

From: dialogue <news@dialogueltd.co.uk>
Sent: 07 March 2025 12:54
To: Jen Bean
Subject: dialogue - March 2025 - Residential Care Bulletin



Residential Care Bulletin March 2025

dialogue offers lots of support to the residential sector, we regularly review the latest research and publications, and offer a huge variety of training courses to support you and your teams.

In this edition:

- **Can you open a home for children with complex needs?** – Ofsted share their tips on opening homes for children with the most complex needs
- **Be part of the residential child care community for Children's Homes** -meetings every Wednesday 1-2pm
- **Children's social work workforce** - reporting statistics for 2024
- **Inspection Top Tips bulletin** – our new weekly bulletin with analysis from live inspection data and suggestions for improvement, together with links to our weekly sessions

- **Defining child exploitation** – NWG, a national charity, seek your views on what we mean by child exploitation
- **March training highlight –Supervising Time with Families** next course on 17th March
- **Virtually in their shoes ... Cornerstone VR** on the latest in AI assisted immersive training
- **Excellent training** for your independent person, safeguarding lead, RI, NI, RSM, RM and staff with a **new exciting course now live to book!**



Ofsted: Opening homes for children with the most complex needs

Ofsted have written a blog and launched a new advice line to try to lend their support to work to reduce reliance on unregistered settings.

They highlight the need for a suitable property with the correct planning permission (highlighting a common error) and that reducing restriction is built into your approach by design with the environment organised, adaptable, with places to be “safely and restfully alone, and areas for social gatherings”. There is growing concern at children being in sole placements with little opportunity to socialise and limited progress for some towards integrating with other young people. While sometimes necessary this is not good for young people and also means many settings are registered for more young people than are living there.

Having a “skilled and experienced manager” is obviously a ‘must’, but interestingly, “a committed Responsible Individual” gets a mention – frequent visits, essential management oversight, an ability to build trust with young people and reflection on how the staff team are working are key criteria.

We’ve been discussing a changed emphasis towards RIs in the dialogue membership sessions with some providers reporting that Ofsted are declining registrations for homes where external consultants hold this role: it’s crucial RIs have sufficient capacity (Reg 26(7)(b)) to undertake the work and are “a director, manager, secretary or other officer of an organisation” (Reg 2).

Lots to think about and Ofsted plan to publish guidance on this area soon. Ofsted’s advice line can answer specific questions for providers thinking about opening a new home on premises, staffing or children’s needs, or wider issues.

You can access the blog and contact Ofsted for further advice [here](#)



2025 Membership plans for Residential Care

Our new membership offer for Children's Homes launched in January with weekly meetings running every Wednesday 1-2pm.

The sessions are getting great feedback and there's lots to cover –

- Jacqui McCann addressed the changing law around restriction of liberty
- A solicitor from RWK Goodman explained the potential impact of sleep ins on annual leave
- We explored the issue of 'consultant RIs' and renewed focus of Ofsted in this area
- We've gone in depth on our Inspection Top Tips and providers have shared their ideas and approaches with one another

Coming up...

- **12th March** - a senior Ofsted manager coming in to talk about Regulation 44
- **19th March** - Missing People join us again to reflect on children missing from care
- **26th March** - What to include and when to send Regulation 40 notifications.

You'll find more membership benefits on our site...

- **Individual members £99+vat.**
- **Whole home membership £395+vat.**
- **Whole organisation membership** get in touch for a quote.

Members' log in here

Find out more & join dialogue today



Children's social work workforce - reporting statistics for 2024

Good news here... statistics just released showing a rise in the number of social workers, a reduction in agency staff, a drop of almost 7% in social work vacancies, a reduction in caseloads and most importantly a reduction in social workers' turnover. This builds on positive progress last year.

All this leads to greater stability, better understanding of families, consistencies in relationships with families and professionals, and altogether better decisions for children.

Children's homes value our relationships with our social workers colleagues and it's good to see more stability in the system. It's crucial that we continue this trajectory as the needs of young people still outstrip services available and we need to keep working hard to ensure young people are getting the right support.

For today though it is good to report some improvements in the pressures on the social work teams.

[Read more here](#)



Inspection Top Tips

Our team are combing inspection reports every week for key themes and issues. We've been talking to providers about

what you find useful and we'll now be highlighting elements that Ofsted identify as great practice, and flagging some of the pitfalls, together with ideas to think about for your setting.

