Responsible Individual training - Welcome back!

Session 5

Today's session will focus on issues related to the workforce

Update

- October-Black History Month Black History Month 2026
- Online Safety Webinar – Dialogue Free on 14th October 1-2pm
- 2026 Conference & Awards - Book Tickets! | The Children's Homes Association 20th and 21st October
- Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning
- Children's Homes Workforce Knowledge and Skills: Rapid Evidence Assessment
-

The RI standard- the workforce

The RI must satisfy themselves that both they, and the RM are visible and accessible to staff, that a workforce 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.) The RI 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

What are the issues in recruiting a manager

- Registered Manager and Head of Care-Vacancy Analysis. Registered-Manager-Vacancy-Research-December-2025.pdf Dialogue.
- 19% -No Registered Manager in post (49% of these had no Manager at all)
- Rise in the number of homes (50% since 2021)
- Rise in the number of smaller homes-20% in 25-26 and 70% since 2022
- Retention-often RMs leave to go to other sectors/roles (54% of survey stated they do not intend to be RMs in 3 years)
-

What might deter a person for stepping up to RM?

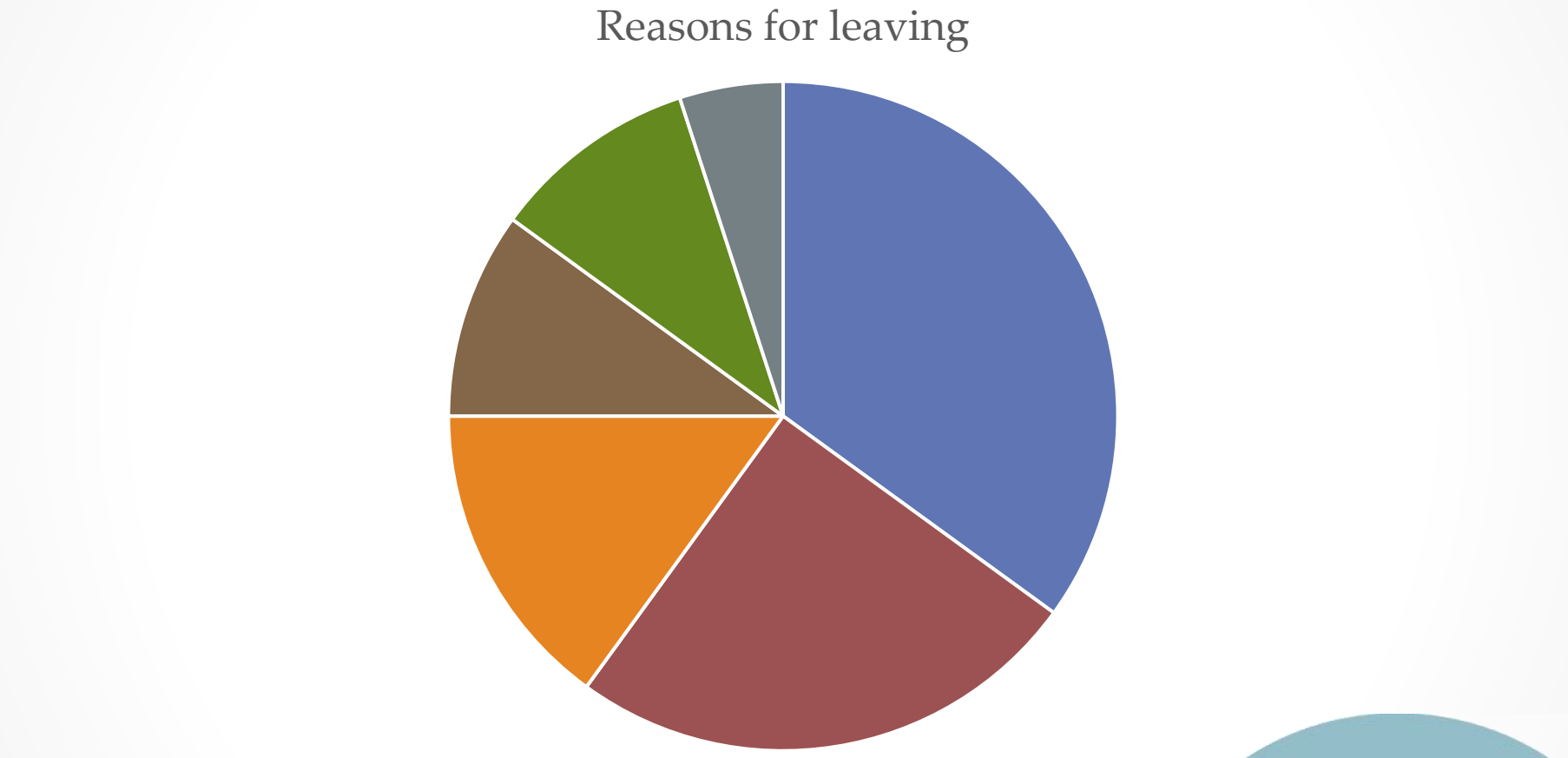
- Watching others do it/deputising
- RM interview (intensity and inconsistency)
- Reg 28-experience and qualifications-limits the number of applicants
- Demands of the role
- Levels of responsibility as opposed to Senior/Deputy
- Ridiculous hours?
- All things to all men-how many shifts do your RMs do?
- Demands, consequences and intensity of inspection
- Lack of support from the organisation/organisational culture

