

Children's home – Monitoring visit

Inspection date	17/10/2016
Unique reference number	1236832
Type of inspection	Monitoring
Inspector	Natalie Burton

This monitoring visit

On 5 September 2016, an inspector undertook a full inspection. The overall inspection judgement was of inadequate, following concerns about insufficient action to promote and safeguard children's welfare. The main concerns arising from the visit were: a failure to ensure that all agency staff were sufficiently vetted prior to working at the home; that staff had insufficiently addressed some incidents of bullying, as not all professionals and parents had been informed of incidents; a lack of information and advice regarding the risks of smoking and use of cannabis; a failure to provide children with a daily routine; and insufficient monitoring of the home.

On 17 October 2016, a monitoring visit was undertaken by an inspector. This was to evaluate the progress made in meeting the 10 requirements regarding concerns about the insufficient action to promote and safeguard children's welfare. The visit found that the provider had fully met six of the 10 requirements and made some progress in the short time since the last inspection with regard to the further four requirements.

Children are provided with a daily routine and clear boundaries. This is because the management has provided clear guidelines, structure and expectations to the staff and the children. As a result, children have a healthier daily routine. They are settling at bedtime, waking in time to attend education, and most are attending their educational provisions. For some children, this is significant progress as, prior to living at the home, they had not attended external education for a number of years. Children's self-esteem and confidence improve.

Staff seek children's views through key-work sessions, residents meetings and day-to-day conversations. Children engage with the staff following incidents to reflect on how they managed situations and to gain their view of how staff can further support them. Some children have individual progress plans that they have developed with staff to increase their levels of independence, for example attending education, and developing independence skills through cooking and budgeting. Achievements in these areas increase children's free time and work towards their chosen targets. Children develop resilience, because they are treated with respect and are listened to.

Children are discouraged from smoking cigarettes and misusing cannabis. Management and staff have provided children with information regarding the dangers of smoking and the misuse of cannabis through key-work sessions and residents meetings. In addition, all staff have been provided with clear guidance to address this area. For example, if smoking paraphernalia is noticed in the home, this is removed, and staff are not to smoke on the premises. Further action is planned through a qualified member of staff providing workshops for the children regarding the dangers and risks. This has resulted in the children no longer misuse cannabis, and some have reduced their use of cigarettes and no longer smoke in the house. Therefore, children are encouraged to start developing healthier

lifestyles.

The senior management has conducted a check of the agency's recruitment and implemented a process where all agency staff working at the home have sufficient checks and experience prior to working at the home. Therefore, children are cared for by agency staff who have been suitably vetted.

The management has ensured that all staff are aware of the action to take in the event of a bullying incident. This is because senior management and the organisation's therapists have provided staff with additional training in addressing bullying. This has resulted in a significant reduction in bullying incidents. Where incidents have occurred, records clearly demonstrate through chronologies and regular key-work sessions the actions taken to address any bullying incidents. Therefore, children feel safe, recognise the impact that their actions are having and work towards re-establishing positive relationships with their peers.

The management has made some progress with regard to records held at the home. Changes to the documentation of records of actual hours worked clearly show all permanent staff, agency and management hours.

The management has ensured that all external monitoring reports have been sent to Ofsted in line with regulation. Monitoring reports assist management to improve the quality of care provided to children.

The management has implemented new documentation to demonstrate all action taken, and that professionals and parents are contacted following incidents. This provides a clear chronology of events taken by the staff to safeguard children. While the majority of records evidence the actions and promote positive behaviour, on occasion staff have failed sufficiently to ensure that inappropriate behaviour is addressed or to inform parents of an incident. This fails to ensure that all action is taken to reduce the risk of a recurrence, and that staff consistently enable children to manage their responses to incidents appropriately.

The management has made some progress in regard to improving the quality of care for the children. This is through support by a senior manager within the organisation to provide staff with clear expectations, new recording documentation and guidance regarding improving the quality of care provided at the home. As a result, children are provided with a daily routine. They engage with staff, because staff spend quality time with children. They receive praise and recognition for their achievements, and are supported with individual incentives to reach their agreed targets. Children's relationships with staff and their peers, their self-esteem, confidence and resilience improve. However, due to limited time since the last inspection, internal monitoring within the home lacks an identification of all of the shortfalls within this report to demonstrate the actions that have been taken.

All children's 'missing' incidents have significantly decreased and some children

have had none. This is because children are engaging with the staff, who spend quality time with them to try to engage them in positive activities. On one occasion, when a child left the home without permission and was reported as missing, the records failed to demonstrate clearly all of the actions taken to safeguard the child sufficiently. This is because they failed to detail the action taken by the staff upon becoming aware that the child had left the home and, on the child's return, the significant information about the use of a taxi to leave the home and return. Staff failed to take sufficient action to prevent a recurrence, such as failing to contact the taxi company to identify where the child had been and to put strategies in place to reduce the risk of it happening again with this taxi company.

During the inspection, a further shortfall was identified. The management failed to take sufficient action and to update its risk assessment regarding damage caused to an electronic gate which is used as a delay barrier to children potentially placing themselves at risk, due to the location of the home. While there had been no incidents and the organisation had taken some action to repair the gate, immediate action to consider other alternatives to reduce the risk had not been taken. Moreover, the location risk assessment was not updated to identify this change. The management did take action at the time of the monitoring visit to open and close the gate manually to reduce the potential risk to children.

Despite some of the requirements being repeated, the organisation has taken sufficient action to address the serious concerns identified at the full inspection within a short period of time. Children are making progress, and the quality of care for children has improved. The organisation is committed to making further improvements for children. Ofsted will continue to monitor.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for four young people of either gender aged between 12 and 18 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person is required to ensure that staff— (ii) protect and promote each child's welfare.</p> <p>This is with particular regard to ensuring that placing authorities and, where appropriate, parents are informed of incidents within the home, in order for risks to be robustly identified and action taken to reduce the risk of recurrence.</p>	30/11/2016
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>(2)(a) In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship.</p>	30/11/2016
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>(2) In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure— (b) 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.</p>	31/10/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p>	30/11/2016

<p>(2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p>(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experience of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>The registered manager must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purpose of the children’s home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>This is with particular regard to changes in action taken to reduce the risk to children from the location of the home. (Regulation 46(1))</p>	<p>31/10/2016</p>

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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