



Recording Audit Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all records are accurate, child-centred, safeguarding-focused and clearly evidence the care, support and progress of each child.

This audit system is designed to help managers check that records are not just completed, but that they show:

- what happened
- what staff did
- what the child said or felt
- what risks were identified
- what action was taken
- whether follow-up happened
- whether managers had oversight

J&R Care should focus on the impact of care on children's lives, not just paperwork, so this audit must look at whether recording shows that children are safe, listened to and making progress.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and managers responsible for recording, reviewing or overseeing children's records, including:

- daily logs
- key work sessions
- safeguarding records
- risk assessments
- incident reports
- missing from care records
- complaints
- pocket money records
- medication records
- health records

- education records
- independence work
- Consequences
- staff supervision records
- handovers
- communication logs
- management oversight records

3. Key Principles

All recording must be:

- Accurate — factual, clear and not based on assumptions.
- Child-centred — showing the child's voice, feelings and experience.
- Safeguarding-focused — identifying risk, action and follow-up.
- Timely — completed as soon as possible after the event/session.
- Reflective — showing learning, patterns and impact.
- Outcome-focused — showing what changed as a result.
- Linked together — daily logs, key work, risks and plans should tell the same story.

Children's case records must be kept up to date, signed and dated by the person making the entry.

4. Legal and Regulatory Links

This policy supports compliance with:

Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

- Regulation 13 — leadership and management
- Regulation 36 — children's case records
- Regulation 37 — records
- Regulation 39 — complaints and representations
- Regulation 45 — review of quality of care

The Quality Standards

Ofsted SCCIF for children's homes

The registered person must complete a quality-of-care review at least once every six months under Regulation 45.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Registered Manager

The Registered Manager is responsible for:

- ensuring audits are completed
- identifying patterns and shortfalls
- making sure actions are followed up
- reporting themes to the RI and directors
- ensuring staff are challenged where recording is poor

Responsible Individual

The Responsible Individual is responsible for:

- reviewing audit themes
- checking management oversight is effective
- ensuring learning is embedded across the home

Shift Leaders / Assistant Manager

Shift leaders and managers are responsible for:

- checking records during or at the end of shifts
- ensuring urgent safeguarding matters are escalated
- giving staff immediate feedback where recording is weak
- ensuring actions from records are completed

All Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- completing records honestly and promptly
- recording the child's voice
- identifying safeguarding concerns
- escalating concerns immediately
- completing agreed actions

6. Audit Cycle

The home will use a simple audit cycle:

- Weekly Audits - Completed by managers and where delegated senior RCW's

Check:

- daily logs
- handovers
- incidents
- safeguarding concerns
- medication records
- missing from care records
- pocket money records
- immediate actions

- Monthly Audits - Completed by the Registered Manager or delegated manager.

Check:

- one full child file
- key work sessions
- risk assessments
- placement plans
- complaints
- independence work
- health/education records
- staff supervision links
- management oversight

- Quarterly Audits - Completed by the Registered Manager, RI or senior leadership.

Check themes across the home, such as:

- safeguarding recording
- exploitation/county lines work
- online safety
- children's voice
- key work quality
- restorative practice

- staff understanding of risk
- management monitoring

Six-Monthly Review

Findings must feed into the Regulation 45 Quality of Care Review.

7. Step-by-Step Audit Procedure

Step 1: Choose the Audit Focus

The manager must decide what is being audited.

This may be:

- one child's full file
- key work sessions
- safeguarding records
- incidents
- risk assessments
- complaints
- daily logs
- medication
- pocket money

one specific theme, such as online safety or exploitation

Step 2: Select the Sample

The manager should choose a realistic sample.

For example:

- 5 daily logs
- 3 key work sessions
- 2 incident reports
- 1 full child case file
- 1 safeguarding concern
- 1 complaint

- 1 medication record
- 1 pocket money record

Where there has been a recent concern, incident, complaint or inspection finding, that area should be prioritised.

Step 3: Complete a Vertical Audit

A vertical audit follows one issue through the records.

Example:

A child raises concern about missing pocket money.

The manager checks:

- was it recorded in the daily log?
- was the child listened to?
- was it passed to a manager?
- was the pocket money record checked?
- was the child updated?
- was there an outcome?
- was learning identified?
- was manager oversight recorded?

This is stronger than just checking one form.

Step 4: Check the Golden Thread

The manager must ask:

“Do the records link together and tell the same story?”

For example, if a child is at risk of exploitation, this should be visible in:

- placement plan
- risk assessment
- daily logs
- key work
- staff handovers
- incident records

- professional updates
- management oversight

If these do not link, this must be recorded as an audit concern.

8. Audit Questions for Managers

Managers should use these questions during every audit.

