

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	8 and 9 February 2017
Unique reference number	1234374
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Phoenix Child Care Limited
Registered provider address	First Floor, Rolle Quay House, Rolle Quay, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1JE

Responsible individual	Post Vacant
Registered manager	Neil Rudd
Inspector	Guy Mammatt

Inspection date	8 and 9 February 2017
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean that young people are not protected and that their care and experiences are poor.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

1234374

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- There are widespread failings that impact negatively on young people's experiences.
- Members of staff did not follow correct safeguarding procedures when responding to a young person's complaint. The registered manager also failed to deal effectively with the young person's complaint.
- The manager's investigation and recording of a young person's complaint is inadequate.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff are not rigorous enough to identify whether staff are suitable for the roles to which they are appointed.
- Staff have not received all of the necessary training to respond safely to the needs of the young people.
- Staff do not support young people in a purposeful way to enable them to engage in education, training or employment.
- Staff do not ensure that young people are well prepared for leaving care. Specific plans to help young people to develop independence skills are not in place.
- Staff have failed to ensure that young people's care plans and health plans are kept up to date and that the plans are sufficiently detailed about young people's individual needs.
- The manager's recording of sanctions given to young people is inadequate.
- The manager does not keep an accurate record of the staff who have worked at the home.
- The independent visitor's report and monitoring by the senior management team are not robust and do not provide sufficient scrutiny.

The children's home strengths

- Young people benefit from and enjoy the good opportunities to see their families and friends. One young person has achieved the placement aim of returning to live with their family.
- Young people have made good progress in relation to looking after their own health needs. They also engage well with specialist health services.
- Young people say that they enjoy living at the home.
- Staff benefit from regular supervision.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meet(s) 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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must ensure that staff (b)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; and (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult.	01/05/2017
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff (a)(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; (ii) support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; (iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; and (ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment.	01/05/2017
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the	01/03/2017

registered person must ensure that staff (a)(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.	
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must ensure that (c) staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (f) 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; and (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	01/05/2017
32: Fitness of workers (1) The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (2) The registered person may only (a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or (b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (3) The requirements are that (a) the individual is of integrity and good character; (b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; (c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.	01/03/2017
35: Behaviour management policies and records	01/03/2017

(3) The registered person must ensure that (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; (c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.	
37: Other records (1) Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. (2) The registered person must (a) maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; (b) ensure that the records are kept up to date; and (c) retain the records for at least 15 years from the date of the last entry.	01/05/2017

39: Complaints and representations (2) In particular, the procedure must provide that no person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate. (3) The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation.	01/03/2017
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is operated by a private provider of care and education. It is registered for two children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
May 2016	Registration	No judgement

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
The overall experience for young people is inadequate. There are significant failings in the help and protection offered to young people and serious and widespread weaknesses in the management of the home. Young people's education, training and employment opportunities need to improve. Staff do not provide sufficient support to encourage a young person to attend school more regularly, nor do they provide alternative learning opportunities for them when they are not at school. One young person's attendance is only for half of the 16 hours per week timetable. Another young person who is above the compulsory school age is not enrolled at college and is not currently employed. On one day a week, staff take young people to a local centre, where they can look for work, college courses or apprenticeship schemes. However, the remaining time is not purposefully used. Despite some poor practice and an overall lack of focus on the educational needs of young people, one young person has achieved entry-level qualifications in English, mathematics and science. Young people's opportunities to learn independent living skills for adult life are poor. Staff do not provide them with any specific work or development opportunities to help them to prepare for adulthood and for when they leave care. As a result, young people are reluctant to engage in developing their confidence in social situations and are reliant on staff. One young person is moving from the home within the next month. There is no transition plan in place, and the leaving care section in the home's care plan has not been completed. As a result, staff are not able to support the young person and ensure that all the necessary resources are in place for a successful move. The care plans completed by staff require improvement. They are not kept up to date with the young people's specific health needs and lack fundamental details relevant to their complex needs. The information pertaining to sexual health, relationships and self-harming is too generic and fails to specify what staff should do to support young people in these areas. Furthermore, these plans lack information about alcohol and substance misuse. This does not demonstrate that staff are aware of important matters in a young person's life, in order to be able to provide the necessary support to help them and to keep them safe. There is evidence of some improved experiences for young people since they moved in. Young people said that they are happy living at the home. They get along with most of the staff and each other. One young person stated that he is very happy that he is moving soon to live with his family. Staff have helped him to develop relationships with his family and, as a	

result, the quality and frequency of family visits have increased. Another young person also enjoys regular time with their family and others who are important to them. A young person has learned to take responsibility for monitoring their own health needs and is now able to manage prescribed medication. One young person's behaviour has greatly improved since living here. The young person has not been involved in criminal activity or displayed any aggressive outbursts towards others since moving into the home.

