

Children's homes – monitoring visit

Inspection date	18 November 2015
Unique reference number	SC008488
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Karen Forster

This monitoring visit

This monitoring inspection was completed following a complaint received by Ofsted regarding the home's management of episodes of challenging behaviour and staffing levels.

An unannounced inspection was completed to check the home's compliance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, in relation to positive behaviour management and staffing.

The home is still experiencing periods of disruption, for example; incidents on the 14 November resulting in damage to the house cars. Young people are challenging staff and damaging property, in the main working as a group, being encouraged by each other. Due to the amount of crisis management the staff have been unable to build on positive relationships with children as their therapeutic parent, and the young people have not been supported to manage their own behaviour or reflect appropriately on the impact of their challenging behaviour. This has resulted in a high number of incidents, some of which have included the Police being called to assist staff in managing the challenges and keeping the group safe.

Group damage to house cars means that the vehicles are unsafe to use, and the damaged body work and interiors pose a health and safety risk. The home had arranged for the disposal of the vehicles, and that was completed during the inspection.

Following a period of significant damage, the premises are still being refurbished and damaged items of house and personal property are being removed. However, this process is incomplete and the environment is not yet homely nor fully furnished. For example at the time of the inspection, the team were awaiting delivery of new beds and the home's laminate floors still appear worn and stained. This means that the premises do not fully meet the needs of each child.

While staffing complements are suitable, they are not flexible enough to allow sleep-in staff to go off shift, following disturbances in the night. This means that some care staff can be tired and less effective when working with young people. In addition, there is a gender imbalance in the team, with a total lack of permanent male care staff. Although there is a male member of agency staff who works regularly in the home, young people still only have a male role model within the group when he is on duty.

There is evidence within incident records where young people's behaviour in school went unchecked by staff. This meant that disruptive and risk taking behaviour

continued, for example, where individual young people stood in the road. While therapeutic parents can intervene in school incidents, the approach taken by respective teams in school and the home to manage young people's behaviour seems disjointed and not jointly planned.

The escalating number of incidents has been monitored by the independent visitor for the home as part of the regulation 44 system. However, the internal monitoring does not capture the escalation in incidents, the impact on staff and young people and does not review the resulting care practice and negative experiences for young people. This means that learning points are not identified nor practice adapted to adjust the pattern of challenging behaviour in the home.

Information about this children's home

The home is provided by a private company and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 8 children, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD).

At the last full inspection on 29 June 2015, the home was judged as good.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2) (iv)	help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone.	18/01/2016
12(2) (d)	ensure that premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards.	18/12/2015
6 (2) (c (i)	ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child.	18/12/2015
13 (2) (b)	the registered person must ensure staff work as a team where appropriate, with particular reference to work between the school and care teams.	18/01/2016
45 (2) (a)	the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children.	18/01/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Whenever possible , staff in day to day contact with children should include staff from both genders. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.22)

- The registered person should plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events or opportunities. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.15)

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

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