Basic Recording Quality

- Is the record dated and signed?
- Is it clear who completed it?
- Is it factual?
- Is it free from judgemental language?
- Is it completed in enough detail?
- Is it easy to understand what happened?

Child's Voice

- Does the record say what the child said?
- Are direct quotes used where helpful?
- Does it show how the child felt?
- Was the child listened to?
- Was the child updated about any actions?

Safeguarding

- Were safeguarding risks recognised?
- Was the concern escalated?
- Was the manager informed?
- Was the social worker/LADO/police informed where required?
- Was immediate safety considered?
- Was follow-up recorded?

Key Work

- Was the session meaningful?
- Was it linked to the child's risks, plans or needs?
- Were safeguarding topics explored?
- Was there evidence of direct work?
- Were actions agreed?
- Were actions followed up?

Risk Assessments

- Are risks current?
- Do they reflect recent incidents?
- Are strategies clear?
- Do staff understand what they must do?
- Is there evidence the risk assessment is being followed?

Management Oversight

- Has a manager reviewed the record?
- Did the manager challenge poor recording?
- Were actions set?
- Were timescales clear?
- Was learning identified?

9. Key Work Recording Audit Prompts

When auditing key work, managers must check whether staff have explored relevant safeguarding topics, including:

- online safety
- grooming
- exploitation/county lines
- missing from care
- healthy relationships
- consent
- bullying
- discrimination
- emotional wellbeing
- self-esteem
- family contact
- substance misuse
- peer pressure
- independence skills
- worries or complaints

The audit must not expect every topic to be covered in every session. However, where a topic is relevant to the child's risks or current circumstances, it should be explored and recorded.

10. What Good Recording Looks Like

Good recording should clearly show:

- the child's lived experience
- what staff observed
- what the child said
- what staff did

- what risks were considered
- what action was taken
- what changed afterwards
- whether further work is needed

Example:

"X said he felt angry because he believed staff had not listened to him about his missing money. Staff reassured X, checked the pocket money record with him and agreed that the manager would review the issue the same day. X appeared calmer after this and said he felt better knowing it would be looked at. Manager reviewed the records and updated X at 6pm."

11. What Poor Recording Looks Like

Poor recording includes:

- "X was fine"
- "No issues"
- "X kicked off"
- "Staff dealt with it"
- "Key work completed"
- "Spoke about risks"
- no actions
- no child voice
- no follow-up
- no management oversight

These records do not evidence safety, progress or quality of care.

12. Action Planning After Audit

Every audit must end with an action plan.

Actions may include:

- staff feedback
- supervision discussion
- team meeting discussion
- refresher training
- record corrected or expanded
- risk assessment updated
- child spoken to
- social worker updated
- management review completed

13. Escalation Procedure

If an audit identifies a serious concern, the manager must act immediately.

Examples include:

- safeguarding concern not reported
- child complaint not actioned
- risk assessment out of date after serious incident
- medication recording error
- missing money concern not followed up
- allegation against staff not escalated
- records suggesting unsafe practice

The auditor must:

1. Make the child safe.
2. Inform the Registered Manager.
3. Inform the RI/director where needed.
4. Make safeguarding referrals if required.
5. Record actions taken.
6. Review staff conduct if necessary.
7. Update the audit action plan.

14. Feedback to Staff

Managers should give feedback in a supportive but clear way.

Feedback should include:

- what was good
- what was missing
- why it matters
- what must improve
- by when

Where recording concerns are repeated, this should be addressed through supervision, capability or disciplinary processes if necessary.

15. Reporting Themes

The Registered Manager should review audit findings monthly and identify themes.

Themes may include:

- weak key work recording
- poor follow-up of children's concerns
- lack of management oversight
- poor risk assessment updates

- inconsistent safeguarding recording
- weak child voice
- actions not completed

These themes should be shared in:

- management meetings
- staff meetings
- supervision
- Regulation 45 reviews
- home development plans

16. Audit Template

Recording Audit Form

Date of Audit:

Auditor:

Area Audited:

Child/Record Sample:

Audit details

Overall Judgement

- Unsafe
- Weak
- Adequate
- Good
- Excellent

Summary of Findings

Actions Required

Manager Signature

Date Completed

17. Simple Manager Checklist

Before signing off an audit, the manager must ask:

- Can I see what happened?
- Can I see what the child said?
- Can I see what staff did?
- Can I see the safeguarding thinking?
- Can I see actions and follow-up?
- Can I see management oversight?
- Can I see whether this made a difference to the child?

If the answer is no, the recording is not good enough.

18. Review of Policy

This policy should be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- Ofsted identifies concerns
- Regulation 44 or 45 reports identify recording issues
- safeguarding concerns show gaps in recording
- there are repeated staff recording failures
- legislation or guidance changes