



ENGAGING WITH WIDER SYSTEM POLICY

Date: May 2026

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to engage proactively with the wider system of professionals, agencies, and organisations that play a role in protecting and caring for children and young people. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors working at Byram House, 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.

Byram House recognises that no children's home can meet, on its own, all a child's needs. It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, particularly the child's placing authority and statutory social worker. This policy aligns with the **overarching requirement of Regulation 5** of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, which applies across all Quality Standards.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Comply with **Regulation 5** of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the **Quality Standards** (particularly Standards 1, 2, and 3 on leadership, care planning, and relationships).
- Ensure that the home seeks to work with those in the wider system to meet each child's needs.
- Define the responsibilities of staff to engage proactively, challenge inadequate responses, and escalate concerns.
- Maintain effective local relationships with police, MASH, LADO, health, education, and advocacy services.
- Act as champions for children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Engaging with the Wider System Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It meets duties under **Regulation 5** of the Children’s Homes Regulations 2015, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, and the **Children Act 2004** (duty to cooperate).
- **Child Advocacy** – It ensures that staff advocate for children to receive the services they need, challenging delays or inadequate responses from placing authorities or health providers.
- **Escalation Framework** – It provides a clear pathway for escalating concerns if a placing authority or relevant person does not respond within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Local Relationships** – It ensures the home maintains strong links with key local agencies (police, MASH, LADO, YOT, health, education, activity providers), supporting early intervention and positive outcomes.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **SCCIF 2026** expects the home to demonstrate effective partnership working. This policy provides clear evidence.
- **Training Framework** – It sets out annual training for staff on partnership working, escalation procedures, and local resources.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, comprising 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.

Company	IMS Care LTD.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Wider System	All professionals, agencies, and organisations involved in a child's care and protection, including the placing authority, social worker, police, health services, education, youth offending team, advocacy services, and independent visitors.
Placing Authority	The local authority that has placed the child in the home.
Relevant Person	Any person or body with statutory duties towards the child (e.g., social worker, CAMHS, YOT, health commissioners).
Escalation	The process of raising concerns through management levels if a response is not received in a reasonable timeframe.
Regulation 5	The overarching regulation of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, which applies across all Quality Standards and emphasises proactive partnership working.

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance (presented in a table)

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 – Regulation 5	Overarching regulation: homes must seek to work with the wider system to meet children's needs, including proactive engagement, challenging inadequate performance, and escalating concerns.	This policy operationalises Regulation 5.

Children Act 2004 – Section 10	Duty to cooperate to improve children’s wellbeing.	The home must cooperate with local safeguarding partners.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Requires multi-agency collaboration and effective partnership working.	The home must engage with safeguarding partners (police, health, social care).
Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026	Inspects how the home works in partnership with placing authorities and other agencies.	Inspectors will review evidence of engagement and escalation.
Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR	Governs sharing of information with partners.	Information must be shared lawfully; data protection is not a barrier to safeguarding.
Children Act 1989 – Section 22	Duty to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.	Partnership working must be in the child’s best interests.

4. The Policy

4.1 Policy Statement and Commitment

Byram House is committed to:

- **Seeking to involve the placing authority** effectively in each child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans (Care Plan, ISP, Health Care Plan).
- **Seeking to secure** the input and services required to meet each child's needs.
- **Challenging** the placing authority or a relevant person if their performance or response is inadequate, and escalating concerns through line management until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.
- **Developing and maintaining effective professional relationships** with such persons, bodies, or organisations as the Registered Manager considers appropriate, having regard to the range of needs of children for whom the home provides care.

The home cannot force a relevant person to engage productively, but it must **evidence** what it has done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. Staff must act as **champions** for children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would.

4.2 The Role of the Registered Manager and Staff

Registered Manager responsibilities:

- Ensure that the home has a clear plan for engaging with each child's placing authority and other relevant professionals (recorded in the child's ISP/Placement Plan).
- Designate a Keyworker for each child who will be the primary point of contact for the social worker and other professionals.
- Ensure that staff have up-to-date contact details for key agencies (see section 4.5).

- Review partnership working at least monthly (in team meetings and supervision).
- Escalate concerns personally if staff escalation is unsuccessful.

Staff responsibilities:

- Proactively liaise with the child's social worker, attending reviews, planning meetings, and statutory reviews.
- Raise concerns promptly if a child's needs are not being met (e.g., delay in CAMHS referral, missed health appointment).
- Record all engagement attempts and responses.
- Follow the escalation procedure (section 4.4) if a response is not received in a reasonable timeframe.

4.3 Proactive Engagement with Placing Authorities

The home must "seek to involve" the placing authority that places a looked-after child in the home. This means working primarily with the child's statutory social worker and developing a strong working relationship.

