

SC047483

Mulberry House Care Homes Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It offers long-term care and accommodation for two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 10 September 2018

This monitoring visit

This monitoring inspection took place due to Ofsted receiving concerns about significant incidents occurring at the home. These included:

- Children climbing on the roof of the home.
- Children running into the busy main road next to the home.
- Children assaulting staff and the police being called to the home.
- Failures to effectively manage the behaviour of children.
- A child sleeping in the lounge of the home.

The inspector arrived at the home and a child was asleep on the lounge floor. This is a wholly inappropriate situation as the child is not afforded any dignity or privacy. Staff were observed, throughout the morning, making various attempts to wake the child and encourage them into a more suitable sleeping location. These attempts were not successful. There are no routines, boundaries or expectations in place for attendance at school or other positive activity. This has the potential to affect the educational achievement of children.

There is widespread failure to ensure that children are safe and that their welfare is promoted. Risk management is poor and there have been dangerous incidents at the home. These include a child having a knife on their person, various breakages to the home's equipment, significant damage to children's bedrooms and children being able to climb on to the roof of the home.

Staffing has been increased to meet the needs of children in the home. This has not afforded children with any stability or continuity. For example, since 20 August 2018, 19 different adults have worked at the home. These include persons from the organisation's other homes, bank staff and agency staff. Where agency staff are used, their recruitment checks are not always completed as required. This means that there is the potential for unsuitable adults to work in the home.

The home remains without a registered manager. There have been delays to the acting manager applying to register with Ofsted. The manager confirmed to the inspector that a fully detailed application will shortly be submitted. However, the home has lacked the oversight from a person who has been assessed as competent by the regulatory body.

In addition to being at risk from poor management of behaviour, children are also at risk of poor health. This is because medication, where prescribed, is not given to children. A child has lived at the home for three weeks and has not been given any of their prescribed medication. The inspector was told that there were no medication records in the home for this child. Furthermore, despite being at the home for three weeks, a child is still without access to any health services. The placement matching of this child was also flawed. Despite the potential risks being clearly identified in referral paperwork, the home's management failed to fully consider the potential impact on the home and the other child. This has contributed to the current situation at the home. There have been avoidable dangerous situations which in turn have significantly compromised the quality of care in the home.

The home is not maintained appropriately. There is widespread damage and concern:

- A child's bedroom door is significantly damaged and is held together by pieces of wood. It is also loosely affixed to the door frame and the child's carpet is not fitted correctly.
- Another child's bedroom has ripped wallpaper and the floor is covered in clothes and other belongings.
- The children's bathroom window is missing a pane of glass. This has previously been smashed during an incident. Fragments of loose broken glass remain in the window frame and pose a potential risk to children.
- The staff sleep in room is not lockable due to damage from the children. Staff use several bolts and a chain to secure the door from the inside of the room.
- There are no fire extinguishers around the home. These are all located in the office due to them being previously used by children in an attempt to break windows. This represents a potential fire risk as firefighting equipment is not immediately accessible. Ofsted have notified the local fire and rescue service of these concerns.

Staff training is poor. Not all staff are trained in the home's chosen method of physical restraint, safeguarding, first aid or fire safety. These critical areas of

practice mean that staff lack the basic skills to ensure that children are safe. The lack of appropriately trained staff with regards to restraint has contributed to the incidents in the home. The acting manager told the inspector that staff are reluctant to restrain as they are not trained, and some staff are intimidated by the children. As a result, the staff providing care are neither competent nor effective.

The management of the home is wholly ineffective. Managers have made various attempts to improve safety. None of these measures have worked and the acting manager confirmed to the inspector that the children are not safe. There has been a significant failure on the part of the organisation carrying on the home to ensure that the safety of children is promoted. The inspector was informed that a child's placing authority has been told that one of the home's children needs to move by 12 September 2018. However, there is insufficient staffing in place for the remainder of the week should the placing authority not find a suitable placement for the child.

Ofsted convened an urgent case review during the inspection. The decision was made to suspend the registration of this children's home due to the significant concerns. Placing authorities were immediately notified of this decision and the inspector ensured that the responsible individual and acting manager were similarly notified of this decision. In addition to this action, there are a number of regulatory requirements made as a result of this inspection.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2018	Interim	Not judged
15/05/2017	Interim	Not judged
13/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/07/2016	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
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1) (2) (a) (viii))	12/10/2018
The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner. (Regulation 10 (1) (a) (2) (b))	12/10/2018
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 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. (Regulation 12 (1) (2) (a) (i))	12/10/2018
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 the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and	12/10/2018

maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	
(Regulation 12 (1) (2) (d))	
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; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	12/10/2018
(Regulation 13 (1) (a) (b) (2) (c) (e) (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.	12/10/2018
(Regulation 14 (1) (a) (b))	
The registered person must ensure that the privacy of children is appropriately protected.	12/10/2018
(Regulation 21 (a))	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.	12/10/2018
(Regulation 23 (1) (2) (c))	
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home.	12/10/2018
(Regulation 25 (2) (b))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment	12/10/2018

procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.

The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

(Regulation 32 (1) (3) (d))

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: SC047483

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Mulberry House Care Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Tollgate Business Centre, Tollgate Drive, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 3HS

Responsible individual: Karen Ingle

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Pete Hylton, social care inspector

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