

2625941

Registered provider: Huntercombe Young People Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. In March 2022, the company applied to vary its conditions of registration to only provide care for up to nine children who have learning disabilities or who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home changed ownership in March 2021 and the manager registered with Ofsted at that time. She is currently away from the home. The responsible individual currently manages the home with support from other managers.

Inspection date: 4 April 2022

This monitoring visit

Ofsted carried out a full inspection on 22 and 23 February 2022 and judged the home to be inadequate. Serious and widespread failures were identified in relation to the safety and protection of children and the leadership and management of the home. Ofsted issued three compliance notices under regulations 12, 13 and 32.

This visit was carried out to monitor the action taken by the provider in response to the compliance notices. The inspector found that since the last inspection, the provider has taken some action to improve the service. However, some of the steps in the compliance notices have not been met and two notices, under regulation 13 and 32, have been reissued in part.

The quality of safeguarding practice is improving. Safeguarding incidents are now dealt with, and where necessary, staff duties are appropriately restricted to protect children from the risk of harm.

Leaders now challenge external agencies when their actions or inactions are not in children's best interests. For example, managers arrange regular meetings to discuss

children's needs and to ensure partnership working. As a result, children receive better planned care that reflects their individual needs.

All staff, including agency staff, are being trained to use physical restraint should this measure of control be required to protect children or others from the immediate risk of harm. Managers ensure that staff who have yet to complete this training do not work with those children most likely to require this level of support. This means that when children are in crisis and pose a risk to themselves or others, only competent staff support them.

There is still a reliance on the daily use of agency staff. However, managers now make sure that when agency staff are used, this has the least disruptive impact on the children. For example, using agency staff at night means that during the day children are surrounded by more familiar staff. This means that the children are experiencing more consistent care and support from people that they know.

Agency staff now read the children's risk assessments and care plans before working with them. Senior staff explore with agency staff whether they are able to understand the children's needs and know how to support them. They also explore whether agency staff understand their role and responsibilities. This ensures that children receive better care and support.

Managers have made improvements to the information held about agency staff. This includes ensuring that previous training is relevant to the needs of the children in this home. However, there are still some gaps in the information held. For example, there is no confirmation regarding who has provided the agency staff members' references and what their previous work experience is. This does not provide assurance that these staff have the skills and experience to meet children's needs. In addition, there is no system in place to verify that agency staff's Disclosure and Barring Service certificates have been updated when required. These shortfalls mean that the suitability of agency staff to work with the children cannot be confirmed and this places children at risk of harm.

The provider has completed its own internal audit of the home and has implemented an improvement plan to address the shortfalls. Managers have made some improvements to the monitoring systems in the home. However, these need to be personalised to this service, and tested and embedded in practice to ensure that managers have oversight of staff practice, and the care and support that children receive. Furthermore, managers still need to implement a system to ensure that recommendations made by the independent visitor are fulfilled in a timely way.

The remaining 10 requirements raised at the full inspection were not reviewed as part of this monitoring visit. These will be assessed at the next inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	18 May 2022
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii))	18 May 2022
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—	18 May 2022

help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority; and help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible; help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8 (1) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii)(x))	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b))	18 May 2022
*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;	18 May 2022

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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)(c)(d)(e)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that impact risk assessments are completed for each child before their admission and consider any training needs for the staff team.	18 May 2022
The registered person must ensure that— the privacy of children is appropriately protected; children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))	18 May 2022
*The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only—	18 May 2022

employ an individual to work at the children's home; or 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). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	
The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c))	18 May 2022
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home.	18 May 2022

The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)— has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i))	
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))	18 May 2022
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	18 May 2022

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2625941

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Huntercombe Young People Ltd

Registered provider address: Morton House, Morton Road, Darlington DL1 4PT

Responsible individual: Gemma Wilkinson

Registered manager: Lorraine Harding

Inspector

Emma Ridley, Social Care Inspector

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