Key actions:

- **Before placement:** Participate in placement planning meetings; ensure that the Placement Plan clearly records delegated authority, contact arrangements, and health/education plans.
- **During placement:** Maintain regular contact with the social worker (at least fortnightly for high-needs children, monthly for others). Share copies of incident reports, daily summaries, and significant achievements.
- **At reviews:** Attend all statutory Looked After Children (LAC) reviews, PEP meetings, and health reviews. Contribute written reports in advance.
- **When needs are not met:** If a service (e.g., CAMHS, dental appointment, occupational therapy) is not provided, the home must challenge the placing authority (see section 4.4).

4.4 Challenging Inadequate Responses (Escalation)

If the placing authority or a relevant person does not provide the input or services needed to meet a child's needs, the home must challenge them. It is not sufficient to raise matters and wait; if a response is not received in a reasonable timeframe, the home must escalate through line management.

Escalation pathway (summary):

Level	Action	Timescale
Level 1	Keyworker raises concern with child's social worker (by phone and email).	Immediate (within 1 working day)
Level 2	If no response within 5 working days, Keyworker escalates to Registered Manager. RM contacts social worker's team manager.	Within 5 working days
Level 3	If still no response within a further 5 working days, RM escalates to the Responsible Individual (RI). RI contacts the placing authority's service manager / head of service.	Within 10 working days
Level 4	If still unresolved, RI escalates to the Director (of IMS Care LTD) and, if necessary, to the placing authority's Director of Children's Services. The home may also consider using the statutory complaints procedure.	Within 15 working days

All escalation steps must be recorded in the child's file, including dates, persons contacted, and outcomes. The home will also consider the use of an **independent advocate** for the child if needs are not being met.

Emergency escalation: If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm due to a placing authority's failure to act, the Registered Manager will contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**, the **MASH**, or, if necessary, the police.

4.5 Maintaining Local Relationships (Police, MASH, LADO, Health, Education, etc.)

Byram House will be proactive in maintaining local relationships within the immediate community and the host authority (Kirklees). The Registered Manager will ensure that the home has established relationships with the following (including contact details readily available to staff):

Agency	Purpose
Police and PCSOs	Build positive relationships with children; invite PCSOs to visit the home; attend local police networking meetings.
Police Missing Person Unit	Designated contact for missing children; consult regularly regarding children who go missing or are at risk.
Youth Offending Team (YOT)	For children involved in offending; access local resources and prevention programmes.
MASH (Front Door Safeguarding Hub)	Contact for safeguarding concerns and referrals (Kirklees MASH: 01484 456858).
Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCP)	Hold and follow local safeguarding procedures.
LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)	For allegations against staff; hold contact details and procedures.
Education Providers	Schools, virtual school heads, special educational needs services.
Health Providers	GP, dentist, optician, CAMHS, sexual health clinics, school nursing.
Activity Providers and Youth Centres	Local clubs, sports, arts, and community groups to promote social inclusion.

Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services	Support for children in care planning and reviews; independent return interviews for missing children.
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The Registered Manager will review this contact list **quarterly** and ensure that staff are familiar with how to access each service.

4.6 Advocacy, Independent Visitors and Return Interviews

- **Advocacy:** Every child has the right to an independent advocate. The home will provide information about advocacy services and support children to access an advocate if they wish (e.g., for complaints, care planning, or expressing views).
- **Independent Visitor (IV):** For children who have limited contact with family, the home will support the placing authority to appoint an Independent Visitor (under the Children Act 1989, Schedule 2).
- **Return Interviews:** For missing children, the home must request an **independent return interview** within 72 hours of return (see Missing From Care Policy). The person conducting the return interview is part of the wider system.

4.7 Recording and Evidencing Engagement

The home must evidence what it has done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. Records must be kept in:

- The child's daily record (on Clear Care) – noting calls, emails, meetings with social worker and other professionals.
- Supervision notes – where staff raise concerns about partnership working.
- The child's ISP / Care Plan – recording agreed actions and responsibilities.

The Registered Manager will review engagement records monthly and report to the Responsible Individual as part of the Regulation 45 quality review.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Engaging with the Wider System Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: Regulation 5, the importance of partnership working, key contacts (MASH, LADO, YOT, police missing unit), the escalation pathway, advocacy services, recording requirements, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (Working Together 2026, SCCIF 2026), case studies of successful and failed escalation, and refresher on local contacts.
Escalation workshop	As needed (for managers)	Training on how to challenge placing authorities effectively, using the escalation pathway, and when to involve the Responsible Individual or Director.

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training.
- Proactively engage with professionals and record all contacts.
- Escalate concerns without delay if a child's needs are not being met.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Missing From Care Policy
- Notifications Policy (Regulation 40)
- Police Involvement Policy
- Appropriate Adult Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 (Regulation 5)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	