager and the staff to ensure the safety of anyone living or working in the establishment, or visiting.

The visitor should be able to consult the fire record book, the fire safety risk assessment, the building risk assessment, risk assessments relating to individuals and activities, and the health and safety policies and records including incident investigations, if an issue is raised.

In any event, it is good practice to ask staff and residents if they know the evacuation procedures, and when they last took part in a practice drill.

4.5.9 Arrangements for Health Care

The Visitor should ascertain what the arrangements are for young people to access health and medical care, including G.P. services, dental care, hearing and sight tests as well as advice relating, as appropriate, to sexual health and substance use. The report should provide an overview of the level of health care provided and identify any unmet needs that exist.

Monitoring and promoting the health of looked after children is particularly important as changes of careers and possibly doctors, dentists and opticians can lead to gaps in knowledge about the child's health needs and medical history.

Particular questions to consider, depending on issues raised, are:

- How do the staff take a proactive approach to promoting the health of each child and young person?
- Are they all registered with a GP?
- Are statutory medicals taking place within proper timescales?
- When did a particular child or young person last see the dentist and the optician?
- Are all medicines kept in a locked cabinet and a record kept of all medicines administered (including over the counter medicines)?
- Look at the list of medicines administered. Is there any pattern of medicines administered which raises concern?

- Does each child have a full health record and health care plan kept at the home? Essential Information Parts 1 and 2 and Placement Plan Parts 1 and 2 of the Looking After Children materials will provide a comprehensive record if they have been adequately completed.
- What advice/education about sexual matters, including contraception and safe sex is provided?
- What advice/education about smoking and the use of alcohol and other drugs is provided?
- How is regular exercise promoted as a part of a normal lifestyle?
- What are the arrangements for looking after residents when they are unwell?
- How is emotional health monitored and promoted?
- Are there any links with health professionals outside the home who can offer advice, support or guidance?

4.5.10 Care and Control

Residents in children's homes may be coping with strong emotions of loss, pain and anger as well as the practical difficulties of day to day living. They might also be suffering from attachment disorder, and have probably had traumatic pasts to some extent or another. They need to feel safe and cared for within a structure, which they understand and respect as fair and just.

Homes should have written guidelines for staff regarding behaviour management and use of sanctions and interventions, which visitors can ask to read.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Can staff explain the philosophy and procedures of the home for the care and discipline of the children?
- How is behaviour and control within the home tackled positively and proactively (rather than only as a response to bad behaviour)?
- Are there written procedures on managing bullying within the home?
- Ask a member of staff how a recent incident of bullying was dealt with.
- Ask a child or young person if she/he thinks there is any bullying in the home.
- How are they involved in the decision making about rules and behaviour within the home?
- Ask them if they know what behaviour is unacceptable within the home and what sanctions are used.
- Ask if they feel the rules are fair, and are applied fairly.
- Are staff aware of potential times of tension (e.g. review meeting, returning from a visit home, court hearings) so that they can prepare to defuse the situation?

- Are all staff clear on prohibited measures that are never acceptable as disciplinary measures? (e.g. corporal punishment, deprivation of food or drink, restriction of contact, requiring a child to wear distinction or inappropriate clothing, the use or withholding of medication, medical or dental treatment, the use of accommodation to physically restrict the liberty of any child, intentional deprivation of sleep, the imposition of fines or intimate physical searches).
- Do the sanctions used fit the guidelines?
- If an issue is raised read the incident report and speak to the child or young person and member of staff involved for their views.
- Note whether anyone who has gone missing without permission from the home, and read the records relating to this incident, including the life space interview taken place on return. Were staff able to ascertain the reason for the incident? Has any plan been put into place to keep the child or young person safe, and help them to regulate their behaviour in more appropriate ways?
- Ask staff and children and young people if they know the procedure that is followed when a child is absent without permission.
- Try to find out whether there are any patterns to individuals or groups running away or failing to return on time. Why has a particular child or young person been missing? Were they running to escape the home or something in the home or were they running to do something or see someone?
- Do staff look for patterns or trends in incidents of children who go missing? Are there any plans in place to manage this behaviour?

4.5.11 The Education of Young People Looked After

Each of our facilities is dual registered as a Residential Special School and as a Children's Home. The company philosophy is one of highly personalised education packages and "no limits" thinking with regard to children's potential.

Looked After Children can be disadvantaged educationally. Changes of carer may have led to changes of school and a disrupted school career. Emotional distress can make concentration on schoolwork difficult and low self-esteem can prevent children achieving their full academic potential.

