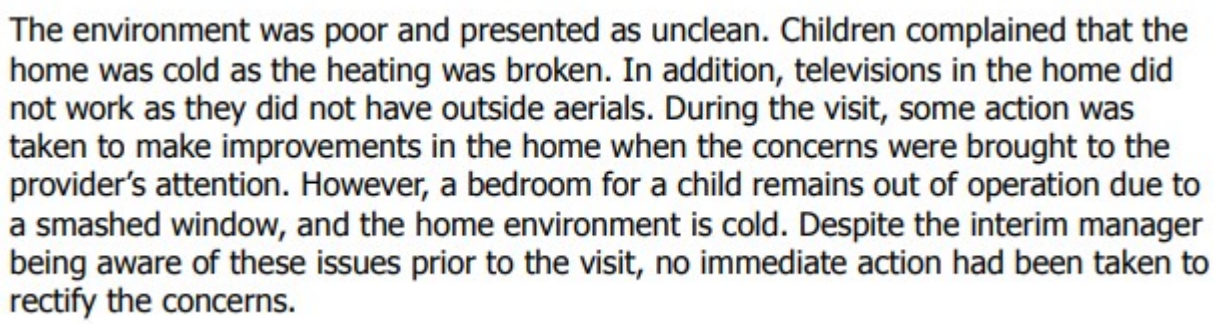
Twitter Thread by Martin Barrow

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State of this children's home in Lancashire, run by the private company Care 4 Children Residential Services Ltd: this Ofsted report was uploaded today

Firstly, it is a shit hole (excuse the language, but...)


The environment was poor and presented as unclean. Children complained that the home was cold as the heating was broken. In addition, televisions in the home did not work as they did not have outside aerials. During the visit, some action was taken to make improvements in the home when the concerns were brought to the provider's attention. However, a bedroom for a child remains out of operation due to a smashed window, and the home environment is cold. Despite the interim manager being aware of these issues prior to the visit, no immediate action had been taken to rectify the concerns.

A child's clothes and shoes are taken away to stop him from running away.

Risk management plans and missing-from-care action plans are of a poor quality. The records fail to provide a clear strategy for staff to follow to minimise the risks for children, and although staff did follow children if they went missing from home, this practice was not consistent. In addition, records did not demonstrate that all information is shared with all relevant professionals. In one example, the staff team

had made a decision to remove and securely store a child's outer clothes and shoes to prevent any further missing-from-care incidents. This strategy had neither been agreed nor shared with the child's social worker.

The home is short-staffed and in chaos.

The home is registered for four children. There are currently two children living in the home with a permanent staff team of four. One child is in need of the supervision of 2:1 staffing at all times. Consequently, the home is heavily reliant on staff covering the hours required for each shift from other homes across the organisation. Staff said, 'This has increased the chaos in the home with no clear routines.' They stated, 'Staff practice is inconsistent with no clear leadership.' Children reported, 'Staff are here one day, gone the next.' This has significantly impacted on the stability of the staff team and the care provided to children and any other potential children moving in to the home.

Staff take under-age children to buy cigarettes.

Children who smoke do not have a clear plan to help them reduce this behaviour. Children and staff told inspectors that when children are given money, some staff drive them to local shops known to sell cigarettes, tobacco and lighters illegally to children. Social workers spoken to were unaware of this practice. This means that children and staff collude in illegal behaviour and this does not support a healthy lifestyle.

Staff share mobile phones with children and exchange personal telephone numbers.

Managers have failed to ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed. Despite a clear mobile-phone policy, which reports that staff should not use their personal phone for work, inspectors observed a member of staff sharing a personal video on her mobile phone with a child. The provider reported that staff have access to work mobile phones. However, these could not be located during the visit and staff confirmed that they do not have access to work phones and instead use their own mobile phones for work. In addition, some staff share their personal numbers with children. Staff reported that they had raised concerns about this practice with managers. However, no further action has been taken to address this safeguarding concern.

This is supposed to be a home for children at risk of sexual exploitation. It is hard to understand how children are being protected in this environment.

This meant to be their home.

Care 4 Children provides children's homes and foster care for some 100 local authorities and is responsible for 150 children and young people.

Its latest accounts reveal that it was paid more than £17 million by local authorities last year and earned profits of £2.5 million. But it can't fix the heating at a children's home in Lancashire.

https://t.co/CEJA0hNhmY

Its statement to investors includes this gem:

The directors are pleased to report continued good outcomes for children in our care, with educational attendance and achievement continuing to be at high levels, and our young people continuing to make good progress through our clinical model. The directors look forward to seeing further positive outcomes for the young people we are privileged to care for during 2020.

Privatisation of children's services is bad for children and families, bad for communities and bad for taxpayers.

It doesn't have to be this way.

A recent investigation into this company: https://t.co/SBd91X4TND