

1249715

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a large private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people aged eight to 17 who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and who are at risk of, or have previously experienced, child sexual exploitation. Education is available on-site.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 July 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable, this is the first inspection since registration on 11 April 2017.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- Poor management decision making has been instrumental in the failure to safeguard young people placed. The approach to risk assessment and risk management is weak. It has failed to identify all the likely risks to young people and has not ensured that staff are provided with strategies or guidance to minimise them. Young people continue to go missing and are exposed to further risks and likely trauma.
- The ill-considered planning for young people moving into the home has created tensions for all, rather than foster positive relationships. Young people have experienced bullying and have then been separated from each other as a management response to tackling the issue. This has not engendered any learning for young people, but rather has emphasised their incompatibility.
- The staff team has not received the training, supervision and support necessary to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. Staff are not equipped to engage effectively with young people who often express themselves through challenging behaviour.
- Staff at all levels have not completed records well. These do not provide all the information required nor do they contribute to a young person's history. This does not support effective information sharing with professionals. Neither does it enable monitoring of the service so as to identify and deliver the necessary improvements. The management has not made good use of the external visits and reports although these have accurately identified many shortfalls in the provision.
- Young people's concerns and complaints are not acted upon.

The children's home's strengths:

- The accommodation is well maintained and decorated.
- Some staff demonstrate their commitment to young people and are working towards effecting positive changes.
- Young people are supported well to engage in education.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff, 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. (Regulation 5 (d))	31/08/2017
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff: help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(iii)(xiii))	31/08/2017
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff 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; that staff understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; and	31/08/2017

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. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i) and (2)(b))	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1) and (2)(a)(b)(c)(g)(ii) and (h))	31/08/2017
The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that arrangements are in place to— ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority; and that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1) and (2)(b)(i)(iii) and (c))	31/08/2017
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers	31/08/2017

the matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular, the age range, number and sex of the children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided and any criteria used for admission of children to the home, including any policies and procedures for emergency admission. (Regulation 16 Schedule 1 (3)(b) and (22))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	31/08/2017
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the missing child policy") setting out the steps taken, and to be taken, to prevent children from being absent without permission and the procedures to be followed, and the roles and responsibilities of persons working at the home, in relation to a child who is, or has been, so absent. (Regulation 34 (4)(a)(b))	31/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that 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: the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i–viii))	31/08/2017
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. In particular, a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Regulation 37 (2)(a) Schedule (4)(3))	31/08/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if: a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working	31/08/2017

there; a child protection enquiry involving a child is instigated or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a–e))	
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Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Weak pre-admission assessments that do not consider the compatibility of young people, the rushed moves of young people into the home, unplanned endings and a lack of effective management have led to very poor outcomes for the young people. A professional said, 'These young people have been failed and re-traumatised.'

Placing authorities supply detailed referral information for the young people who they wish to place. The manager has not used this fully to inform placement plans. The plans are not fit for purpose. They give some voice to the young person but do not provide meaningful, individualised targets. One young person knows what she would like to work towards but this is not included in the plan.

Young people enjoy good relationships with some staff, particularly those that are confident in their role. When staff lack the necessary skills and confidence, young people feel unsafe. Young people have expressed their concerns about staff but they do not feel that their views have been listened to. On one occasion, a young person was not given access to a phone to call a social worker. Young people know how to complain, but they feel that the process is ineffective.

Management changes to rules and boundaries within the short period that the home has been open, and poor communication about these, have inhibited effective staff support of young people.

Education is provided on-site, tailored to the needs of individual young people. Recently introduced structured handovers between education and residential staff are supporting young people in their education.

Young people benefit from appropriate support to meet their health needs. Staff manage medication effectively. The organisation has contracted a psychologist to provide direct therapeutic input for young people and guidance for staff. There are plans for the active involvement of the psychologist in considering referrals, alongside the residential and education assessment.

Staff encourage young people to identify interests and activities that they wish to pursue. One member of staff is creative and proactive in obtaining opportunities for young people, for example, work experience with an airline and involvement with a

horse charity.

