

Children's homes – monitoring visit

Inspection date	10 September 2015
Unique reference number	SC052744
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Information about this children's home

This service provides residential accommodation for up to five young people with a learning disability. The home is owned by a private company who enlist the support of a clinical psychologist to support them with their care practice.

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.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
13	The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard, in particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to- (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; d) ensure the home has sufficient staff to provide care for the child; e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child.	28/11/15

Recommendations

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

- The registered person must ensure that the children's home does not routinely deprive a child of their liberty whilst maintaining all young people's safety. This specifically relates to the use of the Magna lock which prevents staff and young people from leaving the home without authorisation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 50, paragraph 9.63)
- The registered person shall ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. This specifically relates to ensuring the controlled medication log is fully complete. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to investigate third party concerns which were raised directly with Ofsted. These related to how well the home safeguards young people, supports and promotes positive behaviours and staffing levels and qualifications.

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

Summary of findings

This inspection found one breach of regulation relating to staffing levels, their qualifications and skills and continuity of care. Two good practice recommendations were also made. These relate to record keeping and the routine use of external locks to restrict young people exiting the building.

The home does not have a sufficient number of staff to deliver the care and support for young people as outlined in its Statement of Purpose. The current Statement of Purpose identifies there will be three members of staff in the home during the evenings and at night. On 12 occasions since the last full inspection there have only been two members of staff on duty at key times. This has on a number of occasions included an over reliance on the use of agency staff who provide additional support for a small permanent staff team. This reliance on agency staff means that young people are frequently cared for by staff who do not fully understand their needs. Also, this constant change of face inhibits young people from developing positive relationships and attachments with staff who they get to know and who know them.

The majority of staff have not been given the opportunity to develop the right skills to enable them to care for young people with a range of complex needs such as autism. This is because they have not been suitably trained in this area. Also, a number of staff have yet to complete mandatory training, including first aid and medication management. This limits their ability to meet the known and emerging needs of the young people in their care.

Current care practice, as identified within the homes' Statement of Purpose, includes the use of a fob activated lock on the front door. This means all young people rely on staff to facilitate their entry and exit to the building. While this is an appropriate risk management process for some young people, it is not for others. This institutional and generic approach to risk management does not contextualise and consider young people's individual ability and potentially restricts their liberty.

Systems for the management and administration of medication are generally good. However, administration records for controlled medication were found to be incomplete for one young person.

A new manager was appointed to this home in August 2015. She is suitably experienced and is in the process of applying to be registered with Ofsted. The manager has a good understanding of the shortfalls identified at this visit and those arising from the previous inspection in July 2014. An audit and review of care practice has been undertaken prior to this visit. This audit has recognised many of the shortfalls identified during this visit and plans are in place to address these.

However, these plans have yet to come to fruition before their effectiveness can be measured.

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