Low expectations of Looked After Children's educational standards by adults will add to these difficulties.

Staff in our homes are expected to promote confidence and achievement in learning and can help with the transition to further study or employment.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Is the company philosophy promoted in practice?
- If a child or young person is not attending school for any reason, what arrangements have been made to ensure the child receives some continuity of education?
- What practical arrangements are made for private study and homework?
- Is there evidence of staff arranging resources and trips out to support course or school work?
- How is achievement in learning encouraged and rewarded in the home?
- Are there books and reading materials freely available within the home?
- Are children and young people encouraged to use the library?
- What links do key workers have with the Learning Centre?
- Do staff attend open evenings and other functions if parents cannot do so?
- Are young people encouraged to go on to further education?
- Do staff explore ideas about what individuals would like to do when they leave school well before they reach school leaving age?
- How do they help them to gain information about a wide range of education, training or work opportunities?
- How do staff help children who attend work experience?
- What practical arrangements are made to ensure they arrive at work experience on time and appropriately dressed?

4.5.12 Preparation for Leaving

Children and young people may leave the home to live with their families, to join a foster or adoptive family or to go into semi or fully independent living arrangements. However much the child or young person welcomes the move, it will be a significant change for them and will usually cause anxiety. Staff at the home can support them by preparing them for the move as much as possible and being available after the move to offer advice or more practical help to them and their carers.

- Do staff and residents know the home's policy relating to preparation for leaving?
- How are children and young people helped to gain practical skills while living in the home (e.g. shopping, budgeting, filling in benefit or job application forms, using a bank, using public transport, cooking, changing a fuse, registering with a GP)?
- How are parents and/or family members involved in supporting the plan?

- What links does the home have with other relevant agencies such as education, fostering and adoption teams and housing in developing plans for children and young people to move on?
- Are contingency plans made to cope with a breakdown in the plan after the child has left?
- Are children aware of where to go for help and support after leaving the home?
- What support does the home offer after the child has left?

4.6 STAFF RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Caring for children is a continuous learning process for parents as well as for people who look after other people's children in a residential setting. Staff need to learn individually and as a group from experience, training and from one another.

Caring for other people's children can require enormous emotional as well as physical energy. It can challenge personal values about families, gender sexuality, race, religion and morality.

In addition to this, children who have been seriously damaged by the adults in their lives may target staff members to express their anger and pain through physical or verbal abuse. Therefore, staff need to understand about attachment disorder, and the issues about caring for traumatised children and young people. Staff need support to deal with the complexity of reactions that these factors cause for them individually and as a group.

Particular questions to consider are:

- Are there regular staff meetings timetabled so that all possible team members are able to attend?
- Ask if you can see the minutes of the last few staff meetings to get an idea of issues discussed and the level of staff attendance.
- Does the team spend time in group supervision?
- Do staff confirm that individual supervision is regular, structured and valued within the home?
- Are issues of performance, conduct, training and safeguarding children from abuse a routine part of supervision sessions? Visitors can ask these questions of staff and supervisors, but should not expect to have access to the contents of individual personal support records.
- Is there evidence of team training days or sessions?
- Does each member of staff have an individual training and development plan?
- Is there an induction pack for new staff? Are relief and agency staff provided with appropriate induction?

- Have staff who have completed induction and probation, also completed the mandatory training, including behaviour management training? If not, what are the constraints preventing this from happening?
- Do all staff have access to a full range of internal and external documentation and procedures?
- Are there arrangements for staff to receive personal counselling if they wish? Do they know how to self refer?
- Are there arrangements that help staff to report alleged misconduct by colleagues or senior staff? Are staff aware of their responsibilities to do this?

4.7 COMMENTS BY YOUNG PEOPLE, STAFF MEMBERS, PARENTS AND VISITORS

The Visitor should always ensure that there is opportunity for discussion with young people and staff as well as any parents, social workers and relevant visitors who may be present; there should also be the opportunity for individuals to raise matters in private.

4.8 CELEBRATION OF GOOD PRACTICE

The visitor should be alert throughout the visit, and make the most of the opportunities for observing practice. Often clues are gleaned when observing discussions between team members, so being present at shift handovers is a consideration when planning visits. It is important to present a report that reflects the information gained from the visit, and it is easy to concentrate on weaknesses or problems. However, looking for examples of good practice is very important, and should be given equal prominence in the report.