

1259551

Registered provider: Semi-Independent House Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private organisation runs this home. It provides care and accommodation for up to five children who have experienced trauma which has left them vulnerable.

The manager was registered with Ofsted in June 2017.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 November 2018

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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: 11 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/01/2018	Full	Good

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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)) In particular, improve staff knowledge and responses to self-injurious behaviours, bullying and online safety.	25/01/2019
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b))	21/12/2018
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2)(b)) In particular, make immediate arrangements to ensure that all of the fire doors close fully and are not propped open.	28/12/2018
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (Regulation 32(1)) In particular, ensure that gaps in employment are investigated and references are verified.	04/01/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy	21/12/2018

("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—
how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home. (Regulation 35 (1)(a))

This is with regard to the follow-up and actions relating to bullying incidents.

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that the internal decoration is homely, and the grounds are free from rubbish.

- If it is likely that there might only be one member of staff on duty at any time the manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children's care, including any likely risks. This assessment should be recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.19)

Inspection judgements

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

The overall experiences of children are mixed. There is currently one child living at the home. Poor assessment and matching processes have resulted in four children having their placements ended at short notice after they displayed difficult and challenging behaviours.

The experiences and progress of the child who lives at the home are positive. The staff care about his well-being and meet his needs. However, staffing levels have been reduced to a minimum of one member of staff working at the home at any time. This reduction in staffing levels has not been sufficiently risk assessed and therefore compromises the child's safety and that of the staff.

The staff have forged positive relationships with the child by communicating in an open and honest way. He attends school and attendance is high. Staff at the home take him to see his family and friends and encourage these relationships, where appropriate.

A range of recreation and leisure options are available to the child which reflect his

interests. Cinema trips and eating out are a popular choice. He attends a local gaming club. This enables him to develop social skills and widen his peer group.

The staff gain the child's views through conversations, key-working sessions and house meetings. This inclusive approach means he is involved in the planning of his care. The honest relationships with staff mean he will tell staff if there is something wrong or if he wants to make a complaint.

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

The home is spacious, well decorated and, despite some institutional internal signs, has a homely and nurturing feel. There is a large rear garden which has several items of rubbish including a disassembled bicycle and a broken rotary washing line. This detracts from what is otherwise a well-maintained garden. Damage to the front porch of the building has been repaired, as has the driveway. Despite these improvements, essential fire safety measures were found to be lacking, with fire doors being propped open with door stops and six fire doors not closing securely. The manager made immediate plans to have the stops removed and the doors repaired as this poses a risk to children and staff.

There have been several bullying instances in the home since the last inspection. These are recorded in various documents such as incident reports. However, there are no follow-up actions to resolve the bullying. While staff record these incidents, there is no evidence to show how these will be addressed or reduced. This leaves children exposed to bullying.

The staff receive training in safeguarding and are clear about their responsibilities to children in their care. However, there are shortfalls in the training provided to staff. These shortfalls include self-injurious behaviour, bullying and online safety. Failure to provide staff with the knowledge, training and skills they need leaves deficits in the care provided to children.

The home is not fully staffed and there are several full-time vacancies. The organisation has an ongoing recruitment cycle. The last inspection raised a regulatory shortfall in safe recruitment checks for workers from overseas. Although this has been addressed, this inspection found further shortfalls in safe recruitment checks. Failure to investigate gaps in employment history or verify references does not mitigate the risk of unsafe staff being employed to work with children.

The manager ensures that safeguarding records are clear and up to date. When children leave the home without permission or go missing from home, the staff follow clear, individualised missing protocols. There have been two episodes of going missing since the last inspection.

Difficult and challenging behaviour displayed by children is de-escalated by the staff to

good effect and physical interventions are used rarely and only as a last resort. The staff use positive reinforcement with success, and sanctions are used sparingly.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager has the appropriate qualifications, experience and skills to manage the home. Staff receive reflective, practice-led supervisions and appraisals according to organisational policy.

The managers encourage the staff team to work collaboratively to provide consistency and stability in the home. There are clear responsibilities and accountabilities, and the staff team has a sense of shared ownership about its practice. One member of staff said, 'The staff are very caring and [the child] is making progress and understands that we genuinely care for him. He trusts us and that is a big achievement.' Staff feel supported by the managers and by each other.

Internal review of care is adequate. Monthly external monitoring by an independent visitor is happening and offers challenge to the home's management.

The young people's case files are concise, detailed and updated regularly. Risk assessments, behaviour management plans and key-working sessions are thorough and evidence participation by the young people. The child said, 'I like living here and the staff make me feel safe.'

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, Northamptonshire PE4 6HZ

Responsible individual: Collins Usada

Registered manager: Ganene Maycroft

Inspector

Ricky D'Arcy: social care inspector

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