

SC037762

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a local authority and, in accordance with its statement of purpose, provides care for children who may have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The maximum number of children who can live at the home at any time is five.

The home has been without a registered manager since 15 May 2022.

Inspection date: 8 August 2022

This monitoring visit

On 29 July 2022, Ofsted was notified of a serious safeguarding event when two unauthorised visitors entered the home and stayed the night in two of the children's bedrooms. The purpose of this monitoring visit was to explore the actions taken by leaders, for Ofsted to be satisfied that all relevant information had been shared with safeguarding professionals, and to be clear on the day-to-day managerial arrangements of the home.

Two visitors known to the children entered the home and stayed overnight without authorisation or staff noticing them in the children's bedrooms. These unauthorised visitors went undetected by waking night staff, day staff, managers and the home's independent visitor for a period of 19 hours in total.

The unauthorised visitors entered the home through the laundry room door. The alarm on this door was inactive and this had not been noticed by staff or managers. This meant that the unauthorised visitors were able to enter the home without the waking night staff being alerted. Since the incident, the alarm has been repaired and a home security doorbell camera purchased to mitigate a blind spot from a non-working camera. The manager now undertakes a daily walk around of the building to ensure security measures are in good repair to reduce the likelihood of another incident of this nature.

A review of relevant records and interviews with the manager, staff and children confirm that the staff did see the children throughout the day, although their bedrooms were not checked. The staff supported one child to make their normal lunch and spent time talking to both the children about their feelings and plans for the day. Another child living in the home was checked on regularly in their bedroom, in accordance with their care plan.

Once aware, the manager notified the relevant safeguarding professionals within policy timeframes. The allocated social workers were also notified, and both social workers were able to see and speak to the children the following day. The children have made no disclosures of harm towards them by the unauthorised visitors during this unsupervised time.

The manager has completed fact-finding interviews with the staff and has shared this with senior leaders. Senior leaders plan to use this information to inform them if any further investigations are needed. In the interim, all staff are taking part in safeguarding refresher training, including sessions on professional curiosity. This is a proactive move to address any potential gaps in staff knowledge while an investigation takes place.

The children's risk assessments have been updated following this incident. The new guidance includes the necessary strategies for staff to follow to help to reduce the probability of this happening again. Additional measures such as visually checking the children twice daily when in their bedrooms have been introduced. The children informed the inspector that staff do keep them safe and check in with them regularly.

The notification sent to Ofsted was timely and included the necessary information regarding the incident. However, it also contained statements made before the involvement of relevant professionals and a proper investigation being carried out. This has the potential to hinder safe working practices and responses by regulators.

The current interim manager has submitted his application to register with Ofsted. However, he plans to withdraw this as his contract with the local authority nears its end. Senior leaders are actively recruiting for a permanent manager. In the interim, they plan for the residential service manager to step into this role. Senior leaders say the residential service manager will apply to register with Ofsted until a permanent manager can be recruited.

Ofsted was not notified when the responsible individual for this home left the local authority. Senior leaders intend the deputy director of children's services to undertake this role. The home's certification of registration is not displayed in the home due to the details being incorrect. Senior leaders assured the inspector that the relevant information will be submitted to Ofsted following this inspection.

The requirements and recommendations made at the full inspection in May 2022 were not reviewed as part of this visit and are therefore repeated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/05/2022	Full	Good
27/04/2021	Full	Good
11/03/2020	Full	Inadequate
03/01/2019	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. (Regulation 5 (a)) In particular, ensure that the placing authority is consulted about any changes to a child's care plan.	30 September 2022
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— 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. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(f)) In particular, ensure that the staff follow children's care plans and ensure they have clear guidance with regard to when the police should be called to support them.	30 September 2022
The registered person must ensure that all employees— receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	30 September 2022

The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any [other] incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e)) In particular, the registered person must not conclude investigations into serious safeguarding concerns until the relevant professionals and investigations have been completed following the correct processes.	30 September 2022
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Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risk to the child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for the child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and the placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5). Specifically, in relation to ensuring that all risk assessment and emergency safety plans are kept up to date.
- 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', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

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: SC037762

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Portsmouth City Council

Registered provider address: Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA

Responsible individual: Post vacant

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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