

## Children's homes - monitoring

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<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Gillian Walters</b>

### **This monitoring visit**

A monitoring visit was conducted on 11 November 2015 in response to a significant increase in Ofsted notifications since the last full inspection on 28 September 2015. The large majority of notifications identified an increased frequency of some young people going missing from the home and an increased police involvement in responding to a number of assaults on staff and damage to property. Other information provided by the home concerning a fire that occurred in July 2015 was also further explored.

The leadership team shared Ofsted's concern that a few young people were repeatedly going missing from the home and were influencing some others in their activities causing them to be less settled in placement. The home was able to demonstrate that they have been working closely with the police and have strengthened arrangements to further promote young people's safety and wellbeing.

The home has been proactive in engaging with placing authorities and the police to review and revise plans for the minority of young people that are heightening concern. The home has acknowledged that despite their efforts they are unable to keep a minority of young people safe due to their repeated absences from the home and their vulnerability to exploitation. As a result, one young person has already been discharged from the home's care and an alternative placement for another is being planned. The home has engaged positively with the young person's placing authority to support them in identifying suitable alternative provision that will provide a crisis intervention approach that will address recent personal issues that have arisen and focus specifically on the risks associated with absences from home.

The home's working protocol and information sharing arrangements have been reviewed and updated to strengthen efforts to track young people when they go missing and ensure their prompt and safe return to the home. Police confirm that good communication exists and that the home is working together with a range of professionals to resolve recent issues. The home has requested regular and frequent meetings with the police to continue to monitor progress and strategically plan for intervention where required. Police officers have been invited to make informal visits to the home to spend time with young people to re-establish a positive rapport and re-inforce concerns surrounding their safety when reported missing.

Staff continue to engage positively with young people on their return to establish why they have run away and identify what further support and assistance can be provided to prevent the likelihood of this happening again. The home has good arrangements in place for providing young people with the opportunity to speak with both with their social worker and an independent person on their return. Staff are promoting young people to have these discussions to ensure any concerns they

may have are quickly identified.

Young people have not raised any specific concerns about staff or the home that would account for those leaving the home with such frequency. They generally speak very highly of staff and the positive support they feel they provide. Young people often express regret for their actions when interviewed on their return; at times indicating that they wanted to see friends and family or were just having fun.

Managers identify that young people have been less motivated to engage with the range of activities available to them so further encouragement is to be given to promote individual interests and personalise opportunities for young people to socialise and have fun. Staff are actively supporting young people to maintain healthy lifestyles. They, including the home's nursing practitioner, encourage young people to learn about the dangers of such as tobacco and alcohol misuse and the impact these can have on their health. The home has also identified an external resource to commission bespoke workshops for those young people identified as being at greater risk of substance misuse that require further support.

Young people continue to reside in a safe and appropriately secure environment. Health and safety audits have been completed and action appropriately taken by staff where identified. The home has reviewed and updated where appropriate their environmental and location risk assessments to ensure that all potential hazards and risks are fully addressed in and around the home. Repairs have taken place to the home's boundary fencing to ensure young people are prevented easy access to the road and the local railway line. Arrangements are also in place for transport police to raise awareness with young people of the real dangers of going near the railway tracks. The home expect a planned visit by the local authority fire safety officer to provide further scrutiny and advice in relation to their fire safety arrangements. These measures are part of the home's commitment to ensuring that young people's safety is appropriately prioritised.

## **Information about this children's home**

This section should outline:

- The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 50 young people of both genders.
- It is a privately owned residential special school which is also registered as a children's home.
- The home provides for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

## **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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