

SC486167

South West Childcare Services

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for one child or young person who may have some emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection date: 29 August 2018

This monitoring visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken following an inadequate inspection judgement made at the full inspection.

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that the child in their care is safe. Physical attacks on the staff by the child have increased, leaving some members of staff seriously injured and requiring hospital treatment. Half of the core staff team are either injured or refuse to work in the home. The staff are overwhelmed by the complex care needs of the child and lack the skills and experience to safely manage the child's behaviour.

Consistency of staffing has improved since the full inspection, when 15 different members of staff were working with the child. This has reduced to 9 members of staff. This is an improvement but it is not acceptable. The child has extremely complex care needs. Consistency of staffing and the building of trusting relationships is essential for them to make progress, to feel safe and to reduce their risk-taking behaviours.

Inexperienced and unqualified staff continue to work together on some shifts with the child, due to the unavailability of qualified and experienced members of staff. This is unsafe and unacceptable. The staff have now completed specialist training related to the care needs of the child. The managers are now ensuring that regular supervision is now taking place for staff.

The child continues to frequently go missing from the home. The incidents of going missing are not reducing. The staff lack professional curiosity and vigilance about

where the child is going, what they are doing and who they are with. The staff fail to investigate and refer incidents to safeguarding professionals when the child has been missing and returned home with items such as a bike and a lighter.

The child has also returned home with physical injuries following an alleged assault, has made allegations of a sexual assault and has become involved in a firearms incident while missing. Return home interviews are not always taking place. When they do take place, information gained from the young person is not passed to the manager to inform risk assessments and plans. The staff do not always follow the missing from home procedure, which states that the police should be called when the child is missing for more than 20 minutes. This failure leaves the child at risk. Trends and patterns relating to the child going missing have not been identified and acted upon by the manager.

The staff do not have the information that they need to ensure that they are able to safely and effectively manage the behaviour of the child. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments lack detail and strategies. A reward plan is in place to try to encourage positive behaviour. This plan is not effective as the child has found it too hard to achieve. The staff did not review this plan when it was established that it was not effective in encouraging the child to improve their behaviour.

The home has been extensively damaged by the child. The manager has acted promptly to get the damage repaired, but the home is now very bare and stark, with few homely touches such as pictures, furniture and cushions. On one occasion, the home was so badly damaged that the staff took the child away for the weekend while the damage was repaired. The child was taken by the staff to a very busy holiday camp which they found overwhelming due to their sensory needs. This decision led to distress for the child and damage to the holiday accommodation.

Notice was given to the placing authority on 20 August to end the placement for this child. It is recognised by the leaders and managers that they are unable to keep the child safe and to meet their care needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/07/2018	Full	Inadequate
28/09/2017	Full	Good
15/09/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/04/2016	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
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met 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; and seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. In particular, in relation to arrangements being made for children who go missing to have an independent return home interview on their return. This requirement is also in relation to ensuring effective communication and decision making with the placing authority to ensure a comprehensive understanding of a child's needs prior to any child being admitted to a home. Additionally, it refers to the importance of escalating concerns with the placing authority to ensure that children are supported to be safe and their needs are met once admitted to the home. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d))	21/09/2018
13: The leadership and management standard 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;	21/09/2018

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; and ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. In particular, in relation to: ensuring that the registered manager has sufficient support and time to complete her management responsibilities; ensuring that enough staff are deployed to the care team so that staff from other homes are not constantly required to provide baseline staffing ratios; and ensuring that staff rotas provide at least one experienced member of staff on each shift and not exclusively probationary staff. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))	
14: The care planning standard 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 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; and the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission. In particular, this is in relation to improving practices around the assessment and the admission of children to the home and in taking robust action with the placing authority to address concerns about a child's safety and welfare. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(e)(i)(ii))	21/09/2018
12: The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe	21/09/2018

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 and have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the local authority provides opportunity for children and young people to have independent return home interviews when they have been missing. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child.

Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child’s parents. Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care.

Where a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, such as frequently being absent from the home to meet with inappropriate adults, the registered person, in consultation with the child’s placing authority, should convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the child.

Children missing from home agreed protocols with local authorities should be reviewed regularly and be scrutinised by the local safeguarding children’s board (LSCB) when the above is not happening. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 45, paragraphs 9.23–9.32)

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: SC486167

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Registered provider address: 46 Durnford Street, First Floor Flat, Plymouth,
Devon PL1 3QN

Responsible individual: Angela Glynn

Registered manager: Lauren Young

Inspector(s)

Tina Maddison, social care inspector

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