

Children's homes – Monitoring visit

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC034211
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Heather Chaplin

This monitoring visit

On 30 June and 21 September 2016, the inspector completed full inspections of the children's home. The home was rated inadequate on both occasions. Compliance notices were issued following the two inspections.

This monitoring visit was conducted to evaluate progress since the second compliance notice was issued on 30 September 2016.

The notice was issued with regard to continuing shortfalls in leadership and management. Although some progress had been made since the first full inspection, the inspector found that the home had failed to improve the quality of care for the young people to an acceptable standard. In addition, leaders and managers had failed to identify weaknesses in the conduct of the home, and to respond to these in a timely manner. This meant that the improvement which was apparent at the first monitoring visit had not been sustained.

This monitoring visit assessed the home's progress against the following elements of the notice:

- The home was required to ensure that managers have the necessary systems in place to monitor the home effectively, and that they take prompt action on any shortfalls identified. This includes monitoring and improving the quality of the home's environment ensuring that any hazards to health and safety are dealt with immediately.

Inspection of the premises showed that action has been taken to remove the health and safety hazards found on the previous inspection. For example, the laundry cupboard has been cleaned and there is no sign of any mould. The damage to the young people's bathroom tiles and fittings and to the shower room door has been repaired.

Good progress has been made with regard to the overall presentation of the home. The young people's bedrooms have been decorated and the landing carpet has been replaced. The computer room has new furniture and is now a relaxing and comfortable space for the young people. The manager, in consultation with the young people and staff, has plans to fit French doors opening onto the garden, which will further enhance the home. The outside space has been tidied and an old mattress has been removed for disposal.

The smaller of the two staff offices has been converted into a comfortable room for the young people. This provides space for them to sit quietly or meet privately with family, friends or visiting professionals. The former fifth bedroom remains unsuitable in size for young people, but has been utilised for storage and additional desk space for staff.

The previous kitchen strip lighting has been replaced with domestic style lights. This has made a considerable difference to the ambience and homeliness of this room. Food is now stored appropriately, and during this visit some of the young people were busy preparing traditional foods from their country of origin.

The registered manager explained that she is still waiting for the front door to be

replaced, but this does not detract from the overall quality of the home. The young people said that they are happy with the home, and staff commented that 'we love the house now, it looks so nice'.

Management monitoring of the environment has improved. The registered manager said that the condition of the home is now included in the staff's handover procedures. She is encouraging all staff to monitor the home and report any concerns, so that they can be actioned. In addition, managers walk around every day to make sure that everything meets the required standard. This part of the compliance notice is met.

- The service was asked to ensure that the individual risk assessments on young people are updated when circumstances change, to reflect all known risks.

Since the previous inspection, the home has admitted three young people who are seeking asylum in this country. They have joined another asylum-seeking young person who has been stable and settled in the home for some time. All four young people have risk assessments in place. The manager said that these will be updated with any change in the young people's situations. There have been no behavioural challenges with the current group of residents, so this has not yet been fully tested.

- The home was required to ensure that there is an effective system for recording and monitoring serious incidents, which triggers the need for escalation and notification to Ofsted when required.

Before the previous inspection, managers had failed to notify Ofsted of at least two serious incidents. One notification has been received in recent weeks, and this was handled appropriately. This element of the compliance notice is met, so the requirement under Regulation 40 has not been repeated.

There is now a system in place to trigger notifications. The registered manager has worked constructively with Ofsted and some private providers to improve the home's incident reporting system. She has developed a handover form which triggers staff action if there is a need for a notification to Ofsted or other bodies. There is now a new incident form, which is about to be circulated to staff for consultation. This form appears to be a useful document but has not yet been brought into use, so requires further evaluation once the system is fully in place.

- The home was required to ensure that there are sufficient permanent staff to operate the home without reliance on casual and agency staff.

Since the previous full inspection, the home has had to bring in additional staff to help the residents to access a range of medical and dental appointments, but because the young people are very well behaved, high levels of staffing have not been needed. The testing time will come when the home returns to looking after residents with highly complex behaviours.

