

## Residential On Call System



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### 1. Introduction

The residential On Call system provides out of hours access to management advice, support and guidance regarding issues that arise out of hours.

The On Call Service is not intended to compensate for or replace the usual management arrangements of the residential units or to deal with day to day issues, which are known, predicted or which should have been provided for during the normal working day.

Within normal working hours the management team should make arrangements for ensuring that their unit is appropriately staffed and resourced. Additionally arrangements should be in place to ensure that the appropriate procedures exist for dealing with general and predictable situations which arise during the usual operation of the unit and that the team are aware of and competent to carry out the procedures.

If it is known or suspected that an issue is likely to arise out of hours appropriate contingency plans should be set in place to deal with the issue.

## 2. The Role and Responsibilities of the On Call Manager

The role of the On Call Manager is to provide an out of hours managerial service, which is responsive to unexpected or unpredictable issues that may arise.

Within this the role may involve:

- Providing information, advice and guidance to staff regarding issues that arise and which 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.
- Providing advice and guidance regarding health and safety issues or specific care package needs.
- Receiving information regarding issues of serious concern i.e. child protection, staff discipline matters, injury to staff or service users, involvement of the emergency services or any matter cited in Schedule 5 of the National Care Standards. When having gained such information it is the responsibility of the On Call Manager to ensure that staff have followed the appropriate procedures and taken appropriate action and where necessary to ensure that the [Regulatory Authority](#) have been contacted and relevant staff in the department have been notified.
- To ensure information is passed on to more Senior Manager and Health and Safety either for information or action, where necessary.
- To assist in decision making in emergency situations. This may include liaison with other professionals (i.e. ERT, Police, Health Service) where appropriate.
- In the most serious or urgent events the On Call Manager would attend the particular unit and provide on site leadership and management. This action should be a last resort, as other units would then be denied the On Call resource. In the event of such a situation the On Call Manager should advise a more senior manager or a fellow On Call Manager.
- The On Call Manager should respond to a call as soon as is practicable and within half an hour. Whilst on call the On Call Manager must be available to attend situations where required and as such should not be under the influence of alcohol as this may affect the decision making capacity of the role.
- The On Call Manager is responsible for recording details of all calls received during their time on call. In the event of any significant issues arising during an on call duty the relevant registered manager or deputy should be notified as soon as is possible/appropriate. Where an event or situation is likely to impact upon subsequent on call duties the responsible On Call Manager should be notified.

### 3. Guidance to Staff of Situations When the On Call Manager Should be Notified

The On Call system provides residential care staff with access to advice, guidance and support from a member of the management team where unexpected or unpredicted situations occur out of hours (i.e. 9.00-5.00). Incidents, which are serious, both within and outside of the home, should be reported, if only for information.

Where advice and guidance is required the team on duty should assess whether the situation needs reporting to the On Call Manager or whether it is a routine matter that can be handled by the unit's own management team the next working day.

Staff will need to make a clear judgement as to whether a situation is serious enough to report and as such will need to exercise reasonable judgement and share in the responsibility for managing unexpected situations.

Calls to the On Call Manager should not be seen as "handing a problem on" but as an aspect of ensuring that events are correctly notified and considered.

When considering whether a situation should be reported to the On Call, it is expected that the team on duty should first discuss it between themselves to identify if there are any solutions or risks.

It is important that the member of staff who is making contact with the On Call Manager is the shift leader on duty or acting under their direction. This is to avoid confusion in communication. A clear risk assessment of the situation should be completed by the duty staff, including any directions given by the registered manager, which should then be passed on to the On Call Manager for consideration.

It is not possible to give a definite list, which will define all emergencies, but the following are examples of situations that should be notified to the On Call Manager.

- Any situation where a child accommodated suffers an injury serious enough to warrant medical attention or admission to hospital, this should include any incident of self-harm.
- Any situation that may be considered a Child Protection issue however that arose. **(NB ERT will also need to be advised of all Child Protection issues).**
- Any situation where children have gone missing and are thought to be "at risk" (e.g. under the age of thirteen and had not had a prior history of absconding) and where the risk assessment indicates Code Red and High Risk.
- Any situation where a serious complaint is made against a member of staff that may require a manager to be involved in deciding immediate action.
- Any situation where there are particular staffing problems e.g. non-availability of staff, issues related to disciplinary problems.
- Any situation where a member of staff suffers an injury during the course of their work that requires medical attention or admission to hospital.

