

Inspection Top Tips

Escalation

October 2025



Children's Homes Regulations



If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plan



Regulation 5 - (c)



Children's Homes Guide

2.3 ...The registered person and the staff of the home cannot force a relevant person to engage or work productively with them and the regulation does not require this. The registered person should **evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns.**



Children's Homes Guide Continued...

2.4 The home should play a full part in promoting the best interests of the child, proactively advocating for the child to ensure that others play their role and deliver the high quality support that is needed. Such **partnership working should always take place**: before a child arrives; while the child lives in the home and where the child prepares to return home, move to another setting or leave care. Where a placement is made in an emergency, the registered person should quickly engage with relevant persons to provide the best immediate care.



Children's Homes Guide Continued...

2.7 Beyond local authorities, there are other people, bodies and organisations that have responsibilities towards children in children's homes. ... They might include health and education services, Local Safeguarding Children Boards, leaving care services, IROs, voluntary agencies, the police and youth offending teams. This list is not exhaustive. The important thing is that **homes take the initiative** in identifying others who must play a part for their children and **engage with those relevant people proactively**, advocating for the children in their care.



Children's Homes Guide Continued...

2.8 Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). **Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would.** The registered person should **consider the use of an independent advocate** (see paragraph 4.16) if the child's needs are not being met.

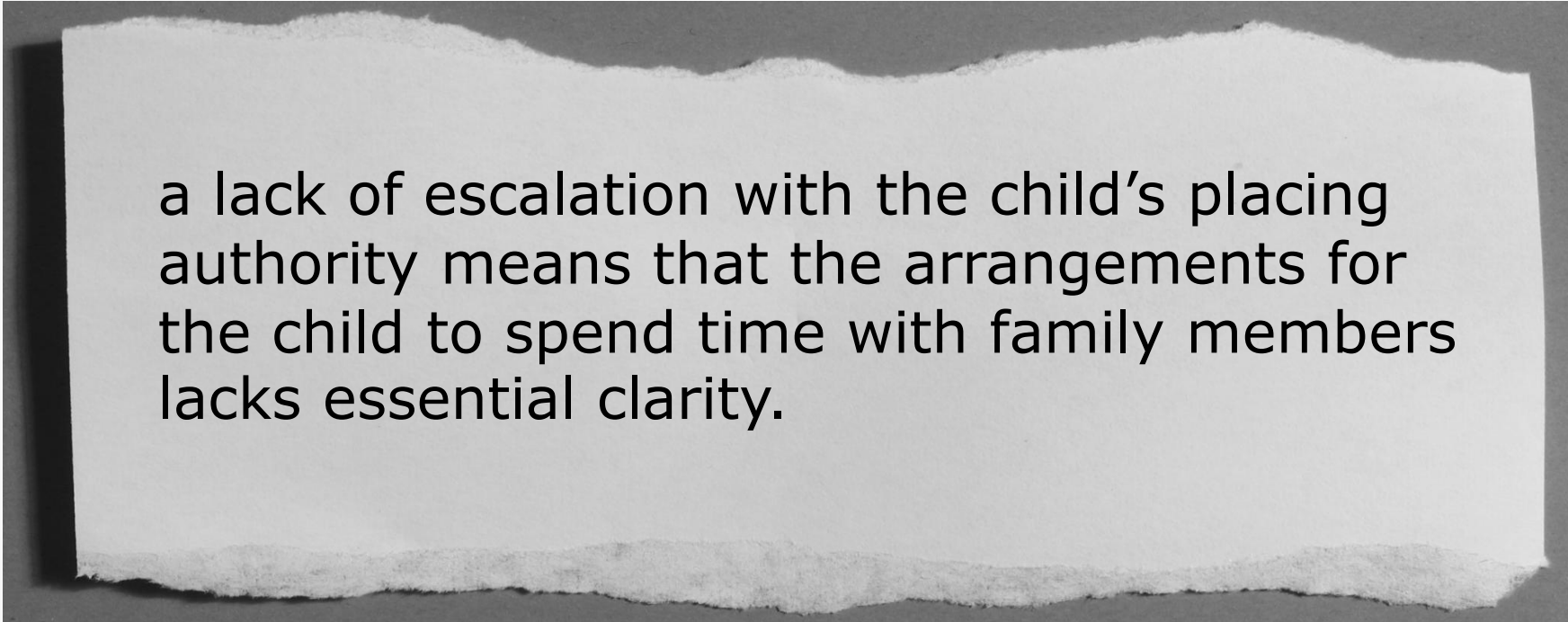


Children's Homes SCCIF Key Elements

- Where services are not available or children are waiting for a long time for help, the home is proactive in challenging and escalating concerns with the placing authority and/or other partners.
- Staff working within the home are clear about, and follow, procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child. ...Where the setting is not satisfied with the response from either the local authority where the setting is situated or the placing authority, it escalates its concerns appropriately, including by writing to the director of children's services (DCS) in the local authority placing the child.



Ofsted comment from inspection - inadequate home

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a lack of escalation with the child's placing authority means that the arrangements for the child to spend time with family members lacks essential clarity.

Top Tips...

1. **Have a clear policy** - dialogue have a members' template you are welcome to adapt.
2. **Make sure staff know the escalation process** and feel confident using it.
3. **Keep clear records of concerns raised, actions taken, and responses received** – keep examples for inspection.
4. **Escalate early** - don't wait until a child's welfare is compromised.
5. **Include the Independent Reviewing Officer where necessary**, and always where the situation may lead to a significant change in the young person's care plan.
6. **Involve the child (where they are of age and understanding)** and ensure their voice is central to the concern, including considering the use of advocacy.

