

1259551

Registered provider: Semi-Independent House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home can accommodate up to five children, of the same gender, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 January 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The staff advocate on the children's behalf in relation to education, health and family contact.
- The staff are working in partnership with the children's schools to ensure that

the children maintain their school placements.

- The staff quickly build a rapport with the children and build on their relationships as the placements continue.
- The children say that they feel safe and happy living at the home.
- The staff speak positively about their manager and how she helps them to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Professionals speak positively about the home and how the staff engage with the children.
- Children say that they feel cared for and describe how this care enables them to enjoy being able to feel like a child for the first time.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home's recruitment process does not ensure that all required checks are undertaken.
- The staff are not updating the children's behaviour management plans with current behaviours.
- The staff are not receiving supervision in line with the home's policies.
- Aspects such as the driveway, fencing and the summerhouse give the exterior of the home an unkempt feel.
- There are inaccuracies and gaps in some of the children's files. Other entries require signing and clarity about who completed the record.

Recent inspection history

Not applicable

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
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32(1))	15/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	15/03/2018

Recommendations

- Provide a nurturing and supportive environment that is homely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, make improvements to the driveway, fencing and the summerhouse.

- Staff should encourage positive behaviour through the use of positive behaviour strategies in line with the child's relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)

In particular, ensure that behaviour management plans are updated to include any new or changed behaviours.

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

This is with particular reference to ensuring accuracy in records and fully completing and signing records when required.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home was newly registered in September 2017. This is the first inspection.

The home has accommodated five children since opening. At the time of the inspection, two children were living at the home. One child had moved into the home on the evening before.

The house is homely, with a number of communal areas including a games room. The children's bedrooms are comfortably furnished, with most having en-suite facilities. The vacant bedrooms are set up in readiness for new admissions. Some aspects of the exterior, such as the driveway, fencing and an outbuilding, need attention. These areas give the exterior an unkempt feel that is not in keeping with the interior of the house.

When the children move in they receive a welcome pack that includes information and toiletries. The welcome packs, coupled with the staff's warm and caring approach, help the children to feel at ease from the moment that they arrive. Both of the children were very relaxed and comfortable in the company of the staff. The staff quickly build positive relationships with the children. Their interactions with the children are jovial and nurturing. This ability to quickly build a rapport with the children was already evident between the staff and the child who has just moved in.

The children's placement plans detail clearly the aims and objectives of their placement. Their weekly planners include targets and the aspects of independence skill development such as laundry and personal care that the staff are helping them to work on. The tasks help the children to gradually improve on any aspects that they may be struggling with, such as personal care. The team's ongoing review of these targets ensures that the children's progress towards achieving them is easy to identify. The staff ensure that the children remain informed and included in their care planning. This includes working towards transitions to new placements or schools. The staff have completed some positive partnership working with a child and his family. This family work enabled the child to return to live with his family. The child completed a feedback form in which he said, 'They [the staff] turned me into a kid.' This is something that he felt he had never previously experienced.

Both of the children attend full-time education. The staff are working with each child's school. The staff are negotiating a reduced timetable for one child who is not coping well, having recently changed to a larger school. The staff have set up a communication book for use by the home and school staff. This communication method ensures that the staff in both settings are aware of any changes in the child's mood or behaviour and any events or situations that may be causing this change. The staff were actively arranging school transportation for the newly admitted child who attends school at a great distance from the home. A staff member drove the child to school and later reported that he [the staff member] had used the journey as an opportunity to get to know the child. The emphasis on partnership working provides the children with consistent approaches.

The staff ensure that the children attend their routine health checks. The staff liaise with the relevant professionals to ensure that the children have regular reviews of any

diagnosis and medication. The staff use their relationship and rapport with the children to encourage the children to consider cessation or a reduction in smoking. This is a positive way of highlighting the harmful effects of smoking.

The children say that they are happy at the home. Their views are sought in various forms, such as children's meetings and key-work sessions. The children participate in a variety of activities in the community. The staff are encouraging them to develop friendships with children from school or their activity groups.

