

SC037657

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for three children who have social and/or emotional needs.

The registered manager has been registered since March 2017. However, in the absence of the registered manager, an interim manager has been appointed and she is in the process of applying to register with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 7 January 2020

This monitoring visit

Serious shortfalls were found in safeguarding practice and leadership and management during a monitoring visit undertaken on 26 November 2019. As a result, Ofsted issued two compliance notices in relation to regulation 12, the protection of children standard, and regulation 13, the leadership and management standard. Additionally, a notice restricting accommodation at the home was issued under the Care Standards Act 2000.

A further monitoring visit was undertaken on 7 January 2020, to assess the actions taken by the provider to comply with the notices. During this visit, the inspector found that the provider had not taken sufficient action to comply with the notices. As a result, notices under regulation 12, and regulation 13 have been repeated. Furthermore, the notice restricting accommodation at the home will remain in place.

Due to the restriction of accommodation notice, no impact risk assessments had been completed, so this element of the notice was not assessed at this visit. Nevertheless, children's individual risk assessments and risk management plans continue to be inadequate.

The children's risk assessments and risk management plans had not been kept updated and they omitted important information, such as effective strategies for

managing the children's mobile phone use. Consequently, children's mobile phone use is not being rigorously assessed, monitored or managed by the staff team.

The staff have not consistently followed the children's risk management plans. For example, they have not undertaken regular direct work on keeping safe with the children. Consequently, children are not being supported to understand their vulnerabilities and they have continued to place themselves at risk.

The staff did not report a potential child sexual exploitation concern to all relevant professionals in a timely way, in particular to the police. This caused a delay in getting the matter investigated by the police, which potentially exposed the child, and possibly other children, to further harm.

The staff's inconsistent response to missing-from-home incidents is compromising the children's welfare and safety. While some staff have acted swiftly to locate children when they do not return home, others have not. Some staff have a poor understanding of their roles, responsibilities and the home's procedures when children go missing from the home.

The children are still not benefiting from consistent routines, boundaries and guidance. How staff care for and support children continues to be variable. For example, staff's response when children refuse to get up for school is inconsistent.

The day-to-day care provided to children is not arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe. For example, the staff do not regularly monitor the children's mobile phone use or undertake sufficient checks on addresses where the children visit, to ensure that they are suitable and safe.

Poor management oversight and ineffective monitoring and review systems have undermined the home's improvement journey. The recommendations raised during the monthly independent monitoring visits have not been actioned to ensure continuous improvements in the home.

On a positive note, the provider has taken steps to strengthen the leadership of the home. Since the last monitoring visit, a new manager has been appointed and her employment commenced on 6 Jan 2020. Due to the short period of time that she has been in post, the impact of this development has yet to be tested.

The redeployment of staff from other homes, coupled with greater consideration to gender balance when arranging staff rotas, has increased the presence of female staff within the home. Furthermore, the children have already started to develop positive relationships with some of the new staff and they confirmed that they are happy with the staff changes. The employment of waking night staff has improved children's welfare and also their safety.

Following the last monitoring visit, a child has moved on from the home. The

reduction in the number of children living at the home has had a positive impact on the children's safety. There has been a significant decrease in the children's risk-taking and disruptive behaviour. As a result, the children are more settled, which in turn has made the home a safer environment.

The manager and responsible individual acknowledge that inconsistencies in the staff team's practice continue. They have identified the weaknesses within the team and there is a plan in place to address these. However, the newly appointed manager has not had sufficient time to consolidate the new team and implement the necessary changes to strengthen team working.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/04/2019	Full	Good
19/04/2018	Full	Good
24/05/2017	Full	Good
07/02/2017	Interim	Declined in 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, 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 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. (Regulation 11 (1))	16/02/2020
* 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— (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	16/02/2020
* 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	16/02/2020

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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(2)(a)(b)(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 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 that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(2)(a))	16/02/2020

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: SC037657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Children's Services, Huyton Municipal Buildings, 6th Floor, Huyton, Knowsley, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Ruth France

Registered manager: James De Turberville – currently absent from post

Inspector

Marina Tully, social care inspector

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