



# **ON CALL POLICY**

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# ON CALL POLICY

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# 1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to provide out-of-hours management advice, support, and guidance to staff when unexpected or unpredictable issues arise. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, and managers who may be involved in the on-call system, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere.

**The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.** This policy applies equally across both residences.

The On Call Service is **not** intended to compensate for or replace usual management arrangements or to deal with day-to-day issues that are known, predicted, or should have been provided for during normal working hours. Within normal working hours (typically 9am – 5pm, though shift patterns may vary), the management team must plan to ensure the home is appropriately staffed and resourced. Procedures must exist for general and predictable situations, and all staff must be competent to carry them out.

If it is known or suspected that an issue is likely to arise out of hours, appropriate contingency plans must be set in place during normal hours.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure staff have access to reliable managerial support outside normal hours.
- Define clearly when the On Call Manager should be contacted.
- Provide guidance on handling child protection concerns, emergencies, and serious incidents out of hours.
- Ensure consistent recording, handover, and escalation of on-call matters.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, including the **Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, and the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)** .

## 2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This On Call Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets its duties under the **Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015** (including Regulation 40 notifications of serious events), **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, and the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**.
- **Child Safety** – It provides a clear pathway for staff to escalate child protection concerns out of hours, ensuring no delay in safeguarding actions.
- **Staff Support** – It gives staff access to management advice and support for unexpected situations (e.g., staffing shortages, serious incidents, police involvement), reducing stress and improving decision-making.
- **Clarity and Consistency** – It lists specific examples of when the On Call Manager should be notified (e.g., serious injury, missing child at high risk, complaint against staff, media attention), reducing ambiguity.
- **Risk Management** – It requires staff to complete a risk assessment before calling, ensuring that the on-call system is used appropriately and that staff take shared responsibility.
- **Accountability** – It mandates recording of all on-call calls, handover to managers on the next working day, and escalation of serious issues to senior leadership.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026** expects homes to have robust governance and out-of-hours arrangements. This policy provides clear evidence.
- **Training Framework** – It sets out training for on-call managers and staff on using the system, including child protection referral protocols.

### 3. Definitions & Legislation

#### 3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Home</b>	Byram House, the children's home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
<b>Company</b>	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
<b>Byram House</b>	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
<b>On Call Manager</b>	A designated manager (from IMS Care LTD) available outside normal working hours to provide advice, guidance, and authorisation for emergency actions.
<b>Out of Hours</b>	Any time outside the home's normal management working hours (typically 9am – 5pm, but may vary by shift; the on-call system covers evenings, nights, weekends, and bank holidays).
<b>Emergency Duty Team (EDT)</b>	The local authority service (Kirklees) that provides social work response outside normal office hours for child protection and other urgent matters.
<b>Regulation 40 Notification</b>	A notification to Ofsted of a serious event, as required under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.
<b>Significant Harm</b>	The threshold defined in the Children Act 1989 that justifies compulsory intervention.

### 3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
<b>Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015</b>	<b>Regulation 40</b> – notification of serious events to Ofsted (e.g., serious injury, child protection incident, police involvement). <b>Regulation 34</b> – policies for protection of children.	On Call Manager must ensure Regulation 40 notifications are made without delay for qualifying incidents.
<b>Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026</b>	Published March 2026. Reinforces that safeguarding concerns must be shared without delay, and that data protection is not a barrier. Outlines roles of EDT and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.	On Call Manager must not forbid staff from making a child protection referral to EDT. Staff may refer directly if necessary.
<b>Children Act 1989</b>	Section 47 – duty to investigate when a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.	Child protection concerns raised out of hours may trigger a Section 47 enquiry via EDT.
<b>Data Protection Act 2018 &amp; UK GDPR</b>	Not a barrier to sharing safeguarding information.	Staff and On Call Manager must share information for child protection purposes without seeking consent where it would cause delay.
<b>Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences</b>	Requires reporting of work-related deaths, serious injuries, and dangerous occurrences to HSE.	On Call Manager must ensure RIDDOR report is made where a staff member or child sustains a reportable injury.

<b>Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)</b>		
<b>Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026</b>	Effective 1 April 2026. Focuses on children's lived experience and whether the home's governance ensures safety out of hours.	Inspectors will review the effectiveness of on-call arrangements and whether staff feel supported.
<b>Human Rights Act 1998</b>	Article 8 – right to private and family life.	On-call managers must balance the need to contact staff outside hours with respect for their private life, but safeguarding remains paramount.

## 4. The Policy

### 4.1 Purpose and Scope of the On Call System

The residential On Call system provides out-of-hours access to management advice, support, and guidance regarding issues that arise unexpectedly and cannot be addressed by the staff on duty.

