

2571480

PSS Care Group Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care for up to five children. The organisation's statement of purpose says that the home aims to provide children with a safe, stable home and enable them to build on their confidence, self-esteem and resilience as they progress into adult life. The home is owned by a private organisation.

The registered manager resigned in June 2020. A manager is in post and has applied to Ofsted for registration.

Inspection date: 19 January 2021

This monitoring visit

The home was registered in January 2020 and has not been inspected since registration. Five children have moved into the home since registration. Since then, three children have moved on and, at the time of the visit, there were two children living at the home.

Ofsted conducted this monitoring visit following significant concerns raised by professionals and information from safeguarding notifications. At the visit, several serious shortfalls were identified. Consequently, the home is likely to be subject to enforcement action.

The registered manager resigned in June 2020. Since then, there have been two interim managers, and a third manager, who has applied to register with Ofsted. The manager is overseen by an operations manager, who has returned early from maternity leave. During her maternity leave, the operations manager provided the current manager with supervision. During this period, the manager raised concerns about her capacity to manage her workload. The operations manager did not address these concerns. The manager's oversight of records and incidents is poor.

Overall, these failures have resulted in ineffective managerial oversight, leaving the children unsafe.

The matching and assessment of children prior to their admission fail to consider whether the staff have the relevant experience and skills to meet the children's needs. The impact risk assessments show that the children are likely to take the same risks as each other. One impact risk assessment is dated four days after the child arrived at the home. These assessments were carried out by three different members of staff during the changes of managers. There are many elements of these impact assessments that are identical. Actions to reduce the likelihood of children being sexually exploited are linked to the expertise of a manager who left in June 2020, prior to the last child arriving. Consequently, the identified risk-reduction strategies cannot be implemented.

There have been several serious safeguarding allegations regarding staff conduct and practice. One member of staff has been dismissed and three staff are currently suspended. Several safeguarding concerns were raised by the children and staff. The management team failed to explore these concerns properly until a child disclosed to a member of staff information that warranted a police investigation. Because of the allegations, two children have been moved and the two remaining children are in the process of being moved out of the home. The unplanned endings to children's placements and the management team's failure to investigate serious allegations have caused the children considerable distress.

The manager and the staff have failed to understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. The manager has also failed to follow the safeguarding procedure set out in the home's policy. The manager has investigated allegations about staff prior to external consultation with the designated officer. Details of the information that support the allegations have not all been shared with the designated officer, leaving the children at increased risk.

Following the suspension of staff, some of those staff have returned to work based on risk assessments. These assessments fail to include the reasons for allowing staff to lone work. An allegation about a member of staff falling asleep on night duty has not been investigated properly. This is despite previous concerns about this member of staff that were substantiated. The manager has failed to investigate this or link this to children being at significant risk at night due to ongoing allegations about another member of staff. The children's concerns have not been taken seriously and, consequently, they have been harmed.

A member of staff has been recruited without full pre-employment checks or being interviewed for his role at the home. References have not been followed up and concerns raised by previous employers have not been explored in depth. Overseas checks have not been undertaken. Failure to undertake all necessary checks and conduct an interview mean that the organisation could not be assured that this member of staff is suitable to work with children.

The staff team includes several new staff and staff from the provider's other children's homes. Five staff have left since September 2020 and nine different staff have worked at the home since the end of December 2020. This fails to provide continuity of care for the children, who struggle to adjust to the number of changes in the staff team.

Most of the staff lack experience and training. Several staff have demonstrated unprofessional and inappropriate conduct while working with the children. The manager's risk management of allegations against the staff indicates that it is the staff who are at risk from allegations made by the children. This shows a serious lack of safeguarding understanding and experience.

The supervision records demonstrate that staff have raised several concerns that have not been followed up. Staff have raised concerns about other staff favouring children and safeguarding. Despite two children raising concerns about a member of staff using inappropriate language and swearing, these were not discussed with the member of staff as part of their supervision. Therefore, supervision is ineffective because it fails to address safeguarding matters.

The children have, at times, returned to the home intoxicated and have consumed alcohol at the home in their bedrooms. Room search records demonstrate that staff have discovered alcohol, unknown white substances and drug paraphernalia in the children's bedrooms. The staff have failed to provide any follow-up work to identify the substance or make the children aware of the dangers and house rules. The children routinely smoke tobacco in their bedrooms. The staff have failed to address the associated fire and health risks to children.

The staff do not provide clear boundaries or effective behavioural guidance for the children. Consequences are rarely used. A sample of records of behavioural consequences shows no managerial oversight of the effectiveness of the consequences. The consequences fail to link to the behaviour, and this does not provide learning for the children. Monetary incentives and rewards are routinely used. The children have a significant amount of money available to them. This has the potential for children to purchase items that place them at risk.

The children's bedrooms are not clean or adequately equipped. The window restrictors in two bedrooms are broken. One bed had no sheet and the mattress was stained and dirty. Food remains and takeaway containers are stored among cigarette ends and cigarette ash. The communal games room has extension leads that are hazardous. The garden has a protruding metal gutter pipe and drain hole that is uncovered. Cigarette debris and litter are lying around the garden. This fails to provide a safe and clean environment for the children to live in.

The number of incidents of children going missing from the home are reducing overall. However, records of these incidents demonstrate that the staff have failed to

report related concerns appropriately. On occasions, the staff have locked doors, restricting the children's liberty without any clear rationale for this. The manager has failed to review and check the associated records, and this has left the children at increased risk of harm.

The children's risk assessments and placement plans are not up to date and contain conflicting information. The risk assessments fail to identify all the actions to reduce the risks. Consequently, the staff do not receive effective guidance to safeguard the children.

The location risk assessment fails to identify risks associated with the house and proximity to the neighbouring property. There is no review of the roof that was accessed by a child and no details of local addresses and venues that are known to be of high risk to the children. This means that the staff may not be aware of these dangers.

The fire risk assessment fails to identify all the fire risks or the fire exits. Some exits are not fire doors and the risk of children smoking in bedrooms has not been included. This fails to provide protection against fire risks. Some immediate action was taken by the provider at Ofsted's request, to reduce the risk to the children. This included installing a thumb lock on one of the rear exit doors and unblocking the property side exits.

The management team has failed to ensure that notifications of serious incidents are sent to Ofsted. This prevents Ofsted from having clear oversight of the events at the home.

The provider has failed to provide Ofsted with the external monitoring reports for a period of five months. This reduces the safeguards intended by this monitoring. In addition, the manager has not submitted an updated statement of purpose to Ofsted since July 2020.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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;	8 March 2021

that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(c)(d))	
*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. 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and 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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(h))	8 March 2021
*If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b))	5 February 2021

The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

8 March 2021

HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor concerns raised to Ofsted.

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

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2571480

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: PSS Care Group Limited

Registered provider address: 284 Chase Road, London N14 6HF

Responsible individual: Frederik Booysen

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Natalie Burton, Social Care Inspector

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

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