

the South West Responsible Individuals'
standards and evaluation tool

(December 2024)



introduction

Registered Managers and Responsible Individuals in the South West of England meet regularly with **dialogue** to share and develop good practice, while addressing the pressure and isolation on such key roles.

The role of the Responsible Individual (RI) has evolved over the years, but there is limited guidance at present in the regulations and guidance. Over the course of 18 months the RI Network codesigned this tool to explore in more depth the requirements on the role, hinged on the Leadership & Management Standard.

dialogue is a training and consultancy organisation for the residential sector, bringing expertise in leadership work, quality assurance and training. We support organisations in the South West and beyond to develop a strong and effective focus on improving the lives of young people in their care.

This tool will evolve with latest version at dialogueltd.co.uk/ri. Do feel free to get in touch.

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Foreword

The purpose of this resource is to help Responsible Individuals to carry out their responsibilities under the children home regulation and ensure the quality standards are implemented to the required standard.

The process of developing the standards has been a lengthy and considered process undertaken by a core group of South West Responsible Individuals who formed a network to share challenges, opportunities and mutual support. The network now incorporates 44 RIs and senior managers from a wide-ranging set of services and organisations across the region.

The work recognises the variation in approach required in different organisations and explores in particular the division in roles between the Registered Manager. The document focuses on the common theme of the leadership standard.

This guide should be use by both the responsible individual and also registered manager. It will act as a support tool to enable discussion around understanding the respective roles and responsibilities of RIs and managers and how these complement each other. This helps provide some clarity around responsibility and accountability within the home. RIs have used the tool as a supportive resource while supporting and completing visit to the home, or as a basis for appraisal and supervision.

This resource can complement the home evidence base around self-regulation and evidence the RI involvement with the home. It will help identify current strengths, areas for further learning and development, and plan how to tackle these weaknesses.

A key feature of this resource was to agree an approach to practice across organisations which can then be measured with regulatory bodies such as OFSTED and provide a benchmarking framework across the service that use it.

Katie Howard & Mike Spencer

The Leadership & Management Standard

The *Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015* set out the duties of the Responsible Individual: to supervise the management of the home (Reg 2(1) and 26(7)) and to attend to their own continuing professional development (Reg 29(2)).

The *Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards* (DfE, 2015) add the RI must "have the essential skills needed to develop the leadership and management of homes within their remit such that the homes have the capacity and capability to meet the Quality Standards".

There is no further guidance for the RI role but the guide to the regulations indicates the key standard to measure the effectiveness of the role is the Leadership & Management Standard:

The leadership and management standard

13.– (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—

- (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and
- (b) promotes their welfare.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—

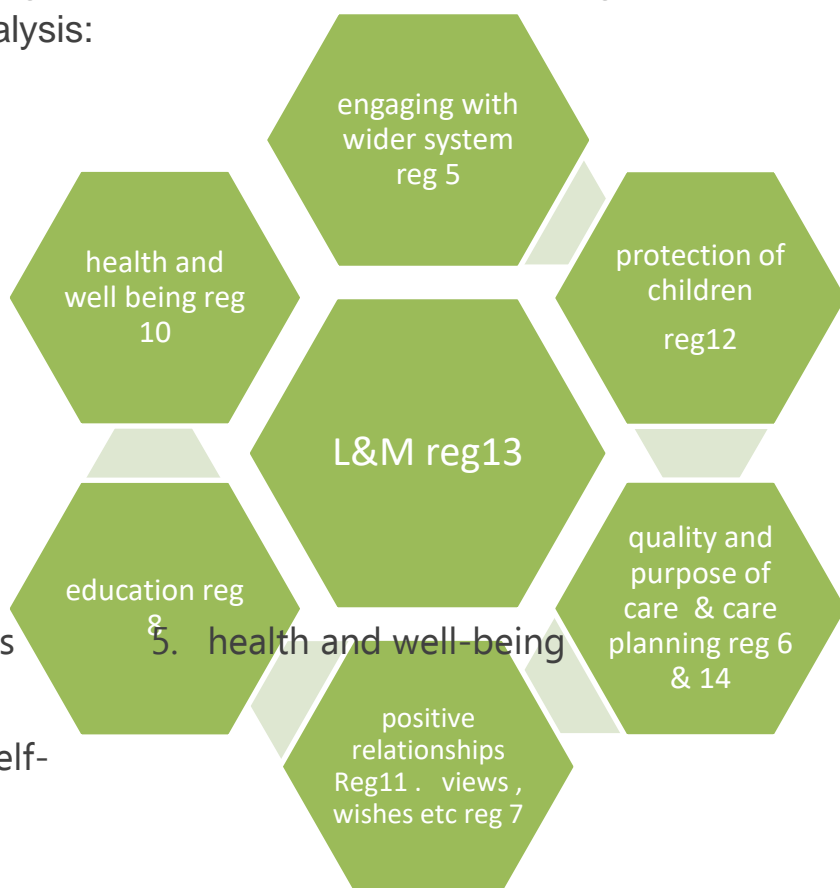
- (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;
- (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;
- (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;
- (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;
- (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child;
- (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;
- (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—
 - (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and
 - (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and
- (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

These standards build on the scaffold of regulation 13 to define a core of principles which can be applied to RI practice, while recognising the implementation of the role will vary across organisations and individual homes.