"It's a thankless task. There is so much responsibility and expectation within the role, the nature of the work, the projection, transference and counter transference from the children, their vulnerability, the risks they take, the trauma, the staff. The regulatory standards, the safeguarding, the health and safety, risk management and it feels that it all hangs on the Registered Manager."
Registered Manager

"Feel as though it is more pressure and responsibility these days. Feel that the purpose of me loving my role was to ensure the children in my care are loved, well cared for and prepared for life. Now it's all about evidence, logs on logs, evidence on evidence, paperwork, paperwork."
Registered Manager



Why may RMs leave?



RM Retention/work satisfaction

- Celebrate achievement
- Respect
- Protect capacity/create capacity
- Work life balance
- Shared on call
- Actual support-what does it look like
- Helpful supervision and appraisal!
- Training
- Collaboration
- What else?

Workforce data

- Ofsted May 2025:
- Children's homes workforce census: Stage 1 findings
- Surveyed managers reported a range of challenges around the suitability of applicants when filling care staff vacancies:
- not having the right experience (74%)
- the right skills (66%) or
- the right attitude or motivation (57%).
- visa issues as a challenge (13% in 2024 compared with 7% in 2023).
- One in five surveyed managers reported recruiting care staff from outside the UK since the start of 2023 (22%) BUT Managers in the qualitative interviews perceived a reduction in international recruitment since the UK left the European Union.

Knock on effects of recruitment issues?

- Cost to the organisation (financial/reputational)
- Inability to take placements
- Poor outcomes for children
- Poor outcomes from inspection
- Inability to recruit high status staff
- Inability to retain high status staff
- Lack of ability to grow staff
- Investment in training potentially wasted (high turnover)

Safer recruitment….

.

What is safer recruitment?

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure your staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

- **Be clear in the advert for the post you are recruiting to of the skills, abilities and expected values needed to fulfil the tasks required** and that these are clear in the person specification for the role.
- **Have a structured interview process** that includes attitudes and understanding of the diverse needs of children.
- **If offering an appointment to a role be clear this is subject to references, DBS and verification checks** based on the information provided.
- **Staff should not have access to working with children until all relevant checks and references are completed.**
- **Have a clear probation period and comprehensive induction process** that requires evidence the potential employee is able to meet the requirements of the job specification.
- **Where there is a concern that the worker is not meeting the probation and induction expectations, this is notified immediately to the person and reviewed not left to the end of the probation period.**

Group work….

- How would you describe the culture of recruitment in your service / home / organisation?
- Do you review the processes carrying out the "think the unthinkable " test---- where are the gaps, do I have all the information I need, could the process let an abuser into this home? (think Ian Huntley (2003)– there had been approximately nine allegations of sexual misconduct made against him, Soham police had not been told this – hence the creation of what is now the DBS)
- Can you say you have reasonably mitigated risk ?
- Do Zoom interviews give you a complete picture? Are you still doing them – why ?
- Having gone back to face to face – what is the difference?
- Are you doing social media checks ? What is your identified protocol and process for doing this ?
- How are you managing the difficulties with recruitment/ balance with safeguarding requirements
-

The RI Standard the workforce-evidence base

Potential evidence :

- Reg 44 & 45 evidence-patterns and trends
- Ofsted reports, LA monitoring reports
- Staff views. Supervision/appraisal records
- Direct staff communication & observing RM relationship
- Regular visits to the home.
- On call support out of hours
- Statement of Purpose / contents, emergency plan
- Recruitment processes
- Retention rates

The RI standard – the workforce – evidence base

- Rotas, agency (budget, % on rota)
- Training and attendance lists-impact analysis
- Induction/probation retention
- Up to date workforce plan
- Children's views, grumps, grumbles or complaints and links to staff ?
- Involvement in whistleblowing processes when they occur
- Change in culture , led from staff view and feedback?
- Investigation / disciplinary processes and outcomes
- Root cause analysis and findings
- Supervision and appraisal
- Staff morale , motivation etc
- Track progress of qualification achievement- remember the timescales!