Young people engage well with the child and adolescent mental health service.

Staff and young people enjoy good relationships. Staff engage the young people well in one-to-one discussions and have regular group meetings. There is good evidence of young people's wishes being considered and responded to, for example their request for 'Netflix' and a house pet.

Staff maintain the home to an acceptable standard. The home is comfortable and repairs are promptly made. The manager responds quickly to any concerns raised by neighbours to ensure that there are positive community relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The help and protection provided to young people are inadequate. The recruitment and vetting processes for new staff do not ensure the safety of young people. The manager does not ensure that all references for new staff employed by the company are verified. Some of the references reviewed during the inspection contain information that raise questions about the staff member's suitability for employment, and some do not provide any useful information to help managers to determine whether staff are suitable to work with children. These deficiencies have not been followed up by the manager. In addition, the manager does not gather sufficient information about staff employed from an agency before they start working at the home. The manager does not obtain information about their previous work experience, training details or references. Without this important information, the manager cannot make an informed decision about whether the worker is suitable and safe to support young people. On one occasion, the manager did not check that a member of staff from an agency had a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. The manager has not requested additional information about whether agency staff have full employment histories. This does not help to protect young people from individuals who are	

unsuitable to work with them.

The response to complaints is inadequate. On one occasion, a staff member did not escalate a safeguarding concern raised about them by a young person and tried to resolve the issue themselves. The manager did not identify this as a concern about the staff member's practice and, therefore, has not addressed it with them. This does not protect young people and has the potential to deter them from making complaints again. It does not demonstrate that the manager always identifies safeguarding concerns or acts upon them appropriately.

The recording of sanctions is inadequate. The information documented does not include the name of the young person and staff involved, or details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use a sanction. The records do not include a review of the effectiveness of the sanction, young people's comments, the manager's review or confirmation that the manager has spoken with the staff member about the measures imposed. As a result, sanctions are not recorded in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations (2015) and the company's policy. The manager cannot demonstrate that sanctions are used effectively and are well monitored.

There have been no recorded occasions of young people going missing from the home or being restrained since they moved in. This represents good progress for the young people. Staff respond appropriately to emergencies regarding young people's health and well-being. They are taken to the doctors and local hospitals as required.

The manager ensures that the necessary health and safety checks of the premises are carried out at appropriate intervals. Staff and young people regularly practise fire drills. Young people's medication is stored securely and correctly accounted for.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The effectiveness of leaders' and managers' work is inadequate. The registered manager and senior managers do not use monitoring and review systems to audit effectively the quality of care provided. The manager has been registered with Ofsted since May 2016. He enrolled on the required qualification course in October 2016. Currently, he is not demonstrating all of the required skills to fulfil his new position. The manager is lacking the necessary support systems from within the company to learn about his role and to develop	

the responsibilities of being a registered manager.

The manager does not respond effectively to young people's complaints. He does not maintain a written record of investigations into the complaint, nor is there a record kept about who has been informed of the complaint, the action taken in response to the complaint or the outcome of any investigation undertaken. Furthermore, the complaint procedure does not ensure that a person who is the subject of a complaint does not take any part in its consideration or investigation until the resolution stage.

The manager has not ensured that all staff are trained and qualified to meet the needs of young people. Five out of eight staff members are not trained in responding to young people who harm themselves. Five out of eight staff members are not qualified to the required level 3 standard for residential childcare.

The manager does not keep accurate records of the staff rosters to show who has worked at the home on each day. This is not good safeguarding practice and does not allow for effective monitoring of the care provided to young people.

Independent monitoring of the home takes place at the required monthly intervals. However, it has not provided sufficient scrutiny to identify the weaknesses found at this inspection and to help the manager to make the necessary improvements.

Staff feel supported by the manager and have regular supervision. One staff member said that supervision is useful as it signposts her to read further information.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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