

Inspection Top Tips

Short Break Services

May 2025




Children's Homes Regulations

14.—(1) The care planning standard is that children—

(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and

(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.

52. (2) b (iii) the short breaks to date do not exceed 75 days in total in any twelve month period.




Children's Homes Guide

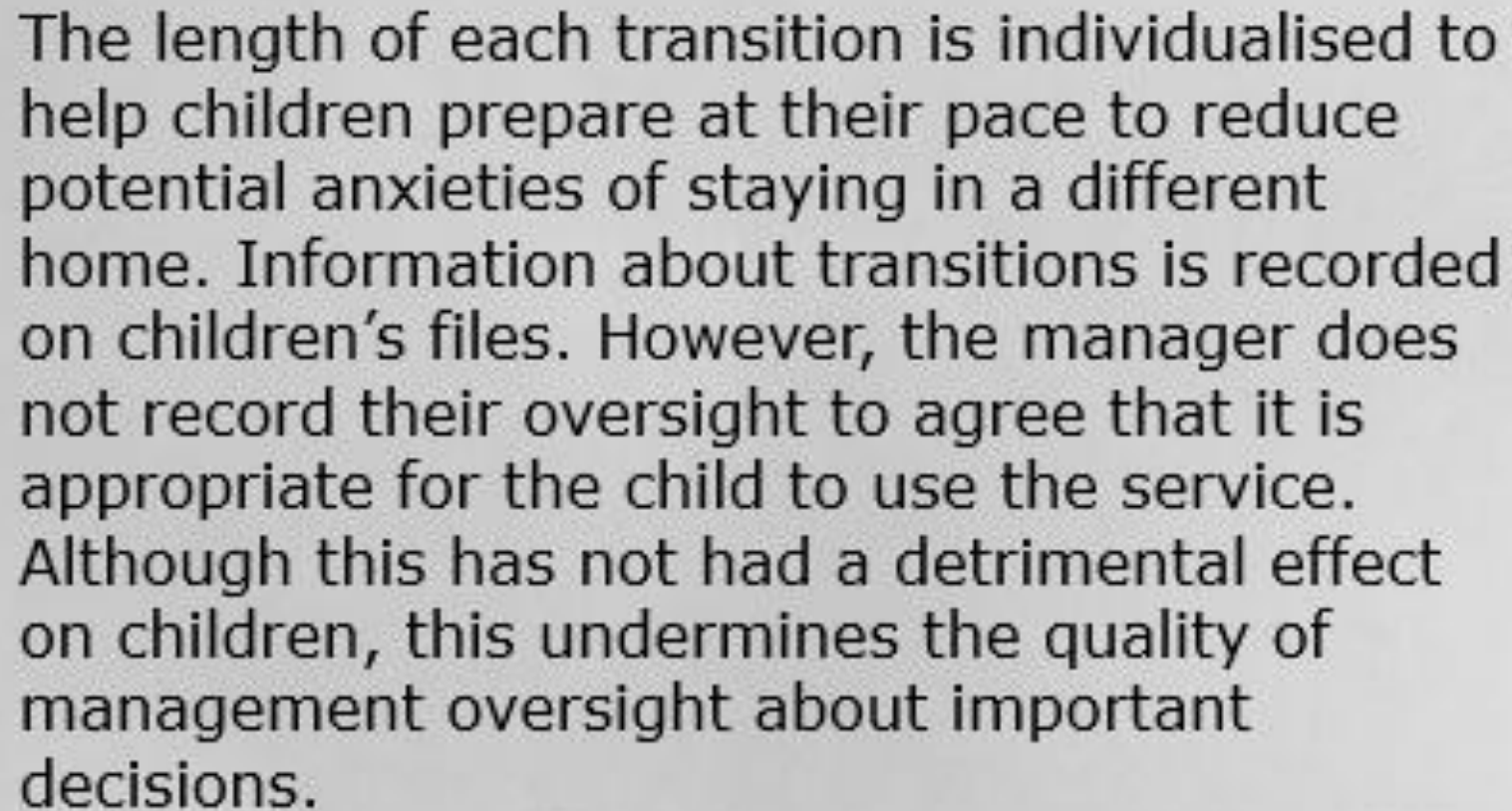
11.7 The registered person should ensure that there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home. In particular, the registered person should ensure that there is management oversight of decisions to admit children to the home.



Children's Homes SCCIF Key Elements

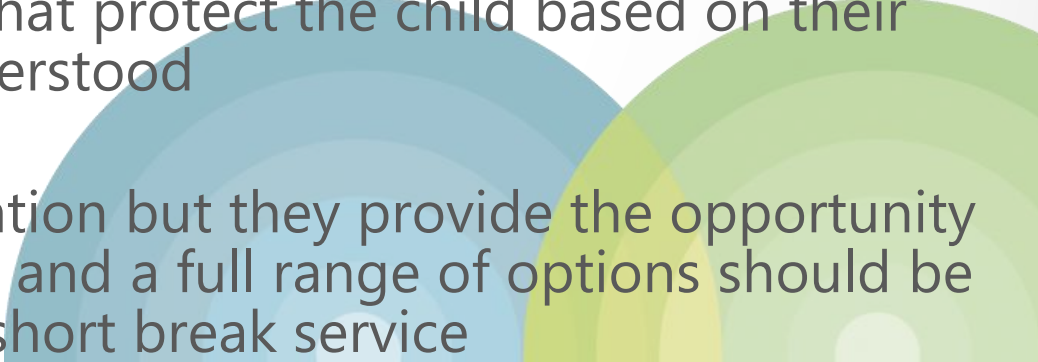
- Identification that the quality of introductions to the service and the level of engagement with the family and with other professionals to provide consistent and safe care and minimise disruption in children's lives are critical.
 - There is likely to be a greater emphasis on experiences for children than on progress, although the service should still focus on working with others to support progress where it can.
 - How services are planned, decisions made, friendships supported and experiences offered are all key areas of interest in inspections
 - In short break services, there are effective relationships with parents or carers so that they feel confident leaving their child for their stay and they understand what the service can offer.
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Ofsted comment from inspection – inadequate home...

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The length of each transition is individualised to help children prepare at their pace to reduce potential anxieties of staying in a different home. Information about transitions is recorded on children's files. However, the manager does not record their oversight to agree that it is appropriate for the child to use the service. Although this has not had a detrimental effect on children, this undermines the quality of management oversight about important decisions.

Top tips...

1. Ensure the environment of the home is welcoming, aligned to emotional needs and fully accessible to all children
 2. Care plans are developed with the child and that their voice is apparent in the decisions made about them and what they want, when first getting a short break and afterwards
 3. Staff are confident and understand the importance of each break for each child is prepared in advance and routines are in place from the start
 4. Safeguarding and health plans are in place that protect the child based on their individual needs and that these are well understood
 5. Short breaks are separate from formal education but they provide the opportunity for children to enjoy and achieve new things and a full range of options should be available to support children who enter the short break service
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Questions to consider...

- Has the child and their family been able to familiarise themselves with the home in advance of any stay?
- Does the referral information provide enough about the activities the child likes to engage to with and is this what they say they like?
- Has the impact and needs of other children having short breaks been assessed and matching of children been fully considered?
- Are all plans and decisions for the short break plan signed by the RM?

