



Guidance for Social Workers: Unregistered Placements

1. What Is an Unregistered Placement?

An unregistered placement is any accommodation providing care for a child under 18 without Ofsted registration. Includes unregulated provision for 16–17s not registered under Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023, or Reg 24 placements where approval has lapsed.

Children under 16 cannot be placed in unregulated provision.

2. Before an Unregistered Placement Is Considered

- Identify placement instability early.
- Hold a Placement Stabilisation Meeting.
- Explore family network and document outcomes.
- Attempt to sustain placement with enhanced support.
- Complete full regulated placement search.

3. Requesting an Unregistered Placement

Requires completion of Defensible Decision-Making Form and approval from Team Manager, Service/Strategic Manager, and Assistant Director.

Referral to Home Finding & Support Team must include risk assessment and relevant documents.



4. Essential Checks Before Placement

Provider checks include insurances, manager qualifications, staff DBS, safety certificates, policies, financial viability. The QA team will follow this up and complete this.

Social worker must assess safety, location, support level, other young people, and child views.

5. Placement Start Requirements

Social worker should take child to placement or visit within 24 hours.

Weekly visits until CIC review; then risk-based schedule.

Placement Plan within 5 working days.

QOT visit within 7 days.

Placement Planning Meeting before placement or within 72 hours.

6. Ongoing Oversight & Review

Weekly Unregistered Placement Meetings (GOLD meetings) review risks, visits, move-on planning.

IRO visits within 20 working days.

Exit plan must be maintained and shared.

7. DoLS / High Court Authorisation

Legal advice is required where deprivation of liberty may occur.



8. Reporting Requirements

Directors must be notified of new placements.

Weekly reports and documentation must be kept updated.

9. Unlawful Placements

Unlawful where Reg 24 expires or foster carers exceed approval.

Monthly GOLD reviews.

10. Quick Checklist for Social Workers

- Stabilisation meeting held
- Family network explored
- Regulated search exhausted
- Risk assessment completed
- Defensible Decision Form completed
- AD authorisation
- Provider safety checks
- Placement Plan completed
- Visits scheduled
- Weekly oversight understood