

# SC368032

Registered provider: Constant Child Care Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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

The home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children and young people aged between seven and 17, irrespective of gender, who have social and emotional difficulties.

**Inspection date:** 2 October 2019

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 1 May 2019

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

Compliance notices were raised following monitoring inspections on 11 July 2019 and 20 August 2019.

## **This inspection**

### **The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection**

This home was judged as requires improvement to be good at the last full inspection. Inspectors found weaknesses with regards to leadership and management and requirements were raised. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

On 11 July 2019, Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit. The inspector found that the registered provider had not taken sufficient action to address all the requirements raised at the full inspection and new shortfalls were identified. A further monitoring visit on 20 August 2019, found that managers had taken appropriate action regarding some of the compliance notices but not all. A further compliance notice was issued. The purpose of this inspection was to review whether action had been taken to meet the compliance notice and to consider how managers and staff have supported the progress and experiences of children since the full inspection.

One child lives at the home. Since the last inspection, two children have moved on. Both children experienced planned and positive moves on from the home. Staff supported one child to return to live with her family and the other child moved on to a home which was better suited to meet his needs, including education.

Managerial oversight and monitoring of the home's internal systems is inconsistent. Although some improvements have been made since the last inspection, repeated regulatory shortfalls remain. As a result of ineffective monitoring, areas of weakness have not been identified or decisive action taken to resolve these issues. For example, physical restraint records do not contain all the required information. Furthermore, managers do not identify these shortfalls. For example, the managers were not able to tell the inspectors how long a child had been physically restrained for. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that restraint practice is proportionate and safe.

Managers and staff no longer lock external doors without good reason. However, they continue to lock internal doors. The kitchen door is locked and this is common practice. This places unnecessary restrictions on children to move freely in their home and does not create a homely environment.

Managers and staff have not improved the quality of children's risk assessments. Key information is not contained in these documents to inform and guide staff. For example, one child's risk assessment does not contain information about child sexual exploitation and smoking behaviours despite these being known risks. In addition, it is not clear whether staff act on the guidance set out in the risk assessments. For example, it is not clear whether staff carry out room searches in response to one young person who self-harms and what the outcome of these checks is. Furthermore, some staff do not know what information is contained in children's risk assessments.

When children go missing from the home, staff take some steps to try to locate them and to help them to return to the home safely. For example, staff follow children and try to contact them via mobile phone to encourage them to come home. However, practice could be improved. For example, children's missing from care management plans do not provide staff with clear guidance such as all the key individuals to be contacted if a child goes missing. In addition, children do not always have the opportunity to speak to someone independent about why they went missing and what happened while they were away from the home.

The home is generally clean and tidy in most areas. However, one child's bedroom, although nicely decorated and personalised, is not maintained to an acceptable standard. This means that staff do not effectively help this child to look after their belongings and to value their personal space. In addition, this does not help the child to feel valued. Other areas in the home do not create a nurturing environment, for example staff use a metal roller shutter hatch between the kitchen and dining room to serve food to children. This was raised at a previous inspection and has not been addressed.

It is not clear whether the home's fire risk assessment covers all potential risks. This

does not ensure that all matters relating to health and safety of the environment are fully considered. Ofsted made a referral to the fire and rescue service following this inspection so that additional clarity can be sought.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been updated, but it does not accurately reflect changes to the staff team. This does not give up-to-date information about staff working at the home to those who may read it.

Managers, including the responsible individual, have not taken adequate steps to act on the recommendations raised by the designated officer for the local authority. These recommendations were raised following the conclusion of an investigation into an allegation made by a young person. This shows a reluctance by the provider to follow advice from the designated officer, which does not instil confidence in the registered provider's approach to safeguarding.

Staff training records are not up to date. Inspectors found occasions when it is unclear whether all staff caring for children are first-aid qualified. This constitutes unsafe practice and has the potential to compromise children's health and welfare.

Staff rota records do not make it clear what staff have worked in the home and the managers are not always clear on which agency staff have worked in the home. The manager is not always aware of the agency staff used to cover shortfalls. This means the manager has little oversight and awareness of the workforce being used to care for children.

Since his appointment, the interim manager has taken some steps to review staff supervision. This means that staff now have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their performance and practice more regularly.

Recruitment practice has improved, which helps to ensure that unsuitable people do not work at the home.

The manager now notifies Ofsted of significant incidents that occur, enabling the regulator to review whether appropriate action has been taken to reduce the risk of such an incident happening again.

Since the last inspection, managers and staff have consistently sought feedback from children through key-work sessions following incidents. The child living at the home has good school attendance and is engaging well with her learning. As a result, this child is making some good progress with her education. The child also engages in activities such as going to the gym and library, which she enjoys.

The child recognises the positive care she receives from staff and how they help her. For example, she told the inspector how a member of staff had made her feel relaxed so that she could talk openly, and this had helped her to regulate her emotions better.

Staff ensure that the child attends routine medical appointments and they are working

with other professionals to promote the child's emotional health and well-being.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/05/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
23/10/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
01/08/2018	Full	Inadequate
21/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))*	25/11/2019
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— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	25/11/2019

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(h))*	
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1.</p> <p>The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))</p>	25/11/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))*</p>	25/11/2019
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(d))</p>	25/11/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a description of the measure and its duration;</li> <li>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</li> </ul> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(vii)(c))*</p>	25/11/2019
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. (Regulation 37 (1)(2)(a))</p>	25/11/2019

\* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation (alarm, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, the use of a metal roller shutter to serve food to children and staff to help children to keep their bedrooms clean and tidy.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC368032

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

**Registered provider:** Constant Child Care Limited

**Registered provider address:** 4 Parkside Court, Greenhough Road, Lichfield,  
Staffordshire WS13 7FE

**Responsible individual:** Barry Edwards

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Patrick McIntosh, social care inspector  
Sarah Billett, social care inspector

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