Children's homes - monitoring

Inspection date	**21/10/2015**
Unique reference number	**SC038435**
Type of inspection	**Monitoring**
Provision subtype	**Residential special school**
Registered person	**Sunfield Children’s Homes Limited**

Responsible individual	**Caroline Bell**
Registered manager	**Mark Brocklebank**
Inspectors	**Dawn Bennett** **Pete Hylton** **Christy Wannop**

This monitoring visit

The purpose of this monitoring visit was to investigate concerns raised by two local authorities and the parents of one young person.

Ofsted found that there has been no regulatory breaches with regard to the concerns raised by the parents on this visit.

The concerns raised by two local authorities relate to a behaviour management strategy of seclusion where a member of staff holds a door closed from outside a room. Preventing the young person from leaving that room.

The service's senior management team have reviewed each individual young person's behaviour management plan, risk assessment and incidents. They identified six young people where seclusion with door holding was being used.

For two young people this strategy is no longer used.

The senior management team and local authorities have met to discuss the needs of the remaining four young people. There are strategies in place to reduce, and where possible stop, the use of door holding. There are also plans in place over the next three months for three young people to move onto alternative placements. Shortly after the monitoring visit one of the three young people left.

This monitoring visit focused on the use of seclusion with door holding as a behaviour management strategy for those four young people.

The visit identified that there have been two breaches of regulations where requirements were set at the last full inspection and have still not met. These requirements have been repeated in this report.

Risk assessments are still not robust. They contain out of date information which is not in line with updated behaviour management plans. Actions to address risks are vague and not always related to the risk. They do not give staff clear specific guidance on how to manage incidents of extreme challenging behaviour. For example, there is no clear guidance that describes when staff would escalate from the use of physical intervention, to the use of seclusion, to then holding a door. There is also no clear guidance for how long a door should be held for. Risk assessments do not contain information that is helpful to staff and keeps young people safe.

Records of incidents of behaviour management continue to be of an inconsistent quality. The present format of the report is difficult to read and gather information from. One local authority has requested staff complete their own reporting format to make it easier for them to track and monitor incidents. Records do not state the behaviours leading up to staff making a decision to use a behaviour management strategy. They do not detail the length of time a strategy has been used. It is sometimes difficult to see the location where the incident has taken place. There is a lack of accurate useful information contained in these reports. This makes it difficult for managers and placing authorities to monitor the quality of staff practice in managing challenging behaviour to ensure is it not punitive or abusive.

This monitoring visit has also set a further two requirements and one recommendation.

Some young people’s needs are not being met in line with their local authority plan by this service. Staff have only been able to manage some extreme and dangerous challenging behaviour because managers have allowed door holding techniques to be used. This has inappropriately sustained some young people’s placements. The responsible individual acknowledges that in hindsight the senior management team should have reassessed young people’s needs rather than use this strategy.

Managers and staff are not sharing information on serious behavioural incidents effectively with young people’s local authorities. For example, there has been serious delays in information being sent to local authorities. This has meant social workers are unaware of patterns of incidents and the strategies used to manage them. This meant the behaviour management strategy of seclusion with door holding was introduced without the knowledge of the social worker. Weekly summaries sent to social workers are not always accurate and do not cross reference to the home’s records. Social workers have been told there have been no incidents of physical intervention when there have been. This lack of partnership work means local authorities are unable to accurately monitor if the home is providing care in line agreed plans.

The behaviour management strategy is not robust. It does not inform staff that the only management strategies that should be used for each individual young person are those detailed in their education, health and care plan, risk assessment and behaviour management plan. The definition of restriction of liberty and seclusion is vague. Senior management have reviewed the policy but it still does not give staff clear systems and definitions to follow when supporting young people with challenging behaviour. It is not clear to staff what behaviour management strategies are appropriate to use and this puts young people at risk.

The senior management team continue to review practice and work with professionals and partnership agencies to reduce and stop the use of this behaviour strategy. This is an on-going piece of work. They have a plan with clear timescales to ensure all young people are appropriately placed and staff are appropriately trained and equipped to meet their needs.

Information about this children's home

This service is a children’s home registered with Ofsted. It is also a residential special school registered with the Department of Education. It is run by a charity. It provides a service to boys and girls aged 6 to 19 years with severe and complex learning difficulties and behavioural needs. It offers flexible placements of 38 to 52 weeks a year for up to 61 young people. 7 of these placements are for short breaks for current students who receive days or 38 week placements. There are 12 homes within the grounds of the school. Each house is different in design, the number of young people it can accommodate and the size of the staff team.

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.

Requirement	Due date
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard 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 (2) (a) 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	30/11/2015
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 all the points listed in Regulation 35 (3). This specifically relates to ensuring a record of all incidents, updates to records after investigations, and recording timescales for restrictive strategies. (Regulation 35 (3))	30/11/2015
The registered person must ensure children are admitted to the home only if their needs are in 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. This specifically relates to the home being able to manage young people's challenging behaviour without using seclusion with door holding strategies. (Regulation 14 (2)(a))	29/01/2016
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met: In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and	30/11/2015

must ensure that staff – (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans. This specifically relates to sharing actuate information on significant behavioural incidents in a timely manner.	

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

The registered manager must ensure the behaviour management policy covers 9.41 to 9.61 of the quality standards.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the home since their last Ofsted inspection.

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

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