

SC036584

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Monitoring visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by Walsall local authority. The home is registered to provide care for up to four children up to the age of 17. Children are likely to have emotional and behavioural needs and may be trauma experienced.

The registered manager has left their position but has not submitted the cancellation form for their registration. A new manager is in post, but an application to register has not yet been received by Ofsted.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection date: 13 April 2022

This monitoring visit

The home was judged inadequate at the last full inspection on 15 and 16 March 2022. As a result of the concerns identified at the full inspection, two compliance notices were issued in relation to regulation 12 and regulation 13 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. In addition, a notice restricting accommodation was issued. Eight requirements and one recommendation were also made.

This visit examined the progress made by the home in meeting the two compliance notices. The inspector found that the compliance notice in relation to regulation 12 had been met. The inspector found that not all steps within the compliance notice in relation to regulation 13 had been met, therefore, this is reissued. In addition, the eight requirements and one recommendation made following the last full inspection are reissued.

The notice restricting accommodation remains in place. This has been adhered to as no children have moved in to the home since the last inspection. There were two children living at the home at the time of this monitoring visit.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the management structure. The registered manager has left and a new manager is in post.

Leaders and the manager have failed to ensure that a clear training plan is in place. Staff have completed refresher training in physical intervention, and have attended sessions on allegations and exploitation. Training gaps identified in the full inspection, for example, in mental health and attachment, have not been addressed. Therefore, staff have not received sufficient training to care for children with these needs.

The manager has not ensured that individual supervision sessions have been provided to staff. Staff have participated in two separate group reflective sessions. This practice is not in line with the home's statement of purpose and has not provided staff with individual opportunities to reflect on their own practice and development. This is a missed opportunity to improve and develop the care that children receive.

The manager has begun to make improvements to the condition of the home. Children have been involved in the changes made to the communal areas. New carpets are planned to be fitted. This helps children to feel valued and proud of their home.

During the inspection, a door in the home was locked unnecessarily, which restricted access to an area of the home. Leaders and the manager were not clear why this had been locked and it was opened during the inspection. This practice raises concerns about unnecessary restrictions placed on children in the home.

There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. However, some learning has taken place around the use of physical interventions. Leaders have completed an analysis of physical interventions and subsequent actions have been identified. Staff have attended a refresher training session for physical intervention. Leaders and managers have made changes to documentation regarding physical intervention, which seeks to encourage professional curiosity. These changes support a change in the management oversight and use of physical intervention.

The manager has updated children's risk assessments and plans as required. Behaviour management plans contain further details for staff and a staff member commented on how helpful these changes had been. The manager has made staff aware of expectations in relation to risk assessments. This ensures that children are cared for by staff who are aware of the strategies in place to support children.

Overall, when concerns arise, staff take appropriate action to safeguard children. For example, when a child was absent without authorisation, staff followed the child's risk assessments and took effective action. There are concerns about a child smoking at the home. The manager and staff have offered support to the child and have sought the expertise of external professionals. However, the approach taken to reduce the risks associated with this are not consistently child centered. This is a missed opportunity to support the child to make positive changes.

Monitoring systems within the home have been improved. There is now greater professional curiosity and scrutiny of the care provided. Through this approach, children's experiences are now considered in more detail.

The communication between the staff team and the manager has improved and there is more clarity around plans for the day. The records show that staff are completing actions, as identified in the risk assessment. As a result, actions are taken to minimise risks posed to children.

The experiences and progress of children are now captured and considered in a number of ways. This includes a children's champion visiting the home and key-work sessions being completed. The manager has oversight of case records. Through these approaches, the experiences of children are understood.

The manager has responded to concerns about punitive practice. These concerns have been discussed with the staff team. When a consequence was given that was deemed to be inappropriate, the manager responded effectively to prevent this from taking place. As a result, there have been no further concerns. The manager's vision is to develop restorative practice at the home. A tool to encourage restorative practice is in place. However, this needs to be embedded into the approach taken by staff.

When a complaint was received, the manager took effective action in response. This included speaking with appropriate professionals and ensuring the children spoke with their social worker. This approach ensured that the safety of the children was prioritised.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2022	Full	Inadequate
23/01/2020	Full	Good
20/11/2018	Full	Good
18/01/2018	Full	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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs; if the registered person considers, or staff 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 (a)(b)(c)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that when there are concerns about other agencies' roles in the transition planning for children, or the need for children's placements at the home to be reviewed or plans put in place by other agencies to support children to remain safely at the home, the registered person pursues this as a matter of urgency.	22 May 2022
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; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.	22 May 2022

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)(i)(ii)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the home environment is clean and sufficiently homely for children. This means that any damaged furniture in the home should be repaired.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding; understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(iii)(ix)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated.	22 May 2022

The registered person must ensure that staff have an understanding of children's past traumatic experiences and any additional needs they may have, and that this understanding is used to support children with their behaviour in a nurturing and non-punitive way.	
*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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(c)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. The manager must ensure that a clear training plan is in place. Managers should ensure that staff receive relevant training to meet the specific needs of children living at the home, including in attachment/therapeutic care, life-story work, behaviour management, and understanding children's mental health needs. The manager should also ensure that staff receive regular supervision in line with the home's policies and statement of purpose.	22 May 2022
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 at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended	22 May 2022

that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically related to the registered person ensuring that children's transitions in to and out of the home are carefully planned and that the needs of all children are properly considered when children are matched to the home.	
The registered person must ensure that— any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises— is necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 21 (c)(ii)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that children have access to all areas of the home, and that if any areas of the home are not made available to children this is only when absolutely necessary to safeguard their immediate welfare, and that it is used as a last resort and there is a clear rationale for this.	22 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). The requirements are that; the individual is of integrity and good character;	22 May 2022

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that verification of reasons for leaving all previous employment where a staff member has worked with children or vulnerable adults previously is sought, and that full employment history dates are gained and verified, as part of recruitment checks.	
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;	22 May 2022

within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that someone independent of the restraint completes the debrief with children and with the staff members involved in any restraints afterwards, and that debriefs are completed with staff after restraints and that these are recorded.	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (Regulation 46 (1)) This requirement was issued at the last inspection and is restated. This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that the location risk assessment fully considers the risks that may be posed from neighbours in the area or disputes that may have occurred before.	22 May 2022

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendation

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) The plan should detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing

structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose; detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications); detail the process for managing and improving poor performance; detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4) (b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', paragraph 10.8, page 53)

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: SC036584

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1TP

Responsible individual: Jivan Sembi

Registered manager: Michaela Adamson

Inspector

Melanie Griffin, Social Care Inspector

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