The manager explained that the use of casual staff has greatly reduced. Two casual staff on duty during this visit were there to cover staff training. Given that the training is on how to support young unaccompanied asylum seekers, this has

to be seen as a positive.

There were enough staff on duty during this visit to support the present young people's needs. The rota shows that next week there is a casual staff member needed on most days, so the home is still in the process of establishing and retaining sufficient permanent staff on the team. This element of the compliance notice has not been fully evaluated, so the requirement under the leadership and management standard has been repeated.

- The home was required to ensure that casual staff receive effective, regular supervision and training appropriate to their role.

At the previous inspection, managers had not provided appropriate supervision and training for casual staff, some of whom had not received mandatory child protection and other foundation training within the specified timescales. In addition, managers had failed to ensure that there were robust monitoring systems in place in the home, because there was no robust system in place to monitor training for casual staff.

The manager confirmed that all permanent staff who have been available for work have completed their mandatory training. Casual staff are now receiving mandatory training, and were pleased with this development. One member of the casual staff team said that she has a computer login now, which enables her to access information and undertake online training, such as food safety. She has received her safeguarding and physical intervention training and is now booked in for the medication course.

It is recognised that as most of these staff have other jobs or commitments outside this employment, that getting them together for training is a challenge. Good progress has been made, but there is still work to do. This is covered by the repeated requirement under the leadership and management standard.

Management monitoring of supervision for the casual staff remains weak. The registered manager said that the managers have to ask each casual staff member who has provided supervision for them. This means that there is still no reliable and accessible management system in place to identify when and where the casual staff have received supervision.

These staff work across a number of homes in the local authority area, and one member of the casual staff team told the inspector that she has received supervision at another home in the city.

Another member of the casual staff team said that she has been supervised in this home during October. However, the minimal supervision notes seen do not provide sufficient evidence that the session covered anything more than confirmation that the staff member now has a computer login. Given that this staff member had not received supervision for a very long period of time, it might be expected that the session would offer a more detailed review of this person's work and professional development needs. This element of the compliance notice has not been met and requires further evaluation at the next full inspection.

- The home was required to ensure that all staff record their work promptly.

The young people's records should be accessible to all staff who work in the home.

At the previous inspection, the young people's key working and other records had not been completed in a timely and appropriate manner, and were not always accessible to other colleagues. Key documents, such as the accident book and staff training records, were not available on the day.

The registered manager said that the staff have now received instructions emphasising how important it is to record correctly. Key working and other important information must be saved on the computer shared drive, so that all relevant staff can access it.

In addition, the manager has reinstated the accident book. She has reorganised the office, with clear instructions for the staff about where items are located in the filing system. All staff are expected to comply with the recording and filing protocol. This is good progress, although there has been limited opportunity for the home to demonstrate its new key working record system, so it will require further evaluation at the next full inspection.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered for up to five children and young people, irrespective of gender, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home's stated remit is to take short-term and emergency admissions. There is one longer-term resident who is in the process of moving into independence. The responsible individual has agreed to a temporary restriction to four young people until works to the home have been completed.

The home has experience in providing accommodation for unaccompanied asylum seekers. It forms part of this local authority's response to the recent national initiative to help young people who have been in a temporary camp in France for a substantial period of time.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring that there are sufficient permanent staff on duty to meet the young people's needs; that all staff, including casual staff, receive mandatory training; ensuring that care planning, key working and running logs are kept up to date and are accessible to all staff on duty; and monitoring all aspects of the home including permanent and casual staff training, the registered person must: 13.—(1) enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that— (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;	12/12/2016

(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
33: Employment of staff (4)(b) The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. In particular, ensure that staff, including casual staff, receive regular, effective and well-recorded supervision appropriate to their level of experience (Regulation 33 (4)(b)).	12/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that a record of supervision is kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with Regulation 33 (4)(b) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 61, paragraph 13.3).

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.

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