

1259061

Outbound Care Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a number children's homes operated by a private provider. The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties or a learning disability.

The manager has been in post since June 2019, being formally registered with Ofsted in December 2019.

Inspection date: 9 February 2021

This monitoring visit

The home was last inspected in December 2019. At that time, the overall experiences and progress of young people were judged to be good. This monitoring visit was undertaken due to concerns about the increase in incidents of young people going missing from the home.

The monitoring visit took place off site and included video calls with managers, staff and a young person. The inspector was also able to access the organisation's electronic record system.

Young people are cared for by managers and staff who understand their needs well. However, young people have been struggling with the restrictions due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and they have been negatively influenced by some of their extended family members. Staff have been unable to support young people to remain in the home and has resulted in them going missing from the home.

Missing-from-care protocols, which are designed to ensure that staff act promptly to secure young people's welfare, have not always been followed robustly by staff when young people have left the home and their whereabouts were not known. This has potentially put young people at risk of harm. The registered manager had already identified that staff required refresher training on this matter, and he

delivered training to staff at the staff meeting in January 2021. Positively, staff do try to find young people when they are missing from home, and young people are welcomed back to the home. Young people now benefit from independent return interviews after they have been missing from the home, which was raised as a recommendation at the last inspection.

Young people's written risk management plans do not contain accurate and up-to-date information. In one case, this included strategies to manage the young person's mobile phone use. However, at the time of this monitoring visit, the young person did not have the use of a mobile phone, which had been the case for a number of weeks prior to the last review of the risk management plan. Risk management plans also included incorrect dates for incidents, making these documents confusing to read and understand.

Both young people have, in the main, been engaging in online education. Staff have prioritised this, appreciating the significance of education for young people's futures. However, few allowances have been made for the current difficult circumstances, resulting in sanctions being given for non-participation in education. These have been ineffective, as they have included the loss of paid activities, despite young people being unable to engage in activities in the community at the present time.

Staff have also been inconsistent in allowing young people access to the home's internet. Some staff have seen this as a privilege, so if they deny young people access this has not been recorded as a sanction, while others have recorded it as such. This does not appear to have been an effective behaviour management technique and, on some occasions, it has prompted negative behaviour from young people. This inconsistent practice is confusing for young people.

The young person spoken to was generally positive about the home and was able to evaluate the impact that the COVID-19 restrictions have had on his experiences. He said, 'Staff are sound. They are just doing their job.' Similarly, positive feedback was received from social work professionals, with one commenting, 'The staff are always prepared to go the extra mile to support the young person. Staff really want to get to know the young person. They care about what is happening for him, regardless of what he does. They have unconditional regard.' This is important for the development of positive relationships and for the young people to want to spend time in the home.

One requirement from the last inspection is repeated, as this encompasses the shortfalls in relation to risk management and responding in line with the young person's missing-from-care protocol. The remaining requirement is assessed to have been met, as there have been no further concerns relating to serious incidents in the home not being notified to Ofsted. Three recommendations are repeated, as these issues have not been explored as part of this monitoring visit. One further recommendation is made relating to behaviour management and the review of the use of sanctions.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2019	Full	Good
03/10/2018	Full	Good
23/01/2018	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	26 March 2021

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. Staff should work to make the children's home an environment that supports children's physical, mental and emotional health, in line with the approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. In particular, that individual work is completed with young people about specific issues, such as refusal to attend health appointments, take prescribed medication and engage with smoking cessation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 33, paragraph 7.3)

- The registered person should ensure that medicines are administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Where the home has questions or concerns about a child's medication, they should approach an expert such as a general medical practitioner, community pharmacist or designated nurse for children looked after. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- The registered person should ensure that staff appraisal takes into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1259061

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Outbound Care Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 2, Metropolitan Business Park, Preston New Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 9LT

Responsible individual: Paul Cotton

Registered manager: David Harrison

Inspector

Mandy Williams, Social Care Inspector

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