

SC030439

Somerset County Council

Monitoring visit

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks, shared care and permanent accommodation for up to five children with a learning disability and complex needs. Two children currently live in the home. The provider suspended short-break provision at the time of the interim inspection in March 2022.

The registered manager resigned in February 2021. A new manager was appointed and applied to register with Ofsted but resigned in September 2021. An acting manager was appointed temporarily but this person has also now resigned. There is no manager in full-time day-to-day control of the home; the responsible individual is closely overseeing the setting.

Inspection date: 15 June 2022

This monitoring visit

Following the interim inspection on 22 March 2022, a restriction of accommodation was placed on the home. This means that no additional children can be admitted while the order is in place. This is the second monitoring visit since the restriction to review the situation at the home and to assess whether the restriction can be lifted.

Following ongoing concerns seen at the previous monitoring visit, Ofsted issued a notice of proposal to cancel the home's registration in addition to keeping the restriction notice in place.

Two children continue to live in the home. Work is taking place to find alternative homes for both children. Both children are supported to attend school or alternative education regularly. Interesting and fun activities take place. Recently, both children visited the beach together and one child also enjoyed an ice-skating trip.

Despite these positives, the care that one child receives falls far short of that described in the statement of purpose. This child continues to be cared for solely by agency staff, and over the past month this has included 20 different people. Despite

having concerns raised about the practices of some agency staff by adults and the child, leaders have not put in place adequate monitoring of their practice. In addition, leaders and managers have failed to assure themselves that all required safer recruitment checks are in place for these staff. A new requirement requiring the provider to take urgent action, has been made about this regulatory breach.

The post of manager remains vacant. The home has now been without a registered manager since April 2021. A consultant is in post and supports the monitoring of the home for three days each week. This provision is not sufficient.

Allegations or concerns made by a child about staff have not been managed effectively. At times, staff have dismissed the concerns saying that they did not happen or that the child's interpretation of what happened is wrong. Staff have failed to follow child protection guidance and ask open-ended questions to enable the child to tell them their views. Leaders and managers have failed to identify these concerns and have failed to notify Ofsted of all of them as required.

Senior leaders acknowledge the seriousness of the concerns and agree that the current situation is not sustainable. Leaders are keeping Ofsted up to date with their plans for the home, and Ofsted will continue to closely monitor the situation and the children's moves from the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2022	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
07/07/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/11/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/08/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 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; and 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— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice; 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)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(ix)(c)(i)(ii)) This specifically relates to improving the homeliness of the environment, taking into consideration the use of institutional-style fixtures and fittings in bathrooms, tired decor throughout the home, use of walkie-talkies, carrying of	5 May 2022

keys and passing through one child's accommodation to access communal areas.	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; and help each child to prepare for any review of the child's relevant plans and to make the child's views, wishes and feelings known for the purposes of that review. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(iv)(vi)) This specifically relates to ensuring that children are helped to contribute to their care plan and are helped to provide feedback on the quality of care they receive.	5 May 2022
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	5 May 2022

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; 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 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)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(d)) In addition, ensure that one child's bedroom window is not covered by an external shutter during the day.	
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 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;	5 May 2022

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)(c)(d)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	5 May 2022
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if— there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the register provider is an organisation or a partnership; does not satisfy regulation 28; or is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. If the registered provider appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of— the name of the person so appointed; and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(i)(ii)(b) (2)(a)(b))	5 May 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— 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).	15 June 2022

The requirements are that—

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)(d))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they consult with children and other stakeholders to obtain their views about the quality of care provided by the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.2)
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.5)
- The registered person should ensure that actions from previous supervision sessions are consistently reviewed at the next meeting. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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: SC030439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Somerset County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4DY

Responsible individual: Serena Pike

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Paula Lahey, Social Care Inspector

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