

Inspection Top Tips

Modifications in regulations for short break services

October 2025



Children's Homes Regulations

52 application of the regulations to short breaks...

(1) In the circumstances set out in paragraph (2), these Regulations apply in relation to a child with the modifications set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 5.

Schedule 5

1. The following regulations do not apply to short breaks—
 - (a) regulation 5(b) (engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met);
 - (b) regulation 8(2)(a)(vi) and (viii) to (x) (the education standard);
 - (c) regulation 10(2)(b) and (c) (the health and well-being standard);
 - (d) regulation 41 (notification with respect to children admitted into, or discharged from, a children's home).

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.

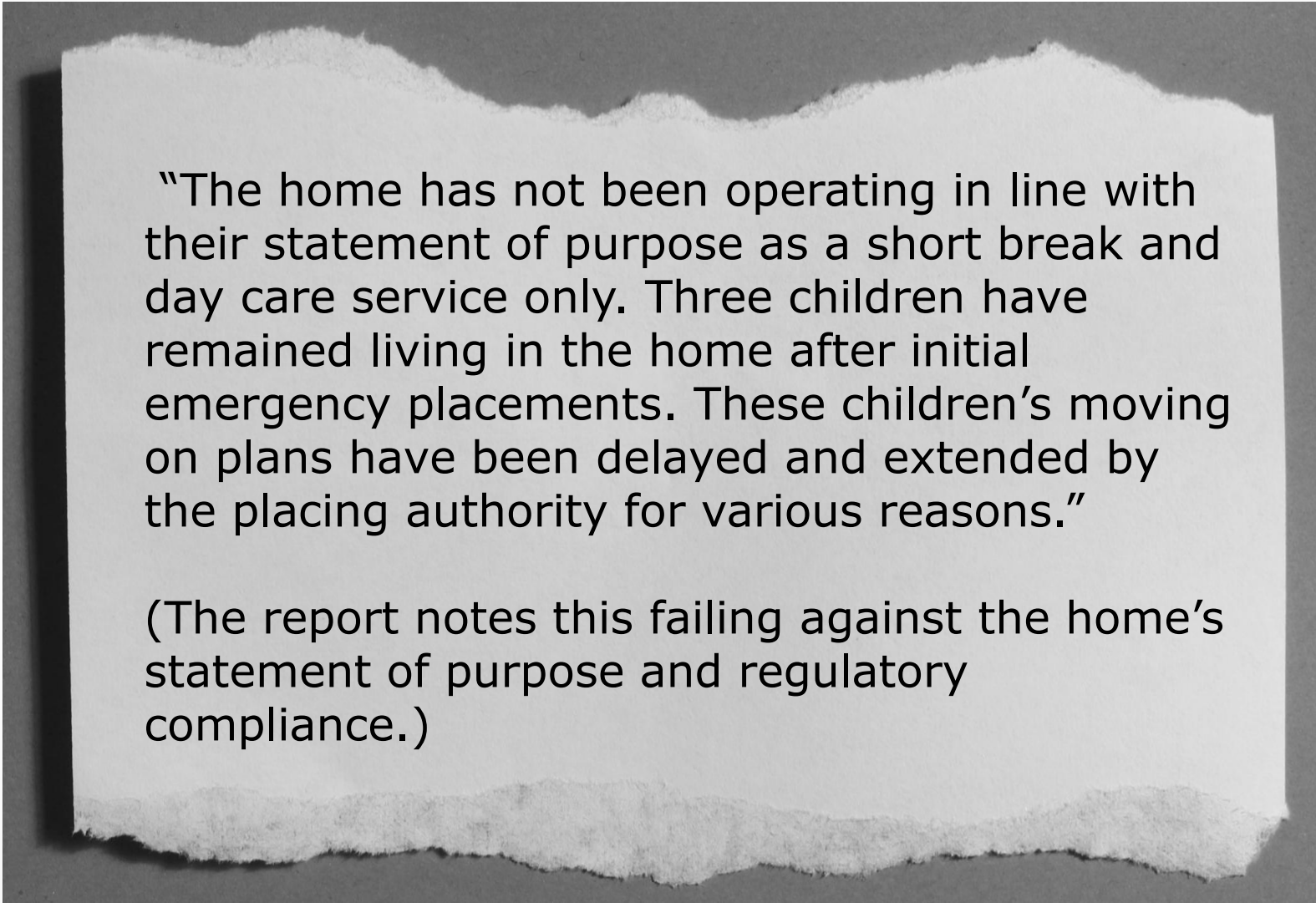


Children's Homes SCCIF Key Elements

- Tracked and sampled cases should be selected by the inspector from the case list provided and may include, where relevant: in a short break service a child who is subject to a child protection plan or a child receiving services as a child in need, to see how well the service works with others to help and protect children
- The impact of the service on children's progress is likely to be influenced by the frequency and length of the short-break stays.
- Children should be supported to enjoy experiences that may not be available to them otherwise.



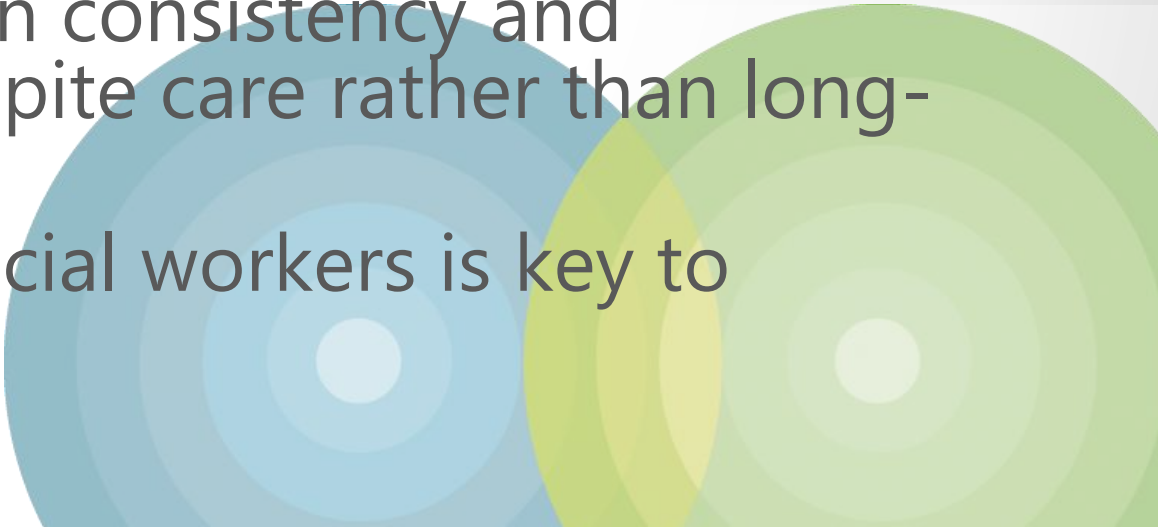
Ofsted comment from inspection - inadequate home

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"The home has not been operating in line with their statement of purpose as a short break and day care service only. Three children have remained living in the home after initial emergency placements. These children's moving on plans have been delayed and extended by the placing authority for various reasons."

(The report notes this failing against the home's statement of purpose and regulatory compliance.)

Top Tips...

1. Short break services don't have to prepare full placement plans as required under Regulation 9 for children's homes. Ensure that essential information (medical, communication, and behaviour support needs) is clear and concise
 2. A short, focused "short break plan" is often more effective than a full placement plan.
 3. Regulations around placement reviews and permanence planning don't apply because short breaks are temporary.
 4. Use review discussions to focus on consistency and continuity between home and respite care rather than long-term goals
 5. Coordination with families and social workers is key to maintaining quality care.
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Questions to consider...

- Are your short break plans focused on the experience to be provided in the home?
- Do your care reviews cover the consistency and quality of care rather than long term goals?
- How do you promote and include the families of children who are provided with short breaks?
- Where there are welfare or safeguarding reasons related to the decision for providing a short break, are all parties clear of the difference in the regulations that apply to a short break service as set out in Schedule 5?