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

Prior to the children moving in, the manager undertakes a matching assessment to ensure that the staff can safely meet the needs of both the new child and those already living at the home. The location risk assessment fully assesses potential risks and details mitigating factors and actions that reduce these risks.

The children are not currently going out without staff members due to their age and unfamiliarity with the area. Any changes in this approach will occur as part of the children's care planning. There have been no episodes of children going missing from the home. The staff are familiar with the procedures that they should follow if an incident occurs. The staff support the children to become increasingly aware of how to remain safe, including when using the internet.

The staff worked closely with a child's [former resident] clinical psychologist to identify strategies that could be used in their work with the child. The strategies learned are transferable for use with all of the children. The manager has also sourced therapeutic crisis training to assist the staff with catering for the specific needs of one of the children. The staff write behaviour management plans for each child. There has been an occasion when the staff failed to update a child's plan to reflect the changes in his behaviour. The failure to update information does not safeguard the children or the staff as it prevents the staff from working with current information.

The staff use rewards and incentives to minimise the need to use sanctions. The staff ensure that the children are aware of how to make a formal complaint or 'a grumble' [informal complaint] from the time that they move in. A child indicated that he felt bullied by another child. The staff were responsive and quickly took the appropriate action. This ensured that the child felt listened to and safe. There have not been any physical interventions, as the staff have successfully used de-escalation techniques to calm situations that have arisen.

When incidents occur, the staff write detailed records and include information on any debriefing conversations that have occurred. The staff have had to undertake one room search. The layout of the form for recording these searches does not make clear whose room was being searched. The manager is addressing this to ensure that it is clearer on future records.

The staff undertake training that helps them to safeguard children. Their training includes recognising and understanding how to work with children who are at risk. These risks include bullying, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Undertaking the training enables the staff to work with general and child-specific knowledge that assists

them in their work with the children and their families.

The staff recruitment process is comprehensive. However, there has been an omission in seeking additional information for an employee. This omission fails to safeguard the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has worked in social care for seven years. She holds a relevant level 5 qualification. She is leading the staff team effectively. The staff speak positively about her 'nurturing and helpful' approach. She is encouraging, and supports the team to help the children to develop. The manager is equally keen to upskill the staff team. One staff member is already talking about career progression, and speaks positively about how the manager shares her skills and knowledge with the team.

The manager has a clear understanding of the progress that the children are making and actively advocates on their behalf. She has a good understanding of the strengths of the team and the areas for development, such as the quality of the recording. Some of the children's case records do not detail which staff member has completed them, others are unsigned, and some paperwork makes reference to past regulations. These omissions indicate a lack of attention to detail and accuracy, which the manager is addressing.

The rota has recently been reorganised to ensure that there are, when possible, a male and female staff member on each shift. The manager feels that this gives the children the continuous opportunity to experience positive role models of different genders.

The staff are enthusiastic about their work, attentive to the children's needs and are eager to help the children to achieve their full potential. The staff who do not currently hold a relevant level 3 qualification will enrol when they complete their probationary period. The staff describe their supervision sessions as helpful and informative. However, the staff, some of whom are still in their probationary period, are not having supervision at the frequency specified in the home's policies. This does not provide the staff with the allotted space and time to reflect on their practice or to identify strategies for further development at the frequency they should be able to expect.

The home has an independent visitor who undertakes a monthly visit and writes a report about the progress of the children and the home. The manager uses these reports, along with her monthly file audits, to identify areas for improvement and development of the service. The manager has completed a detailed quality of care report reviewing the first three months of the home's operation. The manager is developing the format of this report to highlight how feedback from the children, their families and other professionals is being used to shape the service.

The feedback from professionals about the team's work with the children who are currently living at the home and those who have moved out is positive. One professional commented via email, 'You [the staff] have shown great care for [the child]. I have been impressed by how you have worked with him and his family members to achieve the best outcome for him.'

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: 1259551

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Semi-Independent House Limited

Registered provider address: 51 Ploverly, Peterborough PE4 6HZ

Responsible individual: Collins Usada

Registered manager: Ganene Maycroft

Inspector

Sonia Hay, social care inspector

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