#### **The On Call system is not for:**

- Day-to-day management issues that should have been planned for during normal hours.
- Routine matters that can wait until the next working day.
- Covering sickness where staff on shift can reasonably rearrange rotas (but see guidance below on staffing emergencies).

#### **Normal working hours planning:**

- The management team must ensure the home is appropriately staffed and resourced.
- Procedures must exist for general and predictable situations (e.g., a child refusing to go to bed, minor disagreements).
- Staff must be competent to carry out these procedures without needing to call the On Call Manager.
- If an issue is known or suspected to arise out of hours, contingency plans must be set in place during normal hours.

### 4.2 The Role and Responsibilities of the On Call Manager

The On Call Manager provides an out-of-hours managerial service responsive to **unexpected or unpredictable** issues.

#### **Key responsibilities include:**

- Providing information, advice, and guidance to staff on issues that cannot be addressed within the staff group on duty.

- Giving oversight, guidance, and authorisation regarding the need for additional staffing or resources when need arises unexpectedly and cannot be managed by those on shift.
- Providing advice and guidance regarding health and safety issues or specific care needs.
- Receiving information regarding issues of serious concern: child protection, staff discipline matters, serious injury to staff or children, involvement of emergency services, or any matter that would be deemed a **Regulation 40** report.
- Ensuring staff have followed appropriate procedures and taken appropriate action.
- Ensuring the Regulatory Authority (Ofsted) is contacted when required, and relevant staff in the department are notified.
- Passing information to more senior managers for information or action where necessary.
- Assisting in decision-making in emergency situations, including liaison with other professionals (EDT, police, health services) where appropriate.
- In the most serious or urgent events, **attending the home** to provide onsite leadership and management. This should be a last resort, as other homes would be denied the on-call resource. In such a situation, the On Call Manager must advise a more senior manager.
- Responding to calls as soon as is practicable.
- While on call, the On Call Manager must be available to consult and **must not be under the influence of alcohol** as this may affect decision-making capacity.
- Recording details of all calls received during their on-call period.

### 4.3 Guidance to Staff – When to Notify the On Call Manager

Staff must use reasonable judgement. The On Call system provides access to management support for **unexpected or unpredicted** situations. Routine matters should be handled by the home's management team the next working day.

#### **Before calling the On Call Manager, the team on duty should:**

1. **Discuss** the situation among themselves to identify if there are solutions or immediate actions.
2. **Complete a risk assessment** of the situation, including any directions already given by the Registered Manager (if known).
3. Ensure the **shift leader** (or a person acting under their direction) makes the call to avoid confusion.

**The following are examples of situations that should be notified to the On Call Manager:**

Category	Examples
<b>Serious injury to a child</b>	Any injury requiring medical attention or hospital admission, including self-harm.
<b>Child protection issues</b>	Any concern, however arising, that may constitute child protection (EDT must also be advised).
<b>Missing child at high risk</b>	A child missing and risk assessment indicates high risk (e.g., exploitation, CSE, poor weather, vulnerability).
<b>Serious complaint against staff</b>	A complaint that may require a manager to decide immediate action (e.g., removal of a staff member).
<b>Staffing emergencies</b>	Non-availability of staff, disciplinary issues on shift, or inability to cover sickness such that the home's staffing falls below safe levels. A risk assessment must be completed and agreed with the On Call Manager.
<b>Staff injury</b>	A staff member suffers an injury during work that requires medical attention or hospital admission.
<b>Media attention</b>	Any situation likely to attract media coverage (e.g., car thefts, car crashes, disruptions in the local community involving children from the home).

Category	Examples
<b>Destructive or damaging behaviour</b>	Children behaving in a way that is destructive to people or property, not responding to staff direction, where police involvement is being considered.
<b>Emergency services involvement</b>	Police, ambulance, or fire service attend the home.
<b>Child sexual exploitation (CSE) concerns</b>	Any suspicion that a child has been involved in exploitation (including prostitution, county lines).
<b>Serious bullying</b>	Bullying episodes that could cause immediate and significant harm to a child.

**Note:** On-call is **not** a process to cover routine sickness. All attempts should be made by staff on shift to cover sickness. A risk assessment must be completed to ensure appropriate staffing for the children, and only if unsafe should the On Call Manager be contacted for authorisation of overtime or agency cover.

#### 4.4 On Call Child Protection Issues – Out of Hours

In the event of child protection issues arising out of hours, different roles are undertaken by key people.

##### *Staff on duty*

- **First point of contact** for concerns. Concerns may come from reports by others, the child themselves, or staff witnessing a situation.

