

SC064472

Willows (Devon) Ltd

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a small organisation and is registered to care for up to four children. They provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties

The previous registered manager left the home in August 2020. An acting manager has since been in post and applied to be registered with Ofsted.

Inspection date: 25 November 2020

This monitoring visit

An on-site visit was undertaken to address specific concerns received by Ofsted. The concerns relate to the safeguarding of four children between the ages of 13 and 15 years of age, and the leadership and management of the home.

During the visit serious weaknesses were identified in the management of the home that placed the children at significant risk of harm. As a result of this, a notice to suspend the home's registration has been served.

Leaders and managers failed to evaluate sufficiently the impact of a child moving into the home. As a result, the children living in the home are not well matched. One child was recently admitted into the home despite the home being unsettled and staff members expressing their concerns. The manager failed to record and respond to these concerns. The inspector spoke with all the children in the home. They all spoke negatively of how they are cared for and what it is like to live in the home. One child said the staff did not understand her mental health needs. All the children presented as angry and confused.

Children are at serious risk of harm. Leaders and managers failed to protect two children from engaging in a potentially dangerous sexually exploitative

relationship. Concerns that these two children may be emotionally harmed and/or seriously or even fatally injured have not been sufficiently addressed or explored by leaders and managers. The manager failed to share relevant information with one of the children's social workers. The manager failed to follow child protection reporting processes and did not refer this information to the multi-agency safeguarding hub. Resulting in a delay to respond by the local authorities and the two children continuing to remain at risk.

One child, on more than one occasion, has been repeatedly threatened, intimidated and bullied by the three other children living in the home. Staff have failed to intervene successfully to prevent these incidents from occurring. This is despite staff following the child around for her safety and sitting outside her bedroom door throughout the night. For example, during one incident, a child was able to repeatedly bang on her bedroom door for a period of two hours, while verbally abusing her. The child involved informed the inspector and her social worker that she did not feel safe at the children's home.

Staff have been challenged by the behaviours of the children. Several serious incidents have occurred since 21 November 2020. These incidents have resulted in injuries to children and staff and extensive damage to the property. Plant pots, furniture and windows have been broken. These incidents have been lengthy and have at times continued throughout the night.

On more than one occasion police have been called to the home to assist staff with the management of the children's behaviours. As a result, children have been arrested and one child was temporarily moved out of the home to keep her safe and to protect her from the other children.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that children are consistently provided with sufficiently good care, routines or stability. For example, the children are frequently awake throughout the night and sleeping in the day. This means the children's ability to engage in meaningful education and activities is compromised.

Staff have been working long hours and staying awake throughout the night to manage challenging incidents. Staff spoke of the incidents being 'relentless' and 'tiring', and they are worried about 'burning out'. Staff say the manager has failed to consider the impact of repeated 24-hour shifts on their well-being and their ability to provide good enough care for the children.

Leaders and managers have failed to monitor, review and report safeguarding incidents in line with statutory guidance/requirements or in a timely manner. Regulation 44 reports have failed to provide adequate external scrutiny. The manager has failed to challenge this, and there is insufficient evidence of how or if these visits directly inform the development of the home.

Four requirements made at the previous inspection in March 2020 will remain in place. This is because of insufficient evidence to demonstrate they have been met. A further nine requirements are made because of the serious and widespread failings identified during this monitoring visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2020	Full	Good
24/10/2018	Full	Good
20/11/2017	Full	Good
20/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; and make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(2)(b)(ii)(iv)(v)(vi)(ix))	30 April 2020
*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	30 April 2020

promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e)(f)(g)(i)(h))	
*The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. (Regulation 32 (1))	30 April 2020
*Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children’s home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))	30 April 2020
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child’s placing authority effectively in the child’s care, in accordance with the child’s relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (a))	28 February 2021
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—	28 February 2021

understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(ii)(ix))	
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child;	28 February 2021

regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; help each child to understand how the child's privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited; ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(e))	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;	28 February 2021

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))	
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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;	28 February 2021

understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)(e))	
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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each	28 February 2021

child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(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. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within 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; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(e)(i))	28 February 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;	28 February 2021

an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; a child protection enquiry involving a child — is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(d)(i)(ii)(e))	
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4)(a)(b))	28 February 2021

*Requirements continuing from the previous inspection

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: SC064472

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Willows (Devon) Ltd

Registered provider address: Stephen Quay Accountancy, The Granary, Hinton Business Park, Tarrant Hinton, Blandford Forum DT11 8JF

Responsible individual: Jennifer Gould

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

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