

1249196

Registered provider: Headway Adolescent Resources Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home belongs to a small organisation. There are four other registered children's homes within the group. The home offers care for up to four children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is newly registered and this is the first inspection.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 May 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

inadequate

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The quality of children's current experiences needs improving. The home has experienced a significantly challenging few months. As a result, staff have not demonstrated sufficient conviction to instil consistently good routines and firm boundaries.
- The effectiveness of leaders' and managers' work is currently weak, although they and the staff demonstrate a strong 'we do not give up on children' commitment.
- While staff and managers have advocated for children who have been out of school to return to education, they have not provided enough educational activities for children throughout the day. This has been a missed opportunity.
- Leaders and managers have considered the compatibility of children, but the matching process has not been successful. As a result, managers have identified that a child's needs are not being met at this home. Despite this poor outcome, the registered manager and staff have worked hard to ensure that this placement ends in a planned and positive way. For this child, this is the first time this has happened.
- Leaders and managers do not escalate concerns effectively about other agencies whose services fail to meet the needs of the children.
- Care plans and records require improvement to be good, as they do not align sufficiently with the local authority information.
- Leaders, managers and staff are not rigorously tackling the potential risks of one child's use of his mobile phone, tablet and social media.
- Monitoring by the registered manager lacks rigour. Monitoring systems are not effective as they do not identify shortfalls in care practice or the quality of care.

The children's home's strengths:

- Leaders and managers implement a reliable rota system. This means that children are cared for by staff whom they know well. This enables positive relationships to form between staff and children.

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

5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met

28/06/2017

In order to meet the engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met standard the registered person must ensure that staff:

(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;

(b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;

(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and

(d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.

In particular, to ensure the home works collaboratively with placing authorities and key agencies that are necessary to meet the needs of children and challenge any agency to ensure the child's needs are met. Escalate concerns when required.

8: The education standard

28/06/2017

In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff:

2 (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;

(v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;

(vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;

b) that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.

In particular, staff should ensure that children have access to education that meets their needs, and that routines and structures in the home support .

11: The positive relationships standard

28/06/2017

In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that:

11 (1) children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on

(a) mutual respect and trust;

(b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and

(c) positive responses to other children and adults.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

(a) that staff—

(i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

(ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;

In particular, ensure that staff provide children with consistently implemented boundaries structure and routine. Ensure the homes rules are embedded and children are supported to abide by these rules. Review the location and purpose of the staff office in terms of it being a trigger point for conflict.

12: The protection of children standard

28/06/2017

In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff:

(2) (i) 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;

(ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;

(iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;

(v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;

vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and

b) 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;

In particular, ensure that staff protect children in terms of safety with electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets and the use of social media. Also ensure the missing protocols are followed consistently in terms of the time staff report children missing to the police.

13: The leadership and management standard

28/06/2017

In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure they inspire and lead a culture that:

(1) (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and

(2) (a) 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;

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;

(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

In particular, ensure leaders and managers lead the home to embed a day-to-day routine that enables children to progress and have aspirations. Ensure monitoring systems are robust and identify where the quality of care can improve.

14: The care planning standard

28/06/2017

In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children:

(1) (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and

(b) (ii) that arrangements are in place to manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and

(c) that each child's relevant plans are followed;

In particular, that leaders and managers ensure they have the necessary up-to-date local authority care plans, personal education plans and an education health and care plan. Ensure these plans are used to inform their own internal placement plans and records.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Managers assess whether children's needs can be matched together. Before a child

moves in, managers meet with the child, their placing authority and family, and work with the child for the first few nights so that the child has a familiar person caring for them. The matching process has not been successful for the current residents. Leaders and managers have identified that one child's needs are not being met in this home. Despite this poor outcome, leaders and managers have worked hard to ensure that the child moves from the home in a planned and positive way.

In recent months, staff have not implemented consistently firm routines and boundaries. As a result, children are not making the progress they should in all aspects of their lives. Children are currently not sleeping well and are keeping each other and staff awake at night. Staff provide children with physical activities and shared games to encourage good sleep, and have sought medical assistance. However, the day-to-day structure in the home lacks conviction. As a result, children often stay in bed as a result of being up during the night.

Children do not have good educational opportunities. Leaders and managers have worked with placing authorities to secure school/educational placements for children, but these have either been temporary or part-time. Children do not have up-to-date personal education plans. Staff make attempts to take children to local museums and sights of interest, but typically children are not engaging with these opportunities.

The rota system provides consistency of care, with the same staff working in the home. Staff are committed to their role and have built some good relationships with the children. These relationships have helped children to make some progress in areas such as visiting the dentist or doctor, which they have previously found difficult.

Staff ensure that children have access to therapeutic services to meet their emotional needs. This positive outcome is recognised by a placing social worker who said, 'This is the first time this child has engaged with a therapist, which shows some progress.'

Despite an unsettled period and some challenging incidents occurring, staff speak positively about children as a matter of course. This approach is also evident in the staff's commitment not to criminalise children, and to end each day with a positive discussion letting the child know that staff like and care about them.

Children have enjoyed some fun activities such as go-karting, swimming and paintballing. Children have communicated their desire to participate in other activities, but staff have not taken action to implement these requests sufficiently quickly.

