

SC035687

Hesley Services Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a residential special school that is owned and managed by a private company. It is registered as a children's home and offers care and accommodation for up to 37 children who have learning disabilities and/or learning difficulties, together with complex needs resulting in the children displaying behaviours that may challenge. This home is made up of 16 separate houses.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2018.

At the time of this monitoring visit, there were 26 children and young people living at the home.

Inspection date: 2 March 2021

This monitoring visit

The purpose of this visit was to look at the quality of care provided for the children, the culture within the home and staffing levels, following an anonymous whistle-blowing complaint about staff conduct at the home. Two inspectors were on site for the visit. Documents were reviewed, the manager and staff were interviewed and telephone calls were made to parents and professionals. On the day of the visit, some of the children received visits from their social workers. The inspectors spoke to only two children to avoid further disruption.

The turnover of staff has been high over the last year. The figures provided by the manager show that more staff left the home than were recruited. This raises concerns about the quality of recruitment and induction of staff. Many of the staff recruited have very little or no experience of working with children, particularly those who have learning disabilities. Several staff spoken to said that their initial interview and the subsequent induction process did not fully prepare them for their role of caring for the children, especially as they were only offered one week of shadowing other staff before they took up their role.

The high turnover of staff means that there are always staff who are working towards the relevant residential qualification. This leaves a high number of staff who do not have the necessary experience, qualification and skills. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of care provided for some children.

There have been several allegations and whistle-blowing concerns about staff practice, which have been raised both historically and more recently. These allegations and concerns show a repeated pattern over time of poor practice. The manager takes timely and appropriate action to address each allegation or concern, which includes taking disciplinary action where necessary. However, the same themes and types of allegations and concerns continue to occur. This means that children receive care from a constantly changing staff team, when consistency would better support their needs.

Staff do not receive regular supervision in line with the company's policy. The recording of the supervision sessions is inconsistent across the teams, and is of poor quality.

Likewise, the quality of the minutes of staff and managerial team meetings are of variable quality. Some do not provide a good level of detail of the discussion that took place. There is no identified action plan with timescales, and little evidence of reflective practice. This means that opportunities to challenge practice and formulate solutions to improve are missed.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has had an impact on the ability of staff to take children on the usual variety of activities and trips away from the home. However, staff are not creatively looking at different ways to provide children with new opportunities, while staying in line with the restrictions. A reduction in the number of staff who drive has also reduced the choice of activities for children.

Staff are not evidencing how they are developing children's daily living skills within the home and in the community. This prevents children from being able to prepare to move to their adult provision.

Children live in homes that are adapted for their needs and personalised according to their tastes. Those children who have a consistent core staff team are making good progress in different areas of their development. This includes improvements in their communication and tolerance of others, and improved practical skills. There are fewer physical outbursts and self-injurious behaviours. Attendance and attainment at school are good. One social worker said, 'I am very impressed. You wouldn't believe how much they have progressed in just a year.'

The staff spoken to have a good understanding of the children they care for, and stated that they enjoyed their job and helping with the children's growth and development. They felt supported by their team members and managers. One staff

member summed it up by saying, 'When you work all the time with certain children it is rewarding. I have worked with one boy for two years. It is unbelievable to see the progress, see them build new skills and knowing you helped with that.'

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/11/2019	Full	Good
28/11/2018	Full	Good
12/12/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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, the 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 enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— develop the child's interests and hobbies; participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies. (Regulation 9 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b))	18 April 2021
*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 work as a team where appropriate;	18 April 2021

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; 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)(b)(c)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	
*The registered person must— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction; The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b))	18 April 2021

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards, page 57, paragraph 11.9)

Information about this inspection

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

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC035687

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hesley Services Limited

Registered provider address: Hesley Hall Coach House, Hesley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 9HH

Responsible individual: Susan McLean

Registered manager: Deborah Smith

Inspectors

Sue Hatton, Social Care Inspector
Tina Ruffles, Social Care Inspector

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