

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



National Review 2022

Children with complex needs and disabilities

Introduction

- The National Review of Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings is being undertaken by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- The Review is being led by Dr Susan Tranter, supported by Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), for the National Children's Bureau (NCB).
- The review is considering allegations of widespread abuse.
- In phase one it considered the experiences of children and young people placed in three specialist independent residential settings in the Doncaster area.
- Phase two, of which this report is relevant, will consider the broader safeguarding needs of Children in care with disabilities and complex health needs in specialist residential settings and seeks additional assurances about their safety and wellbeing.

Action required

- There were 2 requests of Local Authorities;
 1. Ensure Quality and Safety Reviews are completed for all children with complex needs and disabilities currently living within placements with the same registrations (i.e., residential specialist schools registered as children's homes) to ensure they are in safe, quality placements.
 2. That the host authority LADO for each individual establishment reviews all information on any LADO referrals, complaints and concerns over the last 3 years relating to the workforce in such establishments to ensure these have been appropriately actioned.

1. Children placed by WCF

The Review defines a specific cohort of Children and Young People as being in scope, the criteria of which are;

- Looked after Children
Who are,
- Placed in a residential specialist school, that is registered as a Childrens home
And,
- Have a disability and/or complex health need.

Worcestershire Children First have five young people placed across three provisions in scope.

Provision	Number of Young People
Sunfield School, Worcestershire	3
Cambian Whinfell School, Cumbria	1
Jasmine House, Derbyshire	1

What was done

- To ensure a thorough review of each young person, their care and experiences, a Social Worker and Commissioning Monitoring Officer visited each provision and jointly and independently undertook observations, conversations and reviewed documents to ensure that a robust assessment against 13 questions was completed.
- Each young person was seen in both their home and school setting, relevant paperwork reviewed in depth and feedback sought by the allocated Social Workers from parents/carers.
- Cambian Whinfell School has been visited by the Young Person's Social Worker, however the day the Commissioning Monitoring Officer was due to visit, Ofsted arrived for a two day full inspection and subsequently this visit did not take place. We trust a full assessment will have been undertaken and await feedback from Ofsted regarding this inspection.

Findings

- In all provisions there is evidence of effective communication between home and school within setting and parent/carers.
- Parent/carers have positive experiences of each setting and are aware of how to contact staff should they need to.
- Positive interactions observed between young people and carers.
- All young people have effective communication plans in place with evidence of them being used, they are reflective of individual needs, child focused and centred and link into PBS plans, risk assessments and routines.
- Positive behaviour support plans are in place in all settings, some of these are more reflective of young persons needs than others and there is some work to be done on translating re occurring incidents and significant incidents accurately on to behaviour plans.
- Medication processes are in place with overall effective and safe practices.

Findings

- There is a good understanding of physical and mental health needs at an individual levels and this information is used to inform planning in both home and school settings.
- The use of incident forms have shown variance in recording and whether they have been used appropriately with potential over usage in one setting.
- There is concern regarding the need for physical restraint within one home and whether de-escalation techniques had been effectively implemented prior to this. Debriefing post incident is not evident in the recording across the settings and any proposed actions to reduce further incidents not evident clearly if PBS updated.
- Overall, the review of all three settings has not raised any ongoing safeguarding concerns regarding the care provided those young people open to our service.
- Some case actions were identified during the review as part of day to day care planning and theses have been notified to the responsible social worker

2 . LADO involvement

- Sunfield School & Childrens Home in Clent was the only placement in Worcestershire that meets the criteria as set out for the National Review
- Worcestershire LADO records from September 2019 – September 2022 were reviewed by Karen Green, LADO, in respect of Sunfield and Karen met with the Registered Manager Sarah Marshall to review these.
- In the last 3 years there have been 11 LADO referrals in respect of Sunfield School and Children's home.
- There are 25 children 'placed' at Sunfield and all Local Authorities responsible for each child have been contacted

Findings

- Although there were 11 referrals some included multiple staff, as such there were 7 reported incidents. Of the 11 referrals 4 did not meet the LADO threshold; 1 was unsubstantiated; 3 were unfounded and 3 were substantiated.
- Sunfield were able to evidence that all actions following LADO referrals were undertaken in a timely manner and were all recorded appropriately.
- It was noted in the discussions that several of the incidents had taken place during the night cover. The registered manager made a decision to employ a night Manager to address this.
- The responses from all LA's identified many positives in relation to Sunfield and no safeguarding concerns were raised in relation to the placement.
- Good quality recording regarding the referral incidents and responses was seen

Overall the review found that those Children and Young People placed by WCF in residential schools registered as Childrens homes receive good quality care and the home within our Local Authority responds effectively to safeguard when any concerns arise.