Collectively, the records maintained by staff provide a reasonable overview of young people's needs. However, the placing authority care plans are out of date, and not all information recorded in the plans aligns with the home's documents.

Children are supported to express their views. For example, staff have one-to-one sessions with children to discuss significant items, and notes from the sessions are recorded. The children also take part in a weekly meeting where they can talk openly with staff and each other.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

As children do not have a permanent education provision and are reluctant to engage in educational activities staff have offered them, they say they are bored. This can result in poor and controlling behaviour. Staff try to de-escalate this behaviour, but do not show confidence to challenge it and implement firm boundaries around behaviour and language.

Leaders and managers have identified that the office is a trigger point for a number of incidents and restraints. The manager has asked staff to spend less time in the office, but this is not yet happening consistently. Further action is required to effectively address the problem of the office and the prominence children are placing on that area of the home.

Staff are clear that they want to avoid restraint as much as possible and focus on positive behaviour management strategies. Children have incentives and reward charts in place to encourage them to behave, but these incentives do not always have a positive impact on their choices. Staff use de-escalation strategies when a child's behaviour becomes challenging. These strategies are not always effective, and children have become aggressive towards staff, damaged the home and left the home without authorisation. Staff have held children to prevent them from assaulting others. Leaders and managers ensure that children and staff have time to reflect and discuss what happened following a restraint. The manager's monitoring of these incidents needs improving, as it does not provide further direction for staff as to how they will minimise the risk of such incidents happening again in the future.

Behaviour support plans and risk assessments provide some detail about the children's behaviour, including what may trigger their behaviour to become negative and challenging. These documents also provide some strategies that staff can use to de-escalate incidents. However, these records do not align well with the local authority care plans. Leaders and managers review these documents; however, information is missing about new and potential risks that have emerged since the children have lived in the home.

Staff are committed to the children and try to educate them to make positive choices in terms of risk. However, safeguarding practices require improvement to be good. Staff have not taken sufficient action to reduce the risks posed to one child who uses his mobile phone, the internet and social media unsafely.

Staff are swift to respond when children go missing. They search the local areas and attempt to locate them. Staff report children missing to the police; however, the timings for this reporting are inconsistent with the missing protocols. When children are found staff collect them, welcome them home and try to find out where they have been. Children have an opportunity to discuss the missing incident with an independent

person, but this is not always achieved within the statutory 72 hours.

Leaders and managers report to the designated persons when they are concerned about the welfare of a child. They take decisive action to review the suitability of a child's placement when risks are so great that they can no longer meet the needs of all of the children living in the home. Leaders and managers do not persistently escalate these concerns when other agencies' services fail to respond to meet the child's needs.

The staff team work with the local police effectively in order to prevent children from being criminalised. The team has links to their local officer and missing person's coordinator, with whom they share information appropriately. Leaders and managers are devising creative ways to teach children about the impact they have on the emergency services, including a visit to the emergency service control room.

Leaders and managers have robust systems in place when they recruit new staff. These systems follow safer recruitment processes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Leaders and managers have not maintained the ethos and culture they describe in the home's statement of purpose. The registered manager identifies children are not making enough progress at the moment as the current focus is on keeping them safe rather than moving them forward.

Leaders and managers do not demonstrate to the staff team how to provide good quality of care for the children. Also, the lack of structure and routine for the children enables them to control the home environment, which causes problems for the staff. Leaders' and managers' monitoring systems are ineffective. Weekly and monthly audit tools are in place, but they do not consistently identify some of the weaknesses in the home. When weaknesses are identified action is not taken quickly enough to improve the quality of care. The registered manager has a development plan for the home and conducts a review of the quality of care; however, these documents lack depth and challenge.

Predominantly, the team of staff were promoted from within the company. Although they bring experience of residential care, they are new into their promoted roles. Leaders and managers provide staff with regular supervision, and staff say they feel supported. However, the quality of supervision is weak. While staff receive encouragement and support, supervision does not provide them with sufficient direction to improve the weaknesses in the home.

Monthly team meetings take place. These enable staff to reflect on their practice and the care they provide to the children. There is a workforce plan in place that provides staff with mandatory training which links to the needs of the children. New staff receive an induction which focuses on introducing them to the children and developing knowledge of the home's ethos and policies.

Leaders and managers are yet to achieve productive working relationships with key agencies such as placing authorities. The staff team frequently passes information that is required to meet the needs of the children to other agencies; this happens particularly when staff are concerned about the children. Leaders and managers do not persevere until they receive appropriate responses from other agencies. This creates delay in obtaining the services required to meet children's needs.

This is a newly registered home. The registered manager has previously worked in the company's other homes, and this is his first registered manager post. He has suitable qualifications to fulfil this role. Leaders, managers and the staff team care about the children and have a passion to achieve what is best for them. The registered manager was observed saying to one of the children, 'I am proud of you.' The relationships between children and staff are strong; however, the lack of boundaries impacts on the ability of staff to nurture the children in a way that will achieve best outcomes.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1249196

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Headway Adolescent Resources Ltd

Registered provider address: Chepstow Masonic Hall Ltd, The Masonic Hall, School Hill, Chepstow, Monmouthshire NP16 5BZ

Responsible individual: Timothy Corbin

Registered manager: Martin Buck

Inspector(s)

Nicola Lownds, social care inspector

Paula Lahey, regulation inspection manager

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