

## EASTERN COLLABORATIVE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL NETWORK



## IMPORTANT UPDATES

### Ofsted releases the 2026 update to the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes, along with refreshed inspection documents in Annex A.

The main change this year is a strengthened section on **how inspectors assess children's experiences and progress**. The update is vital reading for leaders and for disseminating to your teams & colleagues. The updated framework places a clearer focus on:

- What daily life feels like for children living in the home.
- How well staff understand each child, their needs, identity, communication, and what helps them feel safe.
- The quality of relationships and the overall feel of the home.
- How children's progress is recognised and supported over time.
- How well the home promotes stability and prevents unnecessary moves.

How do we understand this in practice? This update reinforces the heart of good residential care:

- **It's about the child's lived experience**, not the list of things we offer.
- **It's about really knowing the child**, how they communicate, what matters to them, and what helps them settle.
- **It's about relationships**, warmth, boundaries that feel safe, and adults who show up with consistency and care.
- **It's about noticing the small steps** and understanding the story behind them.
- **It's about stability** and thoughtful leadership that protects children from disruption.

In short, this shifts the focus of inspection from describing activity to demonstrating **what has genuinely changed and mattered for the child**.

Full Documents: [SCCIF: Children's Homes](#) & [Annex A: Children's Homes Inspection Documents](#)

\*With thanks and full acknowledgement to CHQ for this practical and valuable summary.

## The updated Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 guidance is now LIVE.

This updated version brings clearer national expectations, stronger multi-agency standards, and a sharper focus on prevention and whole-family working.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>.

It reflects the direction already seen across the Care Review and SEND reforms and aligns with what many homes have been working towards.

What matters for children's homes and supported accommodation:

- Clearer multiagency roles, information sharing, and escalation.
- Greater consistency across local areas.
- Stronger emphasis on relational, whole family practice.
- Residential settings recognised as active partners in early help.
- Updated statutory duties for providers.

Thank you for reading, your feedback would be very welcome. If you wish to be removed from the distribution or wish to add a colleague, please email us:

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See you at the next ECCRN meeting!



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