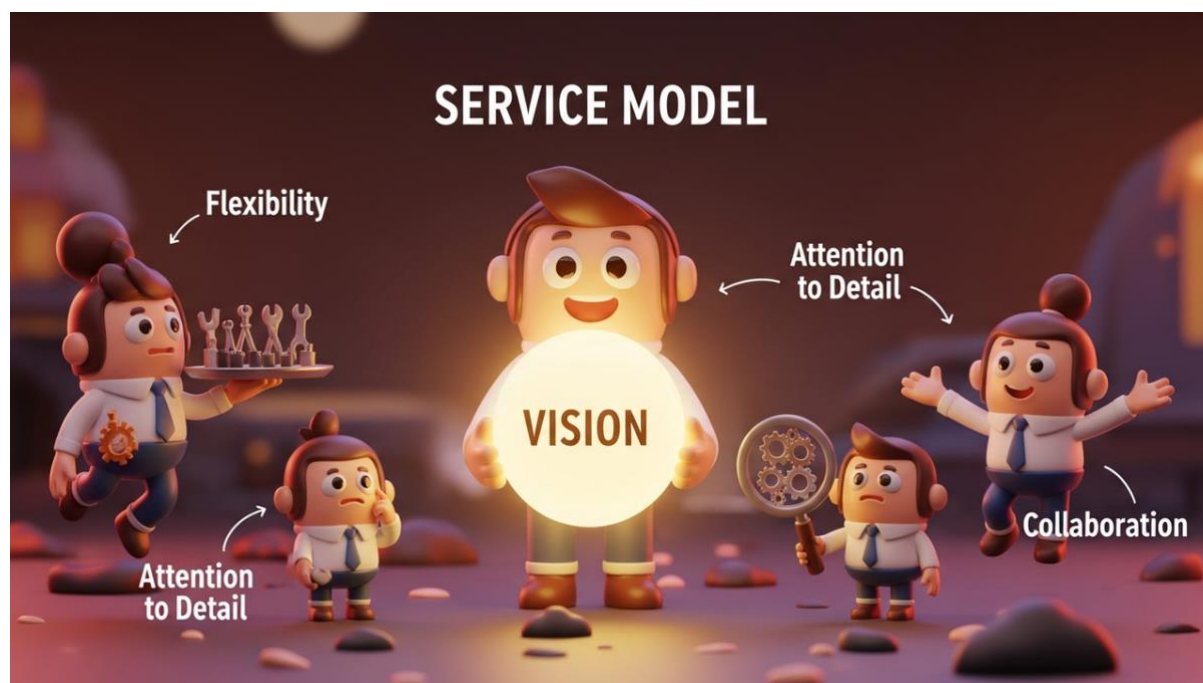


B'toria – Free Children's Home Startup Checklist 2025

A practical guide for anyone planning to open a children's home in England, with support from the B'toria team at every stage.

Opening a children's home involves navigating regulation, property requirements, staffing, safeguarding, and inspection readiness. At B'toria, we support providers through each stage of the journey, helping turn ideas into safe, compliant, and successful services.

Define Your Vision and Service Model



Before opening a children's home, it is important to clearly define the purpose and model of the service.

Key considerations include:

- Identifying the type of children’s home you want to open (EBD, complex needs, solo placement, etc.)
- Deciding on the number of children the home will support
- Defining your therapeutic or care approach
- Understanding local authority demand and placement needs

How B’toria supports you:

B’toria works with new and existing providers to shape a clear service model that aligns with regulatory expectations and real placement demand. We help providers refine their vision, develop a sustainable care model, and understand where their service fits within the wider children’s services landscape.

Choose the Right Property



The property you choose is critical to the success of the home.

Key steps include:

- Ensuring the property is suitable for residential childcare
- Completing a locality risk assessment
- Checking planning requirements with the local authority

- Ensuring the property has suitable space for bedrooms, communal areas, staff facilities, and office space

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria helps providers assess whether a property is suitable before significant investment is made. We support with locality risk assessments, regulatory expectations around property layout, and practical advice to ensure the environment is safe, welcoming, and compliant with Ofsted expectations.

