

Children's homes – Monitoring visit

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Heather Chaplin

This monitoring visit

On 28 June and 13 September 2016, Ofsted inspectors completed full inspections of the children's home. The home was rated inadequate, and compliance notices were issued on both occasions. At the monitoring visit on 28 July 2016, the two compliance notices issued after the full inspection on 28 June 2016 were judged to have been met.

The present monitoring visit is to evaluate progress against the second compliance notice, which was issued on 16 September 2016. This notice was issued with regard to continuing shortfalls in leadership and management, specifically with regard to staffing levels. The notice specified that in order to meet the leadership and management standard, the home must have sufficient staff to provide care for each child, and to ensure that the home provides continuity of care for each child.

The previous inspector had found that on four separate occasions between 28 August and 5 September 2016, there were only two staff on duty. The shifts in question required three members of staff, because one of the young people with particularly complex needs required two adults to support them. This meant that the other two young people in the home at the time had no staff specifically allocated to them.

On 2 September 2016, following a number of serious incidents, the local authority made the decision to close the home to young people for the time being. The home remains registered and has been identified as a possible resource to accept unaccompanied young people who are seeking asylum in this country.

The team manager explained that the previous staff team members are now working in other homes. She has established a group of staff who are on standby in case they are needed quickly to care for young people who may arrive at the home, as this may happen without a great deal of warning.

The inspector was told that there is provision for a minimum of two staff on each shift, in addition to the acting manager, with two sleeping in at night. If additional staff are needed, the team manager is confident that they can be found. She said that there is a tremendous willingness and commitment to helping the young asylum seekers, and that many of her colleagues are keen to help.

At present, these plans, although positive, are hypothetical because there are no children or young people at the home at the moment. This means that it has not been possible to evaluate progress against the compliance notice. The relevant requirement has therefore been repeated.

In view of the fact that the home may be asked to accommodate young people at any time, and at short notice, the quality of the environment was also inspected.

The home has undergone redecoration and refurbishment since the previous inspection. There are five comfortable, welcoming bedrooms. The landing carpet has been replaced, and the home has been cleaned and refreshed. There are pictures on the walls, and the managers plan to add to the home's decoration to provide some culturally-appropriate items, once the racial and ethnic background

of the asylum seekers is known. Discussion took place about how the young people themselves could be involved in shopping for these items.

The layout of the lounge and reception area is still under review. The home's managers have further plans for other parts of the home, including a detached annexe, to provide flexible living space that meets the young people's needs.

Discussion took place about the young people's showers. Although it is very positive that the young people have en-suite shower rooms, the fixtures and fittings are outdated and institutional. A recommendation has been made to refurbish the showers to provide efficient, modern facilities.

The inspector judges that the home is ready to accept children and young people, subject to sufficient staff being available at the time to run the service safely.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people, irrespective of gender, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There are currently no children or young people living at the home.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child, and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child. (Regulation 13 (2) (d) (e)).	31/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home seeks as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, ensure that the young people's showers are refurbished and updated to make them more efficient and domestic in style. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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.

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