Structure of the RI Standards

The Leadership and Management regulation / standard itself sets out eight key areas which form the start of the analysis:

- leadership and management
- work in partnership
- supporting children
- workforce
- quality of care and impact
- feedback from children
- research and development
- quality assurance



The Responsible Individual standards are structured around each of these areas. They have been written as a self-evaluation tool to support RIs in examining their role, particularly in relation to that of the Registered Manager.

These areas, however, are closely underpinned and informed by the remaining Quality Standards:

- Positive relationships
- Protection of children
- Care planning

- Engaging with the wider system
- Quality and purpose of care.
- Children's views, wishes and feelings
- Education
- Enjoyment and achievement

The design of the Standards has taken into account the diversity of individuals, roles and organisations with a Responsible individual, and so provide a strong and flexible framework closely aligned to the Leadership & Management Standard.

They can be used as a reference guide for individuals, as a tool to help Registered Managers and RIs explore the boundaries of their work, or as an audit tool to contribute to, for example, an appraisal.

Leadership

There are key words in the regulation and standard which indicate how the leadership task should be grasped but require thought in how they may be evident in practice and tracked to a change in the lives of young people. We've sought to add some definitions to begin this process:

ENABLE.....give authority or means to do somethingmake a system or device operational or active

INSPIRE.....fill someone with the urge or ability to do or feel somethingbreathe in air or inhale

LEAD.....to cause a person or animal to go forward with you by hand, halter or ropebe a route or means of

access to a particular place or directionthe initiative in an action, an example for others to followa position of advantage in a contest, first place

FULFILL.....achieve or realise something desired, prioritised or predictedcarry out a duty or role as required, promised or expected.

PROMOTE.....support or achieve further progress.

Relationship with the Registered Manager

The Standards generally place duties on the Registered Person (Registered Manager) for the home, operating under the supervision of the Responsible Individual.

This creates a clear accountability and governance role for the Responsible Individual – to hold the Registered Manager to account. Judgements about the home reflect the impact of the leadership of the home, the Registered Manager and the

Responsible Individual working in partnership.

Such an approach has real strengths, but also creates the potential for unhealthy tensions and boundary issues around where the responsibility sits. A useful structure to explore role accountability is included as Appendix A. Leaders are encouraged to set out the requirements under Regulation 13 and the discussion between the RI and Registered Manager.

Experience, qualifications and training of the Responsible Individual

There is no requirement for formal training or experience of an RI in the regulations, akin to the requirement for a Level 5 Diploma for the Registered Person. The RI must be of integrity and good character and have the capacity, experience and skills to supervise the management of the home (Reg 26(7)), in particular in developing the home's leadership and management (Guide para 12.4). The organisation must provide CPD to ensure they have the skills needed for supervising the management of the home (Reg 29).

experience

Responsible Individuals will have a wide range of backgrounds but must be able to demonstrate their experience of leadership and strategic management. To lead and inspire a nurturing, safe and child centred culture, they must love being with children and young people, champion and advocate their rights, and properly understand the regulatory framework. RIs will be able to provide both support and challenge around young people's experiences, the home's processes and safeguarding issues (including Health & Safety) to hold the accountability for

the Registered Manager through their supervision.

learning

The role of the RI will vary, for example carrying financial responsibilities or not. The way people learn also varies, from reading, peer support or specialist forums through to training or accreditation.

To meet the core requirements the provider will need to ensure the RI has developed skills in the areas on the following page, designed as a checklist for the RI to complete.

Not every area is covered on the checklist – some are specified as potential sources of evidence in the relevant section.