Register With the Regulator



Opening a children's home requires registration with Ofsted. This involves submitting a range of key documents and applications.

Typical documents include:

- SC1 Application Form
- Responsible Individual information
- Registered Manager application
- Statement of Purpose
- Children's Guide
- Safeguarding and behaviour policies
- Locality risk assessment

- Staff recruitment procedures

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria supports providers through the Ofsted registration process by preparing documentation, guiding applicants through the application stages, and ensuring that the service is inspection ready. Our experience helps avoid common delays and ensures applications meet regulatory expectations.

Develop Key Policies and Procedures



Children's homes must operate under a comprehensive set of policies and procedures. In most cases, services require 30–40 policies covering areas such as:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Behaviour management
- Missing from care procedures
- Use of restraint
- Complaints and whistleblowing
- Medication management
- Staff supervision and development
- Health and safety

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria provides professionally written policy frameworks aligned with current legislation, statutory guidance, and Ofsted expectations. These documents help providers demonstrate strong governance, clear safeguarding practice, and regulatory compliance.

Recruit the Right Team



A children's home must be supported by a safe and competent workforce.

Typical roles include:

- Registered Manager
- Deputy Manager or Senior staff
- Residential Support Workers
- On-call management support

Safer recruitment requirements include:

- Enhanced DBS checks
- Full employment history verification
- Reference checks
- Compliance with safer recruitment procedures

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria supports the recruitment of Registered Managers and residential staff, helping providers identify individuals with the right experience, values, and safeguarding awareness. We also guide providers through safer recruitment practices to ensure appointments meet regulatory expectations.

Staff Training Requirements



Residential childcare staff must receive appropriate training to support children safely and effectively.

Core training areas include:

- Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Physical Intervention / Restraint
- Fire Safety
- Medication Administration

- Trauma-informed care
- Positive Behaviour Support

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria delivers training programmes designed specifically for residential childcare settings. Our training supports staff to understand trauma, manage challenging behaviour safely, and build positive relationships with children.

Prepare the Environment



Children's homes should feel safe, welcoming, and child-centred.

Key elements include:

- Comfortable, personalised bedrooms
- Welcoming communal areas
- Safe outdoor spaces
- Quiet or sensory areas where possible

Services must also ensure:

- Fire safety compliance
- Health and safety risk assessments
- Safe and secure living environments

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria provides guidance on preparing environments that meet regulatory expectations while creating a nurturing and supportive home for children. We help providers ensure their homes are safe, practical, and suitable for residential childcare.

Establish Care Planning Systems

Children's homes must have systems in place to record and manage care.

Typical systems include:

- Daily logs
- Incident reports
- Risk assessments
- Behaviour tracking
- Care plans and review documentation

Examples of care planning software used in the sector include:

- ClearCare
- Nourish Care
- CHARMS
- Access Care Planning

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria helps providers establish effective care planning systems that support good practice, accurate recording, and regulatory compliance. We also help services choose appropriate digital systems where needed.

Build Local Authority Relationships



Strong relationships with local authorities are essential for successful placement matching.

Key steps include:

- Contacting commissioning teams
- Registering with placement portals
- Introducing your service to local authorities
- Sharing your Statement of Purpose and vacancy information

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria supports providers in presenting their services professionally to commissioning teams and positioning their homes within the placement market.

Prepare for Inspection



Once operational, children's homes must be ready for Ofsted inspection.

Inspectors will look for evidence of:

- Safe recruitment
- Staff training and supervision
- Strong leadership and management
- Effective safeguarding practice
- Children's voices and participation
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Homes must demonstrate the Quality Standards under the Children's Homes Regulations (Regulations 6–14).

How B'toria supports you:

B'toria helps services prepare for inspection through compliance reviews, leadership support, and practical guidance on evidencing good practice.