

Children's homes – monitoring visit

Inspection date	24 April 2015
Unique reference number	SC035439
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Jackie Line

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. This service is registered for up to six young people of either gender, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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
5	In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, the registered person must ensure that if they consider a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans (Regulation 5(c)) specifically in relation to independent return home interviews	25 May 2015
40	ensure HMCI is notified without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40(4)(e)).	25 May 2015

Information about this inspection

The home was outstanding at the full inspection in December 2014, and judged to have sustained effectiveness at the last interim inspection on 17 March 2015.

Concerns have been raised with Ofsted in relation to staff responses to young people missing from home; specifically that there are insufficient staff on duty to search for young people, and staff refuse to check addresses where young people may be located, in order to ensure their safe return.

A monitoring visit was carried out to address these concerns.

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

Summary of findings

This inspection found that there is sufficient staffing in place to respond to the needs of young people. When young people leave the home without permission staff make every effort to locate them and ensure their safe return. Their actions include: following young people to encourage them to return, and if unsuccessful to try and identify where they are going; contacting young people and known associates; liaison with the police to report young people missing; information sharing with relevant parties as required, and collecting young people when their whereabouts become known. There are occasions when staff have to make considered judgements about whether or not it is safe for them to go to potential addresses late at night in search of young people. When it is not safe to do so staff relay information to the police, and ask for their assistance.

The missing from home co-ordinator confirms that staff generally communicate well with the police and raise concerns accordingly. Moreover, she confirms that recently the Registered Manager has been proactive in escalating concerns, and this has led to a placement move for one young person in order to secure their safety and well-being. As a result, it is clear that staff have liaised effectively with partner agencies to review placement suitability in light of increased risks.

Further action is necessary to improve practice in relation independent return home interviews. Where there is a delay, staff must challenge the placing authority to ensure these are carried out in a timely manner. This is to ensure that young people have an opportunity to share information about why they went missing, so this can inform practice and minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

Steps need to be taken to ensure the Registered Manager notifies Ofsted when serious events occur, for example, when there is a concern over a young person's missing behaviour. This is so that all persons with an interest in the safety and welfare of young people are suitably informed, and the regulator can carry out effective monitoring.

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