

2548567

Worcestershire Children First

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home was previously owned by the local authority. It was re-registered in October 2019 when the local authority moved to be a holding company. It is registered for up to eight children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences that have led to associated trauma and presenting complex behaviours, as well as for children who have a learning disability and/or autism spectrum disorder.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in October 2019 and holds an NVQ level 4 in leadership and management.

Inspection date: 2 June and 3 June 2020

This monitoring visit

On 1 and 4 May 2020, Ofsted carried out a remote monitoring inspection of the home. Following this visit, three compliance notices were issued under regulations 12, 13 and 14 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, due to serious shortfalls identified in safeguarding, care planning and the leadership and management of the home.

The purpose of this monitoring visit is to review the progress made in meeting the three compliance notices.

Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, Ofsted only spent a short period of time physically visiting the home and then carried on the inspection remotely. The inspectors gathered evidence in several different ways, including talking to managers, members of staff, the police and the children living at the home. The acting manager also provided electronic documents for the inspectors to review.

Inspectors found that the compliance notices raised at the last inspection have not been met.

The registered manager is not currently working in the home.

Bedroom door alarms are used to monitor children's movements in the home at night. However, some children have learned how to leave their bedrooms without these alarms being triggered. Staff are aware that children can override this monitoring system but have failed to escalate this safeguarding concern to managers. As a result, the strategies in place to keep children safe at night are ineffective. This places children at risk of harm.

Risk assessments and behaviour management plans do not support staff to manage complex behaviours in a way that supports children's dignity. For example, some bathrooms do not contain toilet roll, soap or towels. As a result, children must ask staff for these items whenever they need to use the toilet. This institutionalised approach to personal care and hygiene does not promote children's independence skills and fails to promote children's dignity. Furthermore, information written in behaviour management plans lacks direction on how staff should care for children, taking into account their different needs.

Staff do not work in line with the home's COVID-19 policy. Specifically, staff do not always wear allocated personal protection equipment when carrying out personal care. Senior managers have been unaware of this shortfall in practice. This compromises the safety of staff and children.

Laundry facilities are inadequate to support staff in meeting children's complex needs. There is a practice of staff filling up mop buckets from the bath to clean up bodily fluid. There is no dedicated place to dispose of water waste. There is no dedicated washing facility to enable staff to wash children's clothes that have been soiled. On some occasions, staff have resorted to throwing away soiled clothing. These weaknesses in facilities and practice compromise children's and the staff's health and safety.

Staff do not ensure that the home is kept as homely as possible. For example, previous children's clothes are stored in the computer room. Staff routinely lock internal doors. This restriction on children's movement is not based on the assessment of children's individual needs. Staff have not considered the impact of this practice should there be a fire in the home. This compromises children's safety in the event of a fire.

One child's care records show that during the time the child lived at the home he felt that the staff treated him differently from the other children. Inspectors listening to the views of the staff and examining care recordings evidence showed that staff formed a negative attitude towards the child, and this went unchallenged. This demonstrates a total lack of respect to how children should be treated by people who are in a position of trust.

Complaints made by children are still not investigated and outcomes reached. This leaves children with no confidence that their complaints will be listened to, taken seriously and acted on.

The manager has not ensured that the staff team has the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of all the children living in the home. The manager's training matrix shows that staff are not up to date with relevant training. Staff supporting children who have learning disabilities and additional diagnoses, such as autism spectrum disorder and Pica, have not received any specific training since 2017. Some staff have not attended training on autism spectrum disorder since 2015. Some staff have not attended training on infection control since October 2017. Consequently, not all staff are trained to meet the children's needs.

The inspectors also found that induction and training of new staff are not in place. Specifically, an assistant manager has started in post without having had an induction and/or the experience/training to work with children who have learning disabilities. As a result, staff do not have the experience and/or skills to meet the needs of the children.

Not enough has been done to safeguard children's dignity. For example, an incident that involved a child undressing in a public area was poorly managed and resulted in the child moving to three different parts of the home naked before staff managed to secure the child's dignity. The manager's review of this significant incident was poor. For example, the incident log describes the child being distressed and redirected to the downstairs toilet by staff. The child was then redirected by staff to go to her bedroom and then she moved by her own accord into a bathroom. The acting manager's review of the incident fails to question whether the necessity of the staff to move the child required physical intervention. He also failed to find out why staff took no action to protect the child's dignity. There was no consideration given to establishing ways to prevent such an incident from occurring again.

Staff rotas do not provide an accurate account of the staff who have worked at the home at any given time. This failure to sustain an accurate record compromises the manager's ability to know which staff have worked with children on any given date.

The significant shortfall in practice and weaknesses in the oversight of care have left children's safety, welfare and dignity compromised. As a result of these failures, Ofsted made the decision to issue a notice to suspend the registration of the children's home from 5 June 2020 until 27 August 2020 and to issue a further two compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date

Inspection type

Inspection judgement

This home is yet to have a full inspection under the new registration.

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—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—</p> <p>meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>(Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(i)) *</p>	12/07/2020
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(x))</p>	12/07/2020
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p>	12/07/2020

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.</p> <p>(Regulation (12)(1)(2)(a)(iii))</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—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—</p> <p>feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received;</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>(Regulation (13)(1)(a)(b)(2)(1)(c)(e)(g)(ii)(h)) *</p>	12/07/2020
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 14(1)(a)(b))</p>	12/07/2020
<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—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4.</p>	12/07/2020

(Regulation 37(1)(2)(a))	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

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: 2548567

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Worcestershire Children First

Registered provider address: Worcestershire Children First, County Hall Campus, Spetchley Road, Worcester, Worcestershire WR5 2NP

Responsible individual: Adam Johnston

Registered manager: Alan McGonigle

Inspectors

Louise Battersby, social care inspector

Mrs Dawn Bennett, social care inspector

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