CPD checklist

Required area	Evidence
Child development and attachment in context of trauma	
Safeguarding – generic (what to look for, what to do, multiagency processes, at least every 2 years but regularly updated). Specific requirements around Prevent, Female Genital Mutilation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Faith & Culture based abuse, specific understanding of safeguarding risks in residential care)	
Safeguarding – advanced (managing referrals, taking the lead in safeguarding issues, professional curiosity, organisational risk, managing staff through these processes at least every 2 years)	
Safeguarding – specific issues (for example CSE in a home which specialises in their area, adolescent risk taking if that is their age group)	
Up to date legislative and regulatory knowledge	
Understanding of local and specialist services	
Knowledge of commissioning and local interagency decision-making processes	
Allegations about staff (at least every 5 years)	
People management & HR	
Supervision skills, with an evidence-based model	
Safer recruitment (at least every 5 years)	
sexual health, choices, risks & development	
Young people's mental health	
Up to date knowledge of the home's specialisms (e.g. eating disorder), x-ref to R&D standard	
Health & Safety	
Fire Safety	
Safe handling of medication	
Data Protection & GDPR	
Reflective practice and self-development	
Performance management (individual and team) data analysis, intelligence and action	
Project planning & change management	
Staff well-being, health & resilience	

work in partnership

Working in partnership with others:

The RI supports and works with the RM to develop effective working relationships with the placing authority, other relevant people, other relevant services, parents / carers, specialist agencies, organisations, and others who work with children including the police, schools , health ,YOTs.

The RI supports the RM and team in the development and achievement of effective transitions for young people e.g. between placements , in education, returning to family , moving into foster care and moving into young adulthood.

Cross references to quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, health and well-being, enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well-being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence:

- Any multi-agency meetings, familiarisation or networking visits
- RI ensuring m/agency meetings are happening with representation
- Use of escalation processes by RM / RI and result
- Reg 45 evidence
- Reg 44 evidence
- Communication with parents and carers
- Strategy meetings
- Feedback from a broad range of stakeholders
- Safe location review
- Links with education provider/provision
- Specific input and feedback e.g. police
- Pathway plans / transition plans and planning.

✓

Other evidence:

Actions arising	Monitored outcomes:
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supporting children

The RI must satisfy themselves that a high quality of care for all children living in the home is delivered within the context of the Statement of Purpose (which must be accurate). They should test that the culture is one of high aspiration for children and young people in all aspects of their lives. The RI ensures young people are loved, cared about and supported to reach their goals.

The RI should test the skills and experience of staff in the home and will maintain their own skills and experience to ensure that care and support is up to date and safe. The RI should be aware of how the team is led and functions under the RM and how the team in turn supports the children who live at the home and in their transitions to adulthood in particular

Cross references to quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, health and well-being, enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well-being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reg 45 evidence • Reg 44 evidence • Statement of Purpose • Safe location review • Makeup of the team • Training • Supervision & Appraisal • Environment • Budget and budget management • Progress and outcomes for children and young people. • Observation • Scenarios • Pathway / transition/ Leaving Care planning and processes 	✓	Other evidence:
Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:	

safeguarding

For the RI this is seen as the standard which underpins the practice for every child within the regulatory framework defined within the context of local safeguarding processes, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) and other frameworks

It is also recognised that the RI must take a balanced approach to those roles/tasks which sit within the RM role, the RI role being to support, monitor, review and test the leadership of the RM and the running of the home in order to ensure that the standards and regulations are met. The RI should ensure that the RM has sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child in the home.

The RI should support the RM and team in ensuring that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe within a secure safeguarding culture

Cross references to: leadership and management, quality of care, education, views, wishes and feelings, enjoy and achieve, , health and well-being, care planning, positive relationships

Potential evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends • Reg 44 evidence • Care plans and other documents including policies • Records and specialist reports • EHCP • EP/SLT/OT reports • Observation-positive relationships, positive behaviour management, safeguarding culture • Evidence of consent from LA • Children's views/feedback-formal and informal • RM supervision and appraisal • Supervision /appraisal records • RM meetings with RI • Team meetings • Ofsted reports • LA monitoring reports • Staff views • Staff training records • Formal records related to intervention, safeguarding issues. 	✓	Other evidence:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Records of meetings with professionals		
Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:	

workforce

The RI must satisfy themselves that both they and the RM are visible and accessible to staff, that a workforce development plan is in place and represented as required in the Statement of Purpose, internal whistleblowing process in place and known to staff, training in place, relevant qualifications within the appropriate timescales, staffing in place which promotes consistency and continuity, agency use as per regs, emergency plan in place, appropriate use of policies and procedures, appropriate management cover and mixed gender staffing profiles (unless legal exceptions apply.) Promotes openness and accountability from staff

Cross references to quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, health and well-being, enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well-being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence:

- Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Reg 44 evidence
- Children's views
- Ofsted reports, LA monitoring reports
- Staff views
- Regular visits to the home
- Statement of Purpose/contents
- Recruitment processes
- Training and attendance lists
- Responses to children's grumps, grumbles or complaints
- Involvement in whistleblowing processes when they occur
- Approachable – evidence by direct communication staff and observation of relationship.

