

Children's homes - monitoring

Inspection date	24/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Clare Davies

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was conducted following an interim inspection on 25 January 2016 where the judgement was that this home had declined in its effectiveness. Two compliance notices were issued as a result of this judgement. The compliance notices relate to the following:

Regulation 12: The protection of children standard:

Young people were not protected from harm. Behaviour management was poor with staff unclear on what strategies to use to promote positive behaviour. Young people's behaviour was regularly out of control, requiring police assistance. The manager was not operating to an agreed protocol with the local police. Risk assessments did not address all known risks. Multi-agency meetings to review suitability of placements lacked action planning and were without time scales to avoid delay.

Regulation 13: The leadership and management standard:

The manager failed to adequately monitor and audit the home. The independent visitor did not review records with sufficient scrutiny and challenge. The manager did not provide effective leadership, failing to respond to staff requests for guidance and direction in behaviour management. Team meetings lacked direction and decision making, leaving staff unclear of their practice. A lack of consistency was found in relation to; record keeping, communication and attendance at professional meetings. Young people were not provided with full time education. Health needs of young people were not met in relation to healthy eating.

During this monitoring visit the inspector had discussions with young people, met with members of staff, met with the registered manager, met with a team manager, communicated with a social worker and scrutinised records.

Significant improvements have been made to ensure that the young people feel safe living in this home. The manager and staff have a clearer understanding on how to support young people with any disruptive behaviour and there is a greater emphasis on praise and rewards. Since the interim inspection there has not been any significant incidents causing concern and physical intervention has not been used.

There has been some transition out of the home, all young people currently in placement receive care and protection to meet their needs. Young people say 'it is much calmer here now' and as a result they are content in this placement and value it more as their home. For example there has been a significant reduction in damage to the home. Furniture, fixtures and fittings have been replaced after being damaged. Young people have been involved in shopping for new items for their bedrooms and other areas of the home. This encourages them to respect

their environment.

Two team meetings have provided staff with the opportunity to discuss and agree strategies to promote consistent and effective parenting. This has involved staff devising reward systems with young people to provide incentives to support them in making positive choices in their behaviour. The manager has provided the team with guidance on their roles and responsibilities. This direction has empowered key-workers to be actively more involved in the care planning and decision making of the young people they support.

A review of risk assessments has prompted some changes to ensure that these documents are relevant to each individual. The assessment of group compatibility requires updating as it still includes the young people who have since moved from this home. The manager is clear that any referrals for a placement at this home require full and comprehensive information to assess the risks posed to the individual, and the residential group. The manager reports that she will review the suitability of placements and initiate multi-agency meetings if there are difficulties.

The manager invited the local police officer to visit the home. Following this, the staff report that they now have clarity on when to call for police assistance. The police have been invited to attend occasional team meetings and to call in socially to chat with the young people. In addition, a fire officer came to talk with young people about the dangers of smoke and fire. There are plans to further support young people in keeping themselves, and others, safe by arranging online training in first aid and fire safety.

The manager has received a lot of support from her line manager to address the failings identified at the interim inspection. The manager has recognised the benefit of collaborating with her peers and social care professionals to support her role and avoid operating in isolation. The local authority has invited an 'outstanding' provider to share best practice ideas with the managers of all the homes within the local authority.

The manager has strengthened her focus on monitoring care practices in the home. The quality of monthly reporting has improved each month since December. The report for February 2016 will include positive feedback from young people, their parents, social workers and other professionals as a result of a questionnaire. The manager is now working towards a six month review report that is required to be submitted to Ofsted.

Monitoring by an independent person has occurred once since the interim inspection though the report is not yet available. The manager and the local authority report that they have addressed with the independent person the need for scrutiny and challenge.

The management team at this home has been strengthened through the secondment of two part time assistant managers from other homes. This

temporary arrangement will provide support to the manager, and the team, to fully implement changes to policies and practice. This home now needs a period of stability to embed the revised procedures.

The manager is providing leadership through an increase in team meetings and engagement with staff about the direction of the home. A team day is planned for 14 March 2016 with visiting speakers on behaviour management and, food and nutrition. Additional training events are programmed for care planning, understanding neglect, trauma in childhood, and record keeping.

Staff have been issued with guidance on expectations for when they attend a professionals meeting and how to report back to the team. This will promote consistency in practice and improve communication. Social workers report that communication is good and how it has improved since the interim inspection.

Young people are now receiving more than two hours of education a day. Arrangements have ensured that young people can access full time education. When young people are not in education, staff are becoming more proactive to ensure that they have structure and learning opportunities to their day. Those who are over 16 years of age are supported in training and learning. Staff encourage young people to seek work experience and maintain a CV for circulation to prospective employers.

The menus reflect home cooked meals and now have an alternative lighter option. A dietician is attending the team day on 14 March to provide advice and guidance on promoting healthy eating.

This monitoring visit has identified that progress has been made in all areas stipulated in the compliance notices served. The compliance notices have been lifted. Inspectors will review the judgement at the next full inspection.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people of either sex, with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by the local authority.

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
None	

Recommendations

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

None

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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