

# 1250287

## **Acorn Children's Home (Branston) Limited**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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

This privately-owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to four children and young people who have moved following a breakdown in either their fostering or residential placement, or who are required to live away from home. The registered manager resigned in October 2018. Since then there have been two managers in post. The first applied to be the registered manager but withdrew his application in November 2018. The current manager came into post in February 2019 and there was a delay in him applying to be the registered manager.

**Inspection date:** 23 May 2019

### **This monitoring visit**

Ofsted carried out a full inspection on 14 and 15 May 2019. The home was judged inadequate. Ofsted issued two compliance notices in respect of regulation 32, the safe recruitment of staff, and regulation 13, staff training. This visit was to monitor the provider's compliance with regulation 32, to ensure that the safe recruitment of staff meets regulation.

The review of the recruitment files highlighted significant regulatory shortfalls. Some staff have been able to start work at the home before their criminal record checks have been obtained. The provider has failed to show any evidence that these members of staff have been supervised when they have been with young people. This represents a total failure to safeguard young people in the care of the home.

Recruitment files are disorganised and lack clarity regarding staff members' start dates.

The whole verification process for references is unsafe and fails to explore with referees issues raised in an applicant's application form. For example, the provider has failed to follow up on disclosures made in an applicant's application that indicates they have previously been dismissed and/or been subject to disciplinary procedures. Inspectors found that some members of staff have been able to start

before the provider has verified their references. One member of staff has been employed without a reference being obtained from her most recent employer. Verification of references and interviews do not always explore gaps in employment with applicants or verify the reason why some staff left their previous positions when they have worked with children and/or vulnerable adults. Some references are incomplete with dates and signatures missing. When the provider was asked about these omissions, it was unable to provide an email trail to evidence that these references were authentic.

Operational staff have been allowed to have contact with young people in the home, without suitable safeguarding checks being carried out. For example, one member of staff has indicated that he has four years' experience working with children in residential care. When this was followed up further, it was established that the provider had failed to ascertain the details of this experience prior to appointing the member of staff. Consequently, the provider has not sought verification of the person's experience to help them to determine his suitability to work with children. Another operational manager has changed jobs within the company without evidence of an application or interview process being completed.

The compliance notice in respect of safe recruitment is not met. There is a serious lack of managerial oversight which means that staff are not safely recruited. Consequently, young people are placed at risk of being cared for and are spending time with members of staff who may pose a risk to them.

As a result, Ofsted has issued a notice of suspension of the home with immediate effect from 24 May 2019 for 12 weeks until 16 August 2019. The compliance notice for the safe recruitment of staff has been re-issued.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/07/2018	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
<p>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 requires the registered person to ensure that staff treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(iii))</p> <p>With particular reference to all staff speaking to children appropriately at all times.</p>	01/07/2019
<p>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 requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(v))</p> <p>With particular reference to undertaking key work with a young person who experienced an abusive relationship with a staff member.</p>	01/07/2019
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff 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. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(2)(a)(vi)).</p> <p>With particular reference to young people who have spent time alone away from the home with any employee of the company who is not a member of the care staff.</p>	01/07/2019
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In</p>	01/07/2019

<p>particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(v))</p> <p>With particular reference to maintaining a professional curiosity about any situation where children could potentially be placed at risk of harm by people they are associating with.</p>	
<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. In particular, the standard 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. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)((2)( a)).</p>	01/07/2019
<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. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)((2)(c)) *</p> <p>In particular that staff are trained in autism, safeguarding and first aid.</p>	01/07/2019
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and In particular, the standard 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. (Regulation :14 (1)(a)(2)(a))</p>	01/07/2019
<p>The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home. (Regulation 27(1)(a ))</p>	01/07/2019
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home</p>	01/07/2019

<p>after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. (Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b) (4) (a)(b) (5)(a)(b))</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(3)(d)) *</p>	<p>22/05/2019</p>

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards page 15, paragraph 3.7)

With particular reference to the decoration and furnishing of the entrance hall and stairway of the home.

## 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:** 1250287

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Acorn Children's Home (Branston) Limited

**Registered provider address:** Claremont House, 223 Branston Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 3BT

**Responsible individual:** Farzana Khan

**Registered manager:** Vacant post

## **Inspectors**

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

Debbie Bond, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019