

Children's Homes Regulation (2015) Guide

The right placement at the right time

The Children's Homes Regulations (2015) include Quality Standards. Each Quality Standard is intended to have an aspirational, child-focussed outcomes statement children's homes are expected to achieve, followed by what are claimed to be a clear set of underpinning, measurable requirements that homes must meet in order to achieve the standard.

The Regulations need to be understood in the context of the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations and the OfSTED inspection framework.

OfSTED Judgement Area	Applicable Quality Standard	Applicable Regulation
Overall Experiences and Progress of Children and Young People; taking into account how well children and young people are helped and protected , and the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	1. Quality and Purpose of Care 2. Children Wishes and Feelings 3. Education 4. Enjoyment and Achievement 5. Health and Wellbeing	Regulation 6 Regulation 7 Regulation 8 Regulation 9 Regulation 10
How well children are helped and protected (key judgement).	6. Positive Relationships 7. Protection of Children	Regulation 11 Regulation 12
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	8. Leadership and Management 9. Care Planning Non Quality Standards Regulations Engaging with the wider system Management and Administrative Regulations	Regulation 13 Regulation 14 Regulation 5 Regulations Parts 3 - 7

Table 1: Judgements, Standards and Regulations (from Onrezeme.org)

Inspection process

In order to meet the Regulations, homes need to provide high quality care, with evidence of good planning, in a safe and protective environment where children have positive experiences and make tangible progress, and they will be interested in children and young people's views of how the home is run, how staff practice, and their own progress.

There is an increased emphasis on outcomes for young people and inspectors will want to see how **managers** and **staff**:

- Understand each child's starting point
- Measure success
- Know they are making a positive difference to a child's life
- Understand and act on the strengths and areas for improvement of practice in their home

As managers are able to apply their professional judgement about how to meet the Quality Standards, they need to be able to explain their decision making: how does a course of action meet a child's needs? Inspectors will want evidence of planning. They will be interested in records of incidents, restraints and case files and the Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose will **always** be a focus and a line of enquiry at every inspection. The Statement of Purpose should be kept under review. It should lay out the home's aims and objectives or ethos, and show how the Quality Standards are met. Managers and their teams will need to be clear about the Statement of Purpose, know what it means and know how it is applied in practice.

Outcomes

Outcomes need to be thought about in the context of the OfSTED criteria for making judgements about a child's experience and progress. The Quality Standards encourage a focus on outcomes without being prescriptive on how outcomes are defined or measured. Homes need to show how they help young people make progress in their education, health and social, emotional and psychological wellbeing, as well as how being prepared for the future. Because Ofsted are talking more about 'experience and progress' there needs to be a good focus on distance travelled and how young people feel, as well as end results. Inspections will examine the quality of individualised care provided and the influence and impact of the home on children's progress and experiences. They will look for evidence that managers and staff understand each child's starting point, measure progress and know how what the home provides makes a positive difference in the lives of young people.

How well children are helped and protected (Key judgement)

How children are helped and protected from harm is a key judgement. This means that if this area is judged to be inadequate then the overall 'experiences and progress of children and young people' judgement will always be inadequate. Judgements will be formed based on how well risks are identified, understood and managed; the quality of response if children go missing; and the way situations and behaviours are managed through clear and consistent boundaries that contribute to a child's feeling of wellbeing. Homes will need to provide a safe physical environment and have strong, proactive responses to risks. Whilst they must support age appropriate risk taking, they also need to work to reduce risks and minimise harm.

Children should be helped to identify trusted adults. Evidence of how they encourage positive behaviour and manage conflicts effectively is also needed. There are specific expectations around searches of young people, their rooms and possessions, which, if necessary, must be carried out by properly trained staff who take into account the young person's need to feel safe and to have their dignity and needs respected. Homes are also expected to develop proactive and positive relationships with the police.

There must be robust and clear vetting of all staff and volunteers, and homes need to show how they implement 'Safer Recruitment' protocols. They need to ensure that staff files are complete and that recruitment policies reflect practice in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and include clear lines of reporting for staff and others.

Homes must have, and carry out, clear child protection procedures, and they need to have and carry out clear procedures for the investigation of all allegations. Designated Officers must be kept up to date with current safeguarding knowledge and be familiar and involved with local area safeguarding arrangements such as a Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub.

Homes will need to clearly show how any safeguarding incident or referral has been handled and completed, and be clear about the outcome. E-safe policies and staff training on E-safety will need to be up-to-date to ensure that staff know how to safeguard and protect children on line.

Leaders and managers

The judgement of the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is graded on the four-point scale. If inspectors judge this area of provision to be 'inadequate', this is likely to lead to an overall 'experiences and progress' judgement of 'inadequate' and certainly not a judgement that exceeds 'requires improvement'. Inspectors will make the 'help and protect' and 'leaders and managers' first so that they can take these into account when arriving at a judgement on 'overall experiences and progress'.

Managers and leaders are expected to prioritise the needs of children, and ensure that children continually make progress in all areas of development, demonstrating clear understanding of a child's progress in relation to their care plan. There are high expectations of staff as decision makers and activity leaders. Managers need to support staff and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and take effective action, based on this understanding, whilst achieving the aims and objectives of their Statement of Purpose. Managers will be judged on the quality of their professional relationships and the degree to which they actively challenge ineffective responses from other services.

Managers are also expected to drive progress. To do so they need to be permanent and suitably qualified, and they must actively manage the home. They need to ensure adequate staffing and actively monitor the quality of care provided, ensuring that each child's care plan comprehensively addresses their needs. Managers must also be proactive with other agencies and within the local community. If children are not making progress they must ensure that plans are reviewed and updated.

Managers must provide their staff with effective supervision and effective training and development opportunities. They need to ensure staff are consistent and reliable and develop good relationships with children. Managers need to have good succession plans in place to maintain stability and they should involve children in the recruitment and appraisal of staff.

Managers will need to ensure the quality of the physical environment as well as the quality of case records, and ensure that proper Notifications are made. They need to review and respond to risks and keep the Statement of Purpose under review. They will also need to make child-centred decisions about admissions.