SCIE definition

- What is workforce development in social care?
- Workforce development helps to identify current trends and forecast future workforce structures that can help to meet service delivery requirements. This in turn can lead to the development and implementation of skills sets to raise labour productivity and increase social inclusion

- How else may you define it ?

Workforce development

- Children's Homes Workforce Knowledge and Skills: Rapid Evidence Assessment Sept 2026
- A DOE commissioned expert-led review examining the purpose of children's homes alongside professional development, qualifications, training and workforce pathways.
- Insights
- children's homes are complex environments that require a confident, skilled and well-supported workforce, operating within settings that have a clear purpose, a coherent model of care and the organisational conditions to deliver it.
-

This is what it found staff need to do!

- Building trust, staying connected through conflict, de-escalation, creating safe group environments, supporting participation, working with families, collaborating across agencies and exercising confident professional judgement.
- Combine an understanding of trauma, relational and communication skills with specialist knowledge of neurodivergence, mental health, exploitation and cultural identity. Identity-aware, anti-discriminatory practice is essential, enabling staff to recognise how racism, migration, gender diversity and disability shape children's experiences and needs.
- Staff must combine knowledge of trauma, exploitation and local risk environments with dynamic risk assessment, safe relational boundaries and coordinated planning. Risks such as going missing, exploitation, aggression or self-harm emerge differently for different groups of children, making curiosity, emotional availability and contextual understanding essential. Skilled practice involves dynamic risk assessment, early identification of exploitation, safe relational boundaries and coordinated multi-agency planning.

- Findings:

1. England currently lacks a coherent national framework that defines the distinct purposes of residential care and supports purposeful placement decisions that match each child to a home whose model of care aligns with their assessed needs.
2. Workforce development does not consistently centre relational practice, reflective capacity or the practitioner's use of self, and that existing qualifications and specialised CPD are not always rooted in day-to-day practice.
3. Organisational conditions are as influential as individual capability.
4. Placement decisions, commissioning, regulation and workforce development frequently operate separately, constraining the conditions needed for skilled practice.



-

Workforce Plan

PURPOSE

Reg13(2)(g)(i)

The Registered Person must demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met;

Workforce Plan

PURPOSE

HOME

Experience & qualifications
Management/staffing structure,
Supervision arrangements
Include your consultants and other professionals
Induction & probation
Core training (and timescales, such as safeguarding, H&S & mandatory qualifications)
Performance/capability
New training
Training **needs** (link from appraisal)