- Any situation that is likely to attract media coverage e.g. car thefts and car crashes, disruptions in the local community.
- Any situation where young people are behaving in a destructive or damaging way to other people or property; who are not responding to the direction of staff and where consideration is given to the use of the Police to effect control.
- Any other situation that warrants the intervention of the emergency services.
- Any suspicion that a child has been involved in prostitution.
- Any concern of serious bullying episodes that could cause immediate and [Significant Harm](#) to a child.

#### **4. On Call**

##### **Child Protection Issues – Out of Hours**

In the event of Child Protection issues arising out of hours there will be different roles undertaken by key people.

##### **Staff on duty within the Unit**

Staff on duty within the unit will usually be the first point of contact for concerns in respect of issues of possible child protection.

These concerns may be the result of receiving reports from other people, the young person themselves, or as a result of the staff witnessing a situation of concern.

The concerns may relate to issues that have arisen outside the unit or as a result of a situation that has occurred or is occurring within the Unit. In the latter instance it may be as a result of the behaviour of another child(ren) or a member(s) of staff.

In all instances any concerns in respect of Child Protection should be reported as soon as possible.

Where there is an immediate risk to a child, the member of staff should consider what action is necessary at that time to protect the child. This may involve intervening to stop any abuse that is occurring and separating the child from the source of the abuse, if possible. In some extreme instances the safety of the child at risk may only be achieved by making an emergency call to the police for immediate intervention.

If the police are, or have been, involved the names of any officers involved and the name and telephone number of the police station responding should also be recorded. In instances where the police have arrested a child suspected of abusing another, then ERT should be advised immediately, in order that they can liaise with the police to arrange the joint investigation of this matter.

As soon as the safety of the child has been secured, the member of staff should alert the On Call Manager.

In other circumstances, where there is not a need for action to ensure immediate safety, the member of staff on duty should consult with the On Call Manager in the first instance.

Whilst this is generally the appropriate course of action, staff should be aware that:-

- The passing on of the referral must not be delayed simply to allow discussion with a manager or supervisor.
- In no circumstances can the On Call Manager forbid a member of staff to pass on concern to ERT about possible child abuse.
- In certain circumstances, it may be completely inappropriate to discuss the referral other than with ERT e.g. if the On Call Manager is implicated by the information.

If in doubt, staff should make the referral direct to ERT and explain the reasons why they have taken this action.

The information that is needed at this time will be the name and date of birth of the child, their home address, their care category and name of the Social Worker and/or area office responsible for the child. In addition, information will be required about the reasons for the staff's concern including as much factual information as possible that supports these concerns.

Staff should not seek to question the child who they believe has been abused to seek further information or clarification at this stage, unless they are requested to do so by ERT or the On Call Manager. Staff should remain aware that outside of office hours, ERT provides the Child Protection Investigation Service.

All information should be recorded as soon as possible in the progress sheets for the young person.

Following discussion with the Manager on Call, the member of staff may be asked to contact ERT to pass on the relevant information, if it is agreed that the concerns need to be reported.

If the On Call Manager determines that a referral should not be passed to ERT, the member of staff should record this decision and fax a copy of the information to the child's Social Worker and Team Manager to be available to them at the start of the next working day.

## **5. On Call Manager**

If a member of staff contacts the On Call Manager to report concerns that a child who lives in a Department Children's Home or foster home is believed to have been the subject of abuse, either in the home or before, or is thought to be an abuser, they will consider the information presented and advise the member of staff on action to be followed.

The information provided to the On Call Manager should be recorded in the On Call Recording Sheet, along with the decision of the manager whether to notify ERT or not. If the decision is taken not to pass on the referral, the member of staff who made the call should be advised of this decision and the reasons for reaching this conclusion. These reasons should be recorded in the On Call Recording Sheet.

If the On Call Manager agrees that a referral should be passed to ERT, they will advise the member of staff who called to contact ERT directly and to pass on their concerns, along with any other information that the On Call Manager has requested them to pass on. The On Call Manager must follow up with a call to ERT in order to discuss the situation with the appropriate ERT worker who took the referral.

The purpose of this discussion will be to confer with ERT worker and confirm the actions that they will both be taking in respect of the referral.

The On Call Manager will work with the approved officer from ERT to assess any immediate risk to other children in the home and to devise an appropriate plan to minimise that risk. In conjunction with ERT, the manager will also ensure that appropriate support is made available to residential staff or foster carers working in the situation where the concerns arose.

The On Call Manager will also be responsible for ensuring that the registered manager of the home is informed of any information in respect of the incident that arose out of hours on the next working day and that the appropriate notifications are made to the [Regulatory Authority](#), Senior Managers and Area Offices.