✓

Other evidence:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in culture lead from staff view and feedback – • On call support out of hours • Workforce plan- up to date • Supervision/appraisal records • Investigation / disciplinary processes and outcomes • Root cause analysis and findings • Rotas, agency (budget and % on rota) • Track progress of qualification achievement • Emergency plan 		
Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:	

quality of care and impact

For the RI this is seen as the standard which underpins the experience the child has at the home from the Statement of Purpose to the relationships the children form.

The RI must satisfy themselves that the Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the service provided within the home. That the policies, procedures and available resources enable the service to provide the stated quality of care and supporting positive outcomes for children and young people . The RI should ensure that the RM has sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each of the children and young people in the home.

The RI inspires staff that care for young people within relationships in which they feel loved, happy, healthy, safe from harm and able to develop, thrive and fulfil their potential. Talent and interests are fostered and valued to provide young people with a strong sense of self.

The RI drives an ambitious culture of aspiration evidenced through the celebration of success no matter how small. There are daily opportunities for learning new skills and where risk taking is valued as part of the learning process

Cross references to : leadership and management, children's views , wishes and feelings, education , health and well being , enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence :

- Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Reg 44 evidence
- Statement of Purpose
- Care plans and other documents
- Transition or moving on plans
- Observation-nurturing / supportive environment
- Children's views- formal and informal
- RM supervision and appraisal
- RM meetings with RI
- Team meetings
- Home Development plan
- Ofsted reports
- LA monitoring reports

✓

Other evidence:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff views 		
Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:	

feedback from children

For the RI this is seen as the standard which captures the views of children and can give a clear picture of the child's voice in the home, if it is heard and acted upon in their home and lives. The RI has clear examples of children being heard and their wishes being acted upon. If not they are offered a clear explanation as to why it cannot happen.

The RI should support the RM and team in the practice of listening to children taking their views , wishes and feelings into account when planning and undertaking their care as well as in the further development of the service in the short , medium and long term.

Cross references to : leadership and management, quality of care , education , health and well being , enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence :

- Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Reg 44 evidence
- Children's Guide.
- Care plans and other documents
- Transition or moving on plans
- EHCP/PEP /IEP documents / plans
- Observation-positive relationships , advocacy.
- Independent Visitor records
- Children's views- formal and informal
- RM supervision and appraisal
- RM meetings with RI
- Team meetings
- Home Development plan
- Ofsted reports
- LA monitoring reports

✓

Other evidence:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff views		
Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:	

Research and development

The RI should support the RM and team in developing practice within the home which demonstrates that the practice is informed and improved by taking into account and acting upon:

-research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met.

Cross references to quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, health and well-being, enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well-being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence:

- Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Reg 44 evidence
- RM supervision and appraisal
- RM meetings with RI
- Team meetings
- Home Development plan
- Children's views
- Ofsted reports
- LA monitoring reports
- Published research material
- Undertaking own research project
- Care plans and supporting documents
- Staff views
- Observation
- Outcomes and impact longer term for young people and adults

✓

Other evidence:

Actions arising:	Monitored outcomes:

quality assurance

The RI must satisfy themselves that the RM oversees the welfare of each child in their care through observation and direct engagement with each child, each member of staff, family /carers for each child (if appropriate), professionals involved in the care or protection of each child i.e. SW, IRO, teachers, clinicians, other health professionals.

The RI should ensure that the Reg 44 and Reg 45 are fit for the purpose of ensuring continuous development of the home. The RI should test out the skill of the RM in anticipating difficulties, reviewing incidents, learning from placement breakdown, implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice

The RI should support the RM , giving effective and accurate feedback in relation to the RI's quality monitoring in their role in "supervising the management of the home."

Cross references to quality and purpose of care, children's views, wishes and feelings, education, health and well-being, enjoy and achieve, PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, health and well-being, positive relationships, care planning

Potential evidence:

- Reg 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Reg 44 evidence
- RM meetings, supervision and appraisal
- Home Development plan
- Children's views & responses to grumps, grumbles, complaints
- Ofsted reports & LA monitoring reports
- Care plans and supporting documents
- Staff views/stakeholder views
- Regular visits to the home
- Observation
- Statement of Purpose/contents
- Approachable – evidence by direct communication with staff and observation of relationships in the home.
- Supervision/appraisal records for staff
- Root cause analysis and findings

✓

Other evidence:

Actions arising:

Monitored outcomes:

appendix A

Who is responsible? Leadership and Management- Regulation 13

Regulation	Requirement	RI?	RM?	Any actions?

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