

Children's homes - monitoring

Inspection date	09/02/2016
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Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Stephen Collett

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit took place following a **Declined in effectiveness** judgement made at the interim inspection on 18 December 2015. Subsequently, a compliance notice was issued on 24 December 2015, requiring the home to make improvements to admission procedures by 8 February 2016. This monitoring visit focused on what progress has been made to rectify the breach of regulation specified in the compliance notice.

An acting manager took responsibility for the day-to-day running of the home on 28 January 2016. On the day of the monitoring visit he had not seen the organisations action plan to address the matters specified in the compliance notice. The action plan was being monitored by the organisations practice manager, who was present during the monitoring visit.

There are some staff vacancies at the home. Currently there are sufficient numbers of staff to care for three residents and agency staff are employed to cover any shortages. The home does not have sufficient numbers of permanent staff to meet the needs of young people in the event of a fourth young person being admitted. The majority of staff are experienced and either have a relevant qualification, or are working towards this. However, staff have not consistently kept their training updated. In particular, some staff have not completed or renewed their 'Team Teach' or restorative justice training. These two courses underpin the homes behaviour management approach.

An impact assessment process has been introduced for the purpose of assessing the suitability of new admissions to the home. This process takes into account the likely impact a new admission will have on the current group. One young person has been admitted since the interim inspection and this new process was applied.

There have been some improvements in gathering relevant information prior to offering a placement. This information has been used to inform the impact assessment. However, the amount of information being collected remains insufficient and clarification is not being sought where questions remain. This has resulted in leaders and managers having a contradictory understanding of a young person's child protection status.

In addition, a young person's bail conditions were not clarified prior to admission. Leaders and managers misunderstood a young person's level of engagement with the youth offending service. Consequently, these issues have not been fully addressed in the impact assessment. The home has therefore failed to meet the requirement of the compliance notice in relation to obtaining all relevant information prior to admission.

Evaluation is now taking place regarding the compatibility of new admissions with those already accommodated. This reduces the potential for poor group dynamics

and young people being a risk to one another. However, practice can be further developed in this area. Insufficient analysis was undertaken in respect of expressed vulnerabilities and the potential for young people to become involved in sexual exploitation.

Leaders and managers undertook an evaluation of whether staff could meet the needs of the young person prior to admission. They concluded that overall, the organisations established training programme was sufficient to equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills. Managers identified potential gaps in knowledge among the team and plan to address these in staff meetings and a practice development workshop. However, on the day of this monitoring visit it was not evident that leaders and managers have given sufficient consideration to when staff will update the training referred to earlier in this report.

Effective planning has taken place in relation to how young people will be introduced to the home. This has included consultation with current residents. The young person recently admitted stated that he was made to feel welcome and given information about routines and boundaries shortly after arriving. Records of key-working sessions confirm this to be the case.

Effective action has been taken to meet two of the three steps outlined in the compliance notice, relating to Regulation 6 of The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. In order to ensure continued progress, two requirements are made as a result of this monitoring visit. Satisfactory progress has not been made in relation to gathering full information about a prospective admission.

Information about this children's home

The home caters for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned.

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to evaluating risk, the registered person must ensure staff: Regulation 12 (2) (a) (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	04/03/2016
Ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. Specifically, ensure staff complete refresher training in a timely manner (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	25/03/2016

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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