

# 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 left on 31 March 2021. At the time of the visit, there was no manager in post. The responsible individual has since brought in an interim manager from one of the other homes.

**Inspection date:** 1 April 2021

## **This monitoring visit**

At the time of the visit, three children were living at the home. Since the last monitoring visit, on 4 February 2021, one child has moved in and one child has moved out of the home. Two children have lived at the home since August 2020.

The visit took place due to Ofsted receiving information that raised concerns about the management of the home, the staffing arrangements and the safety and well-being of the children. The visit comprised a blended approach of on-site and off-site activity.

Several members of the organisation's management team have resigned since the monitoring visit in February 2021. The day before this visit, the operations manager, registered manager and deputy manager all resigned with immediate effect. The quality assurance manager and a business support staff member have also since resigned with immediate effect. On the day of the visit, the management arrangements were not clear. Furthermore, at the time of the visit, the management arrangements did not provide the ongoing required level of management support and oversight of the largely inexperienced staff team. The responsible individual has since brought in an interim manager from one of the other homes within the group.

The knowledge and experience of the staff team is a concern. Of the 11 staff currently allocated to work at the home, six have less than one year's experience of

working in residential childcare. One staff member, who has less than six months' experience and has yet to complete their probationary period, has been promoted to team leader. The acting deputy manager, who, at the time of the visit, was the most senior team member, has not yet completed a required level 3 qualification despite working in the organisation's children's homes for more than two years. Only one member of staff holds a suitable level 3 qualification in working with children in residential care. The staff sometimes work with children who have experienced trauma and who self-harm, but most staff have not received training in these areas. Two of the children have autism spectrum conditions. However, not all staff have undertaken training in this area. This means that some staff are not equipped to meet the children's individual needs.

Management monitoring is ineffective. Records of key-work sessions do not demonstrate that effective discussion takes place with children about risks and responsibilities. Children's case records were not appropriately secured when requested by the inspector. This meant that these confidential records could potentially be accessed by children and other unauthorised persons. Online training on autism awareness was made available to staff, but managers have not monitored to ensure that all staff have accessed it. Training on preventing and managing self-harm has been booked for April 2021. However, this was a requirement at the last monitoring visit, in February 2021, and the timescale for completion has passed. As a result, to date, several staff have not had training to enable them to meet the children's needs.

The staffing arrangements initially planned for the Easter bank holiday weekend were poor. Some shifts were due to be staffed only by staff with less than six months' experience or who had not completed suitable minimum training. When this was drawn to the attention of the responsible individual, they made changes to ensure that at least one more experienced member of staff was on each shift. They also undertook to ensure that the staff completed the available online training in autism awareness prior to their next shift.

Fire safety arrangements are not consistently robust and have the potential to place children and staff at risk. It would not have been possible to escape from the kitchen in the event of a fire because of a locked fire exit.

Failure to provide consistently effective leadership and management oversight means that the day-to-day running of the home and the lack of experience of the staff team may place children at risk of harm. Consequently, the home is likely to be subject to enforcement action.

Some of the previous requirements were outside the scope of this visit and were not reviewed. These requirements are therefore restated.

## 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:</p> <p>children's risk assessments and the suitability of the location assessment are consistently updated with new risks;</p> <p>the fire risk assessment is updated to reflect practice at the home and risk-reduction measures;</p> <p>all fire doors fully close and, at all times, escape routes are clear and fire exits are unlocked.</p>	4 May 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> <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>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;</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)(a)(c)(f)(h))</p> <p>In particular:</p> <p>ensure that children receive care from an experienced, trained and skilled staff team;</p> <p>ensure that management capacity is sufficient to provide advice, guidance and support to the staff working at the home;</p> <p>ensure that management monitoring is comprehensive and effective and results in any necessary action being taken to meet the children's needs and keep them safe.</p>	<p>4 May 2021</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>4 May 2021</p>

<p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</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)(h))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that:</p> <p>records are accurate, clear and dated, and evidence the support that the children receive;</p> <p>records of physical interventions demonstrate suitable discussions with staff and children;</p> <p>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>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>4 May 2021</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>4 May 2021</p>

<p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; 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 no staff 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>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 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>	4 May 2021
<p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p>	4 May 2021

<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>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— HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (4)(a)(b) (5) (7)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that independent visitor's reports are of consistently good quality, are reviewed by the responsible individual and are sent to Ofsted promptly.</p>	<p>4 May 2021</p>

\*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

## Recommendations

- The registered person should request that the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for a child to have an independent return home interview when that 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 (EHC) plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.43)

- The registered person should ensure that children's case records are stored securely while they remain in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

## **Information about this inspection**

The visit took place due to Ofsted receiving information that raised concerns about the management of the home, the staffing arrangements and the safety and well-being of the children.

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:** Post vacant

## **Inspector**

Joanna Heller, Social Care Inspector

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