Workforce Plan

PURPOSE

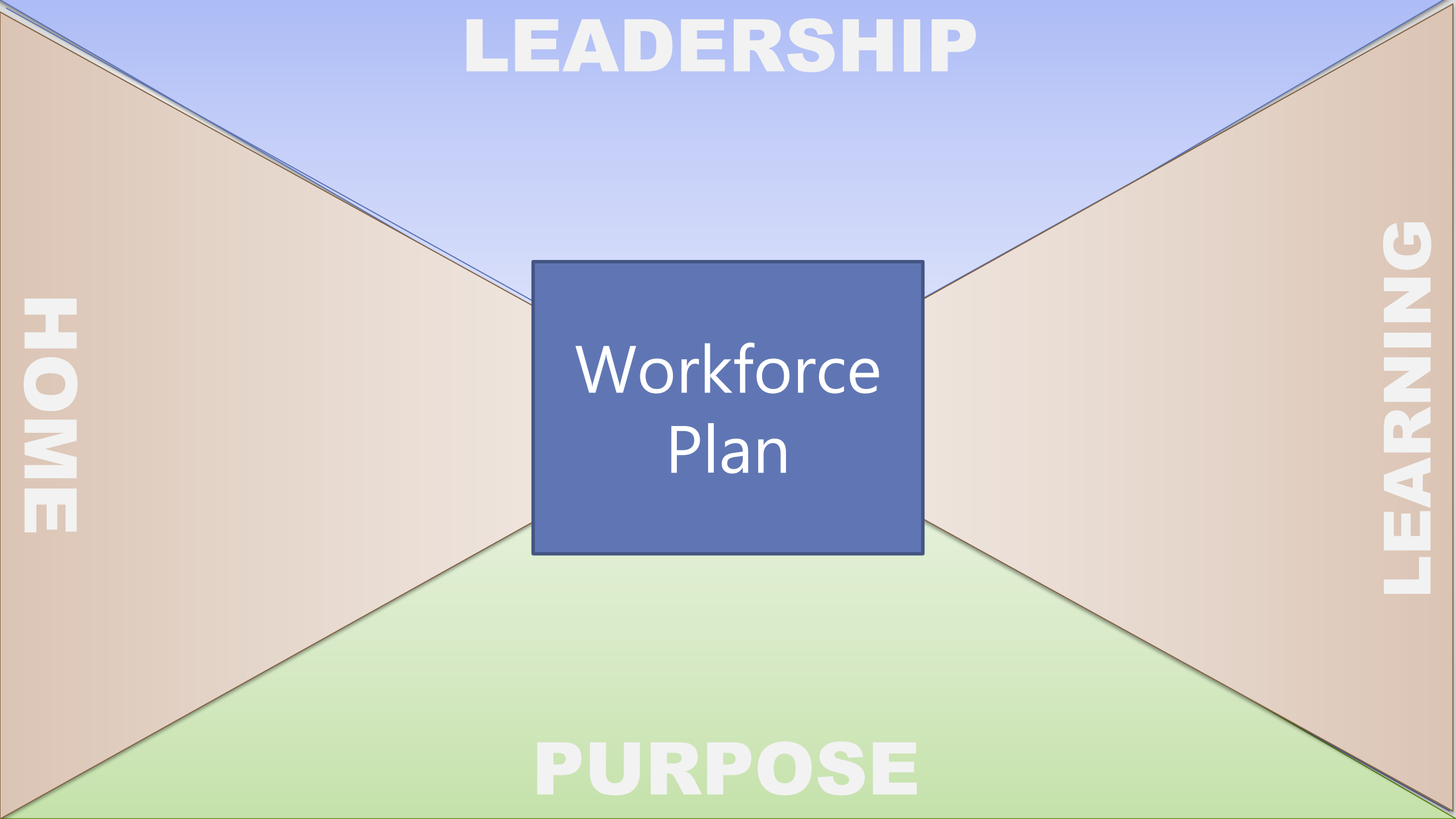
HOME

Workforce Plan

Analysis of events
Appraisal
New research
New young people
Regulation 44
Commissioners visits
Ofsted inspections
Regulation 45

LEARNING

PURPOSE


LEADERSHIP
HOME
Workforce Plan
LEARNING
PURPOSE

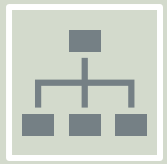
Issues…

- Regulatory breach
- Should link to the overall strategic plan for the home / organisation- lacking one gives the message that you do not hold a strategic view
- Absent or incomplete plan shows that you are not making explicit links to your Statement of Purpose
- Indicates that you do not have a “joined up approach “ and are being reactive, especially around training
- Can show that you are not making consistent links to recruitment – risk of not recruiting a breadth of skills / experience to your team

Issues….



Not matching staff profiles to the needs of the young people and the Statement of Purpose



So a key document which indicates your grasp of a strategic approach, weaving the development plan through all aspects of the service / organisation.

The five core workforce planning steps

- Deciding strategic direction and goals: workforce planning is a top down process requiring clear organisational direction and defined strategic goals to guide and inform strategic decisions
- Analyse existing workforce
- Develop your plan
- Implement workforce planning
- Monitor results and keep monitoring

Plan for :

1. narrative around the vision , ethos , values of the home and the strategic link to all aspects of development.

2.ensure that the plan reflects the young people – skills , training , SoP, need, etc. Capturing their voices within it

3. training opportunities for staff from induction and onwards/ expected impact of training

4. staff , quals and skills profile (link to SoP)

5. CPD opportunities – link to R45, development plan- strategic and operational

SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS- useful to carry out

What else? Are you sure about the effectiveness of these processes / practice from an RI perspective and from the perspective of the workforce?

- Induction / training - when were these last reviewed and linked to the needs of the home as expressed in the Statement of Purpose, workforce planning
- What does induction include?
- Policies; care planning; modelling…..what else?
- Shadowing- is it really shadowing or "in at the deep end" quite quickly?
- How do you measure its impact?
- Supervision- does it work , are you hearing about issues (good and bad) when you speak with the Manager, are you sure it is up to date , robust , reflective and has challenge/learning?
- Culture
- Communication
- Relationships with young people
- Statement of purpose, policies , procedures including "whistleblowing.".
- Anything else?

Pause for thought….

- Are you secure in your knowledge , monitoring and input / fact finding in relation to all aspects of the workforce – policies , procedures , recruitment etc
- Any actions you need to take or areas to develop?
- Are you getting the information you need to inform your "supervision of the management of the home"?

What next?

- Review your role and how you monitor , review and comment on the framework around the workforce
- Does this form a key element of your supervision and meetings with the Manager?
- Do you hold a developmental view with the Manager on workforce issues – strategic and operational?
- Anything else…?

- See you next time.