In the last 4 weeks we covered:

- Exploitation in Communities with bystander interventions
- Planning for a Child to come to your home
- MCA and Restrictions
- Online safety

All the resources and back catalogue are available in the [members' area](#)



Survey for professionals on the definitions of various forms of child exploitation

This survey from [NWG Network](#) is part of research on how language affects child trafficking, but is also in the context of criticism that the definition of exploitation may undermine actions to keep young people safe.

In particular, it seeks to explore UK child protection actors' understanding and use of child exploitation definitions and the impact this may have on children. The research is in response to the new government's commitment to a definition of the offence of child criminal exploitation and aims to develop policy recommendations and drive a better response to children affected by modern slavery.

The survey takes approximately 20minutes to complete using the link below.



Supervising time with Families training

Family time is important for all of us. For some young people, especially those in care, time with families brings complications and in some cases this time needs to be supervised.

Developed in response to issues highlighted at Ofsted inspections where staff had not been sufficiently trained, this course explores how to create the right environment for safe, positive time with families. It equips supervisors with tools to understand the risks, plan ahead, respond effectively in a child-centred way and make an effective record.

The course

The course will cover:

- understanding care plans
- risk assessment & intervention
- court issues, including 'reasonable contact'
- writing a good contact report for court
- facilitating positive experiences
- dealing with the unexpected

This one-day course, delivered over zoom, is suitable for both Children's Homes and Supported Accommodation Providers and costs £132+vat, reduced to **£99+vat for members**. We can also deliver this on a whole team basis – get in touch for pricing.

Our next training dates, being delivered virtually, are running on the following dates:

9:15am-2:45pm on 17th March 2025

You can read full details and make a booking for this date by clicking on the button below or by contacting one of our team at **admin@dialogueltd.co.uk**

[Read more and book Supervised Contact training](#)



Cornerstone VR

is an award-winning, trauma-informed virtual reality programme used by professionals who work with vulnerable children and their families.

Their 360-degree immersive films allow users to 'walk in the shoes' of children, bringing the challenges of trauma, neglect, and societal pressures to life.

Spanning critical stages of child development from pre-birth to adolescence, this approach helps professionals, educators and caregivers have a deeper understanding of the child's perspective - building empathy, improving decision-making, and raising the standard of care.

Their children's homes partners are using Cornerstone VR across staff training, recruitment and in direct work with children, young people and parents, promoting better outcomes for the children in their care.

Cornerstone VR's partnership with Inspirations Children's Residential Care Homes, Leicestershire was recently recognised with the LaingBuisson Excellence in Children's

Services Award. For more details, explore their case study [here](#) or read the news release [here](#).

You can also hear from Inspirations directly on their podcast [here](#).

Visit Cornerstone VR for more details

info@cornerstonevr.co.uk 0808 1756 414

Do mention dialogue when you get in touch!

Upcoming Training Courses

Face to face training, virtual, at your setting or in our venue, we're ready to support you and your team.

Here's some of our upcoming courses, to see a full range of courses and memberships, please chose from the relevant options below:

training for Residential Care

training for Supported Accommodation Providers

MCA & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (on 12th March)

Supervising time with Families (on 17th March)

Safeguarding Lead (starting on 21st March)

(Children's Homes) Young People Going Missing (on 2nd April)

(Sup Acc) Managing the Inspection Process (on 3rd April)

Safeguarding Supervision (starting on 22nd April)

Leading Supported Accommodation (starting on 24th April)

(Children's Homes) Managing the Inspection Process (on 30th April)

NEW COURSE - (Level 1) Online Safety Leads (on 1st May)

Reg45 Quality Review (on 2nd May)

Directors, the Board & Safeguarding (starting on 6th May)

RI training (starting on 16th May)

Managing Allegations (starting on 3rd June)

Regulation 44 and Standard 3 (starting on 5th June)

Safer Recruitment training (on 3rd July)

Want training on something else?

For a full list of training topics to support the residential sector, please visit www.dialogueltd.co.uk/residential

We also design bespoke courses to meet the needs of you and your staff. Do get in touch to discuss.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Jen Bean
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Who are we?

dialogue provides training, coaching & mentoring, consultancy, safeguarding audits and independent visiting services for children's homes, residential schools and supported living providers. We prefer to work closely with you to identify areas of need and devise bespoke packages that demonstrably improve the lives of young people in your care. Training for managers, residential workers and other staff includes supervision, safeguarding, care planning & analysis, recording and much more.

[Click here](#) for more information.
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