Staff understand the importance of contact with family for young people and support this well within the agreed contact arrangements.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Young people are not consistently safe in this home. Although the manager has information about the risks to individual young people, this is not used to inform the understanding of the staff team and the management of risk. Risk management plans are poor. They do not provide guidance or strategies for staff on how to effectively reduce risk-taking behaviour. They place an over-reliance on high staffing levels as a risk reduction measure. This staffing level can feel oppressive to young people and has not effectively reduced risks. For example, young people have continued to go missing and been exposed to and suffered harm while absent. Young people report that the response by some staff on return from an episode of going missing is not welcoming or supportive. When young people complete a feedback sheet, their comments provide an insight into the incident, but there is no evidence that this has been used to inform their subsequent care. The manager does not actively pursue independent return home interviews for young people who go missing. These failures lead to missed opportunities for a full exploration of young people's reasons for going missing and to inform actions to reduce the risk of future episodes of going missing.

Staff management of potential self-harm by young people is not underpinned by clear guidance. Risks identified in referral information, such as use of ligatures, are not expressly mentioned in their plans and so there is no management direction for staff on how to reduce these risks. Staff have not received specific training in managing self-harm.

Risk assessments, risk management plans and behaviour support plans repeat the same information and do not guide staff in their care of young people. Staff's use of language in young people's records is blaming of the young people, for example, stating that they are making 'bad choices'. This demonstrates a lack of insight into working with those subject to child sexual exploitation.

Young people report positive relationships with some staff but also express a lack of confidence in others. Relationships between young people have been turbulent. Staff management of bullying has not been effective. The manager's response to this, which is to place one young person in each house, has not supported learning and the development of appropriate relationships.

Staff are ill-equipped to manage young people's challenging behaviour, resulting in an increase in such behaviour. Staff call the police for support to manage these challenges. The lack of meaningful records means that the learning of staff and managers from these events is limited and does not inform staff training and development. This failure to understand and manage behaviour effectively has led to the unplanned endings of the placements for two of the three young people who have used this service.

Young people are not effectively safeguarded because managers do not have a sound understanding of the safeguarding framework, for example, the different responsibilities that the multi-agency safeguarding hub and the designated officer have in relation to referrals, investigations and advice. A record relating to a significant incident could not be found and senior staff did not know what, if any, action was taken. The management communication of safeguarding incidents to relevant external professionals is inconsistent.

The organisation's implementation of sound recruitment checks ensures that only people deemed suitable are employed to work in the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and management of the home are weak. The registered manager has resigned following a period of absence. In the eight weeks since registration, the senior manager with designated responsibility for the home has changed three times. These changes were not communicated effectively to staff, so they did not know who they should direct concerns to when asked by external professionals. A new responsible individual was confirmed in post on 1 June 2017. At the time of the inspection, she was implementing interim day-to-day management arrangements. House managers are now taking on a more direct role in supporting staff and working with others to begin to improve the care of young people.

The managers have reviewed the statement of purpose and plan to broaden the range of needs of the children who may be accommodated, specifically to cease specialising in the care of young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation.

The organisation recruits using robust interview processes but the conclusions are not subsequently used to inform plans to support those staff in accordance with their level of experience. This has been compounded by the manager's limited supervision and support of and guidance for the staff team. In addition, staff have not had the benefit of the comprehensive training programme that was planned. Staff have completed some online training, but this has not been evaluated to determine how effective it has been. As a result, many staff are not sufficiently knowledgeable about or equipped for their roles in the home. Concerns raised by young people about staff competence have not been addressed. This has contributed to the failure to safeguard the young people.

The records of staff working in the home do not provide easily accessible information about who has worked on each shift. The manager's deployment of staff does not demonstrate a good understanding of the service and the needs of young people. Four senior staff, including the registered manager, appear to be on duty during office hours. When there were three young people in three houses, one member of staff was on duty in each for fifteen-hour shifts. This was not changed in the light of increasing incidents and concerns. Staff report that they felt exhausted and unsupported at that time, and this is reflected in staff leaving and in absence through ill-health. Staff morale is starting to improve through more supportive direction from house managers.

There is no evidence of any internal monitoring since the home opened. Record keeping is not systematic and prevents effective oversight. The managers have not informed the regulator of all the notifiable events. A significant number of deficits highlighted in this inspection have been identified and reported on by the independent visitor, the organisation's quality assurance team and other stakeholders. The house managers are beginning to take steps to address the individual issues. However, there is no strategic, overarching plan to continue to secure improvements and to develop the service.

The lack of effective management direction and communication have inhibited the development of cohesive work between residential, education and therapeutic staff. Stakeholders are dissatisfied with the quality of the partnership working. They also describe poor management communication and a lack of response to requests for information.

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: 1249715

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Priory Education Services Limited

Registered provider address: Priory Group, 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Hannah Cox

Registered manager: Tristan Mabey

Inspector(s)

Maire Atherton: social care inspector

Amanda Harvey: social care inspector

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