

# 1258658

**PSS Care Group Limited**

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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

This home, which is one of three run by a private organisation, provides care for up to four children with emotional/and or behavioural difficulties.

The registered manager has managed this home since June 2020. This is her first registered manager's post and she is working towards achieving a suitable management qualification.

**Inspection date:** 4 February 2021

## **This monitoring visit**

This visit was carried out to explore how well the staff have managed incidents of substance misuse and children going missing from the home. The visit was undertaken using a blended approach of on-site and off-site activity.

At the time of the visit, three children were living at the home. Four children have moved in and four children have moved out since the beginning of August 2020.

The manager has, on occasion, been naive about the risks that children face and over optimistic about the skill set of the staff. As a result, the matching of children has not been robust. A child who was at significant risk of going missing from care, substance misuse and county lines moved into the home when an existing child was known to also present these risks. These children were able to quickly become involved in local drug networks. Consequently, both children were moved. A further child who has complex needs is not well matched with the other children or the staff's skills and experience. This child's placing authority is identifying a more appropriate long-term home. The staff struggle to meet this child's needs. There is conflict between the children, which is causing one child distress.

The staff have acted appropriately in response to individual incidents when they have arisen. However, children's individual risk assessments and the review of the

suitability of the location of the home are not comprehensive or kept up to date. This means that not all staff may be made immediately aware of emerging risks and the agreed strategies to manage these.

When children have gone missing from care, the staff have searched for them and worked well in partnership with other professionals to promote the children's safety. However, there is no system in place to prompt the child's placing authority to carry out a return home interview. Therefore, potential opportunities to identify risk and approaches to reduce risk are missed.

There are suitable arrangements for fire prevention, including regular servicing of fire equipment. However, the fire risk assessment does not fully reflect risk-management arrangements at the home. One child's bedroom door did not fully close, the side gate was locked, the front door is, on occasion, locked, and sleep-in staff have sometimes been used instead of waking night staff. These actions are contrary to the fire risk assessment. There was a fire officer at the home on the day of the visit. The officer confirmed that although he will be making recommendations to improve safety, in his professional opinion, the home is safe. Therefore, although elements of risk have not been identified and reduced effectively, children are not at risk of physical harm.

Staffing levels are appropriate. Continuity of staffing for the children was maintained during a COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak in the home. The staff benefit from a variety of suitable and relevant training. However, not all staff who have worked in a children's home for more than two years have achieved a suitable level 3 qualification. The staff sometimes work with children who have experienced extensive trauma and who self-harm, but most staff have not received training in these areas.

The organisation has not carried out some safer recruitment processes or shown sufficient professional curiosity. Recruitment files do not evidence that employment gaps are consistently fully explored. Furthermore, overseas checks have not been undertaken when staff have lived abroad. A relief member of staff has worked at the home prior to suitable pre-employment checks being received. Failure to undertake all the appropriate checks means that the organisation cannot be assured that this member of staff is suitable to work with children.

There have been concerns regarding some aspects of staff practice. The manager ensures that these are addressed appropriately through training and supervision. However, probationary reviews are not effective. These reviews do not detail the concerns and strategies to support and develop the staff during and after their probationary period.

A serious safeguarding allegation regarding staff conduct and practice was not notified to Ofsted. This prevented Ofsted from having clear oversight of the events

at the home. The organisation is working with partner safeguarding agencies in respect of this concern.

On occasion, the front door is locked to safeguard one of the children. This is risk assessed and there is no information to suggest this has been used inappropriately. However, this information is not documented in the child's care plans and there is no written agreement from the child's parent or placing local authority.

Staff are trained in the use of physical restraint. The manager monitors all incidents to ensure that the use of restraint is appropriate and proportionate. However, two records of physical restraint did not demonstrate reflective post-restraint debriefs with the staff concerned and one did not evidence that there had been discussion with the child to reflect on their feelings about the restraint. This means that opportunities to develop practice and support children and staff through difficult situations are missed.

Record management is not consistently robust. On occasion, records are not clear or fail to demonstrate the support that staff offer to the children. The staff rota is not a reliable record of who worked at the home on a particular day. This meant that the manager was not able to easily give accurate information to the inspector about the working pattern of a named staff member about whom concerns had been raised.

The reports by the independent visitor are not of consistently good quality or submitted to Ofsted promptly. The visitor has not demonstrated suitable attempts to obtain feedback from staff, social workers, parents or the children. This is particularly important when these reviews have been conducted without an on-site visit. These shortfalls reduce the safeguards intended by this monitoring.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/07/2019	Full	Good
04/10/2018	Full	Good
22/01/2018	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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;</p> <p>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> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(b)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that children's risk assessments and the suitability of the location assessment are consistently updated with new risks; the fire risk assessment is updated to reflect practice at the home and risk-reduction measures; all fire doors fully close.</p>	12 March 2021
<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>	31 March 2021

<p>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>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that records are accurate, clear, dated and evidence the support that the children receive; staff receive suitable training that equips them to meet the children’s needs (this is with particular reference to the prevention and management of self-harm and working with traumatised children); records of physical interventions demonstrate suitable discussions with staff and children; records of staff performance reviews demonstrate the ongoing suitability of staff and any support in place to promote professional development.</p>	
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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)(b) (2)(a))</p>	<p>5 March 2021</p>

<p>In particular, ensure that children moving into the home are suitably matched with the existing resident group and the staff's skills and experience.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home;</p> <p>if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff do not work at the home until all suitability checks are received and the person is assessed as suitable. Furthermore, obtain a full employment history for every person working at the home in a care role and ensure that appropriate overseas checks are completed for staff who have lived abroad.</p>	<p>23 February 2021</p>
<p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years</p>	<p>31 March 2021</p>

<p>after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that all staff who have worked in a children's home for more than two years achieve a suitable level 3 qualification.</p>	
<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> <p>ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff duty rotas are clear and accurate.</p>	<p>5 March 2021</p>
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—</p> <p>children are effectively safeguarded; and</p> <p>the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.</p> <p>The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that independent visitors' reports are of consistently good quality, are reviewed by the responsible individual and are sent to Ofsted promptly.</p>	<p>30 April 2021</p>

## Recommendations

- The registered person should request that the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that details of any planned approaches to restraint, such as locking the front door at times of escalated and risky behaviour, are documented as agreed with the child's placing authority and included in the child's education, health and care plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.43)

## Information about this inspection

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

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1258658

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

**Registered provider:** PSS Care Group Limited

**Registered provider address:** 284 Chase Road, London N14 6HF

**Responsible individual:** Frederik Booysen

**Registered manager:** Joanne Batchelor

## Inspectors

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector  
Lianne Bradford, Social Care Inspector



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