- Concerns may relate to issues outside the home or within the home (including abuse by another child or a staff member).
- Where there is **immediate risk to a child**, staff must take action to protect the child (e.g., separate the child from the source, call police on 999).
- If police are involved, record officers' names and station.
- If police have arrested a child suspected of abusing another, **notify EDT immediately** so they can arrange joint investigation.
- **As soon as the immediate safety of the child is secured**, alert the On Call Manager.

*When there is no immediate risk*

- Staff should consult the On Call Manager in the first instance.
- However, **staff must be aware** that:
  - The referral to EDT must not be delayed simply to allow discussion with a manager.
  - **The On Call Manager cannot forbid a member of staff from passing on a concern to EDT.**
  - If the On Call Manager is implicated in the concern, staff should refer directly to EDT and explain why.

*Information needed for a child protection referral to EDT*

- Child's name, date of birth, home address.
- Care category and name of the child's social worker and/or area office.
- Factual information about the reasons for concern (staff should not seek to question the child further unless requested by EDT or the On Call Manager).

*If the On Call Manager decides not to refer to EDT*

- The staff member must record this decision.
- A copy of the information must be faxed or emailed to the child's social worker and team manager, to be available at the start of the next working day.

## 4.5 Recording and Handover Requirements

### **On Call Manager must record:**

- All calls received during their on-call period.
- Details of the situation, actions taken, decisions made, and rationale.
- Names of staff involved, children involved, and any external agencies contacted.

**The log must be shared via email** with the manager group by Monday morning (or the next working day after the on-call period).

This ensures:

- Managers can deal with any follow-up actions.
- The incoming on-call manager is up to date with any ongoing situations.

**For significant issues** arising during an on-call duty, the relevant Registered Manager or Deputy must be notified as soon as possible/appropriate (normally by the start of the next working day, or immediately by phone if the situation is still active).

## 4.6 On Call Manager – Decision Making and Escalation

When a staff member contacts the On Call Manager with a child protection concern:

1. The On Call Manager will consider the information presented.
2. They will record the information and their decision (whether to notify EDT or not).
3. If the decision is **not to refer**, they must advise the staff member of the reasons. These reasons must be recorded in the On Call Recording Sheet.
4. If the decision is **to refer**, the On Call Manager will advise the staff member to contact EDT directly with the relevant information.
5. The On Call Manager must **follow up with a call to EDT** to discuss the situation with the EDT worker who took the referral.

6. The On Call Manager will work with the EDT approved officer to:
  - Assess immediate risk to other children in the home.
  - Devise an appropriate plan to minimise that risk.
  - Ensure appropriate support is made available to staff involved.
7. The On Call Manager is responsible for ensuring:
  - The Registered Manager of the home is informed of the incident on the next working day.
  - **Appropriate notifications are made** (Ofsted Regulation 40, RIDDOR, safeguarding partners).
  - Any actions recorded are followed up.

**Escalation:** If the On Call Manager believes that the incident requires senior leadership intervention (e.g., potential serious misconduct by a manager, media crisis, or multiple serious incidents), they must contact a Director of IMS Care LTD without delay.

## 5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff and on-call managers understand and can implement this On Call Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
<b>Induction for all staff</b>	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: the purpose of the on-call system, when to call (examples list), the requirement to complete a risk assessment before calling, the shift leader responsibility, the chain of communication, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
<b>Induction for On Call Managers</b>	Upon appointment	In-depth training covering: legal framework (Regulation 40, Working Together 2026, RIDDOR), handling child protection calls, liaison with EDT, recording and handover, decision-making and escalation, and attending the home in emergencies.
<b>Annual refresher for all staff</b>	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation, case studies, reminders on when to call, and the importance of not delaying child protection referrals.
<b>Child protection out-of-hours training</b>	Annually (for On Call Managers)	Specific training on the role of EDT, making a referral, Section 47 enquiries, and the legal duty not to forbid a staff member from referring.
<b>Regulation 40 and RIDDOR awareness</b>	Annually (for On Call Managers)	Training on what constitutes a serious event, how to notify Ofsted (including out-of-hours contacts), and HSE reporting.

<b>Record keeping and handover</b>	At induction and refresh	Training on completing the on-call log, sharing via email, and ensuring handover to managers.
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**Staff are required to:**

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training sessions.
- Know the on-call telephone number and the name of the current On Call Manager.
- Never delay a child protection referral to discuss with the On Call Manager if there is immediate risk.
- Understand that the On Call Manager cannot forbid them from making a child protection referral to EDT.

## 6. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Missing From Care Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Accident and Incident Reporting Policy (including RIDDOR)
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Local safeguarding partnership procedures (Kirklees)
- Kirklees Emergency Duty Team (EDT) contact details

## 7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Byram House

<b>Policy Name</b>	On Call Policy	
<b>Home</b>	Byram House	
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
<b>Approved by</b>	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
<b>Date</b>	May 2026	