

Children's homes - monitoring

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC026991
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Denise Jolly

This monitoring visit

This home was judged inadequate at the full inspection on 15 July 2015. Following a second full inspection on 10 September 2015 the home had made sufficient progress to improve the identified shortfalls. Consequently, the judgement was changed for the home to requires improvement. The home continued to make progress that improved outcomes for young people's safety and welfare. Relationships between young people improved, and staff attended training that helped them to respond to the individual needs of young people living in the home. Young people went missing less often, attended school and college regularly, and the home became more settled. Staff supported young people's individual learning, social and emotional needs. They became more skilful at diverting young people's anger and frustration. Incidents reduced, and young people engaged more positively and safely in the local community. Staff restrained young people less, and this contributed to a happier, more settled group. A permanent manager started, and they applied to be registered with Ofsted. This application is still in progress.

From January 2016, notifications of serious incidents to Ofsted raised further concerns about young people's safety and welfare. This monitoring visit confirms that the home has failed to respond effectively to the emerging needs of young people, who have suffered recent setbacks in their emotional health and wellbeing. A number of shortfalls identified are similar in nature to those identified in July 2015, and many requirements from that inspection visit have been repeated. The home has declined in effectiveness.

On arrival at the home, there was broken glass outside the front wall of the property, and the inspector was able to gain entry without the knowledge of staff because the front door was unlocked. This fails to provide a safe and secure environment for vulnerable young people. The visitor's book was in a poor condition, with pages that had become detached from the binding. The record was not secure, which does not ensure there is a permanent record of all visitors to the home.

One young person has suffered a decline in his progress in a number of areas. Staff said that difficulties in family contact have impacted upon his ability to make positive choices to keep himself safe. However, his care plan has not been amended to effectively address the emergence of previous unsafe behaviour. Episodes of being missing increased, and the care plan does not include robust risk management in relation to the episodes. During those absences he was involved in antisocial behaviour and criminal disturbance, resulting in arrest and court action. The guidance for staff about how and when to report him missing had not been updated to include the varying curfews and limits on his movement that had been imposed by the courts. Police action taken against him has increased to prevent his movement outside of the home without staff accompaniment because of increased

criminalisation. Staff were unclear about why such action is necessary, and this limited the support they offered to help him to understand the consequences of his actions and choices upon his life chances. Staff ensured that he had a full programme of supported activity during the half term break, to minimise the impact of this restriction.

Staff fail to monitor the mobile phone activity of one young person, despite him being identified as vulnerable to exploitation. They are unaware of good practice regarding e-safety or the safe use of electronic social networks such as Facebook. They do not talk to him about any concerns that arise from intelligence they gather from other sources. This places him at risk of exploitation and unsafe relationships. Staff have failed to discuss with him the issues arising from posting a sexually provocative image, or an occasion when he met a relative without the knowledge of staff. Staff are failing to develop open and trusting relationships with him to afford protection, and reinforce appropriate boundaries to increase his understanding of personal safety and wellbeing.

Staff identify and report safeguarding and child protection concerns resulting from interactions between young people, and disclosure of historic abuse. However, they offer support to the young person by asking them leading questions and giving them their opinions. Staff are unaware of the importance of protecting the reliability of statements made by young people, to ensure that uncontaminated evidence can be explored by child protection professionals.

Records of these concerns are very inconsistent, because the home does not use local authority procedures for reporting concerns. No record is available for one concern, and for others the information recorded does not identify a clear audit trail of action taken, advice received, and decisions made. When social workers visit young people, there is no record of the outcome of their findings. This prevents a complete picture of the progress being made to support and protect young people, leading to drift in addressing young people's safety and welfare.

As relationships in the home have become more stressed, young people have reverted to inappropriate and disrespectful ways of gaining attention, such as demanding that staff 'make their dinner', or kicking the office door in order to gain entry. Staff use restraint more often to regain control of behaviour, and prevent damage. The manager reviews records. The quality of their analysis and oversight has been questioned by senior managers. A referral was made to the designated officer in the local authority, but no record of their agreement to an internal investigation is available in the home. However, they have failed to investigate in good time, and did not highlight concerns about staff practice that were identified during this monitoring inspection. There is no assessment of risk in place for staff who continued to work despite their restraint practice being questioned. This leaves young people vulnerable to the potential of being restrained inappropriately by staff whose practice is not subject to immediate review.

One young person has suffered a decline in his emotional and mental health. On

one occasion he required admission to hospital, and assessment by mental health professionals. His health care plan does not reflect the emerging difficulties, and fails to provide an update from health professionals about his emotional wellbeing. The report from his annual medical is also missing. The home has not chased this information with the nurse for looked after children, because they were unaware of her role in supporting young people's healthcare. They failed to chase the follow up mental health appointment, although it was very overdue. Staff were aware that the organisation's therapy team had liaised with the hospital team, but did not have this plan available for reference. This fails to ensure staff have the knowledge and understanding to do all they can to support his emotional needs and help him to make progress.

No young people have been admitted to the home since the last inspection, and therefore it is not possible to assess progress in procedures for matching and suitability. The requirement made at the last inspection will be repeated. Staff are pursuing appropriate qualifications, and attending training, to have the knowledge necessary to care for young people. However, the shortfalls identified in this visit indicate that they do not yet have the skills necessary to provide safe and effective care that helps young people to make progress.

Information about this children's home

- The home accommodates up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties
- It is run by a private organisation.

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.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard	12/04/2016

In order to meet quality and purpose of care standard the registered provider must – (2)(b) ensure staff – (ii) protect and promote each child’s welfare; (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background; (v) help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;	
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered provider must ensure that— (a)the health and well-being needs of children are met; (b)children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and (c)children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a)that staff help each child to— (i)achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans; (ii)understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding; (iv)understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being; (c)that each child has access to such nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.	12/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard. * In order to meet the protection of children standard the provider must ensure - (2)(a) that staff— (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;	12/04/2016

(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) 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; (d) 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. In particular ensure staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, specifically with regard to addressing concerns of children being missing from the home.	
13: The leadership and management standard * In order to meet the leadership and management standard the provider must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that— (1)(a)helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b)promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a)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; (f)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; (h)use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	12/04/2016
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the provider must ensure-	12/04/2016

(2)(a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	
32: Fitness of workers Ensure the provider employs individuals to work at the children's home who have the appropriate experience and skills for their work. (Regulation 32 (3)(b))	30/03/2016
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes all of the information required by the regulation, to enable effective oversight of staff practice. (Regulation 35 (3))	30/03/2016

*** means compliance applies to that regulation.**

Information about this inspection

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

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

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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