

2528141

Hopscotch Care Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a number operated by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person who may have emotional or behavioural needs.

A manager was appointed in December 2020 but has not yet applied to register with Ofsted.

We last visited this children's home on 5 November 2019, when we carried out a full inspection.

Inspection date: 28 January 2021

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was carried out in line with Ofsted's procedures for monitoring services during the current period of suspended routine inspection activity.

The visit was carried out using off-site activity. There were no young people living in the home when the visit was undertaken.

Outcomes for young people who have lived in the home since the last inspection have varied. One young person made good progress during her stay and was able to move to a setting with reduced support nearer her home area. However, the progress of two young people who were admitted and discharged from the home in short periods of time was not as positive.

Some areas of risk have decreased for young people during their time living in the home. For example, concerns relating to young people's high-risk behaviours have reduced. Young people rarely go missing from the home and when they have done so, it has been for short periods of time.

However, shortfalls in risk management were identified during this inspection. Some risk management plans lack clarity and contain conflicting information. This means that staff may not fully understand the actions required of them to protect young people from harm. The record of one incident demonstrated that a staff member failed to follow risk management guidance, which contributed to the escalation of the incident.

Safeguarding practice requires improvement. The response to an allegation raised by a young person in January 2021 was inadequate. Although a strategy meeting took place following the allegation, no actions or strategies were recorded by the manager and subsequent communication with external agencies was poor. Furthermore, there was failure to conduct a thorough investigation in line with the provider's safeguarding procedures. Failure to take effective action in response to safeguarding concerns compromises young people's safety and well-being.

A requirement was raised at the last inspection in relation to the recruitment of staff. However, recruitment procedures still require improvement. During this inspection, there was evidence that the provider failed to follow up information about a staff member made available during their recruitment, which indicated further scrutiny was required. Gaps in recruitment procedures mean that young people are at risk of being exposed to staff who are not fit to carry out the role, which therefore fails to safeguard them.

Prior to his resignation, the previous registered manager had an extended period of leave from July 2020. A new manager was not appointed until December 2020. Therefore, the home was without stable leadership for several months. The new manager demonstrates commitment to making required improvements and shared plans to develop the staff team and their practice. Staff spoke highly of the manager, describing him as knowledgeable, supportive and approachable.

Monitoring of incidents has not always been effective. Records of two significant incidents present potential practice issues, which were neither identified nor addressed. Furthermore, failure to properly investigate an allegation raised by a young person, and more general concerns raised by her placing authority, mean that poor practice could be allowed to continue and that opportunities to learn and improve practice are lost.

During a serious incident that occurred in September 2020, staff were unable to contact a senior manager for several hours. Discussions with staff demonstrate that arrangements for management support outside daytime working hours remain unclear. Staff must have access to management support and guidance at all times to help ensure that any emergency situations that arise are dealt with safely and appropriately.

The provider has not consistently shared appropriate information with Ofsted. This includes notifications of significant incidents, the home's statement of purpose and

the six-monthly review of care. Failure to share relevant information with Ofsted undermines our ability to monitor services effectively, and as such does not promote young people's safety and well-being.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/11/2019	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, 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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(vi)(vii)) This relates to the need to ensure that risk management plans contain clear guidance for staff about the measures that they must take to keep young people safe from harm and that staff have a full understanding of this guidance. This also relates to the need to ensure that effective action is taken in response to concerns about a child's welfare, including thorough investigation of safeguarding concerns or allegations.	7 March 2021
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.	7 March 2021

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(h)) This relates to the need to ensure that monitoring is effective so that poor or unsafe practice is identified and addressed, and the need to ensure that there is a reliable system in place to enable staff to contact a manager outside of daytime working hours, in the event of an emergency.	
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	19 March 2021
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (2) The registered person may only— (a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or (b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3) (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b))	19 March 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	7 March 2021

a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must—	19 March 2021

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and

make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.

(Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to develop their understanding of safe internet and social media use. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring to support continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2528141

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hopscotch Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 19 Lancaster Road, Carnforth LA5 9LD

Responsible individual: Richard Witt

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, Social Care Inspector

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