

1248979

Little Belsteads Care Home Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to four children who have learning disabilities.

Inspection date: 22 June 2017

This monitoring visit

This home was registered on 2 March 2017. The first child was admitted in May 2017.

Ofsted received information that raised concerns about the practice at the home and the potential impact of those concerns on the children. This monitoring visit took place to evaluate the practice in the home and the children's outcomes and experiences. The monitoring visit identified a number of concerns.

Three children have moved into the home within a period of three weeks. There is a pool of up to seven core staff. Twenty-two agency or bank staff have worked in the home since it opened. Some shifts have more agency or bank staff than permanent staff working with the children. Each child has significant and complex needs. Each child needs close adult supervision and support and some need personal care. The considerable number of staff working with the children at the home does not help the children to become settled or to develop trusting relationships. Two of the children have a staffing ratio of two adults to one child. On at least two occasions, one of the children who needs to be supported by two adults was supervised by one lone worker who was new to the home. This is unsafe practice and places children and staff at risk of significant harm.

The inspector interviewed five members of staff. The members of staff said that they have had mixed experiences regarding the induction that they have received. While some of the staff reported that they had received a helpful induction, others stated that soon after arriving in the home for the first time, they had been caring for the children. For one member of staff this included being left alone with one child who needs to be looked after by two staff. This member of staff stated that she had received no training and had not worked with children who have learning disabilities before. This practice of individuals

caring for vulnerable children when they have no previous relevant experience or qualifications places both the children and staff at risk of significant harm.

Some of the staff have been seriously assaulted by the children. More than one member of staff has been hurt. Incident reports do not go far enough to demonstrate the manager's actions following the evaluation of the incidents. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of the significant incidents at the home. This has prevented Ofsted from having current information about these incidents and the way that they have been managed.

The arrangements for the storage of medication are not strong enough. The medication is stored in more than one place. During the visit, the inspector found that medication that was due to be returned to the pharmacist had been placed in a staff member's locker. Although the medication is locked away, the practice of keeping medication in different places increases the likelihood of human error.

The arrangements for the administration of medication are inadequate. Some of the children receive medication on an 'as and when' basis. One of the children has a medication plan that was due to be reviewed on 6 June 2017. The staff continue to administer medication in accordance with this out-of-date plan. This does not ensure that medication is administered to children in accordance with a current and accurate medical assessment. The registered manager delegated the responsibility for overseeing the system for medication to the deputy manager. The deputy manager has recently resigned from her role. Records show, and staff say, that there is no evidence to reflect how the deputy manager checked the medication system. Lack of effective management oversight of medication administration and storage is of serious concern, particularly when the children have complex health needs.

A number of staff for the home are from a recruitment agency. During this inspection, neither the responsible individual nor the registered manager could provide confirmation of safe recruitment checks for the staff who are supplied by the agency. There was a lack of evidence to show that references are verified. This practice does not ensure that the information written in a reference gives an accurate overview of suitability. This increases the likelihood of unsuitable individuals having access to vulnerable children.

The responsible individual had not made suitable arrangements for the day-to-day management of the home during the registered manager's planned absence. Although, following the monitoring visit, the registered manager cancelled her annual leave plans, the initial arrangements to cover the absence were reliant on a new member of staff for whom safe recruitment checks had not been fully completed. The responsible individual had made arrangements for a new deputy manager to start working at the home on 26 June 2017, despite, as at 22 June 2017, not having a current and relevant reference from the applicant's last employer. This failure to follow safe recruitment processes does not protect children and, in this case, did not provide information to confirm the applicant's suitability to perform day-to-day management tasks and assume management responsibility in the absence of the registered manager.

This visit has raised serious concerns about the care and practice in this home. Consequently, the home is likely to be subject to further enforcement action.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
None		

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
<p>*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.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(e))</p>	14/07/2017
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))</p>	14/07/2017

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the practice at the home.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1248979

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Little Belsteads Care Home Limited

Registered provider address: Little Belsteads, Back Lane, Little Waltham,
Chelmsford CM3 3PP

Responsible individual: Peter Adams

Registered manager: Angela Fairman

Inspector

Rosie Davie, social care inspector

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