

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	24/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC005567
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Stepping Stones Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	Broadwood Education Services LTD, Keys Attachment Centre, Hurstwood Court, New Hall Hey Road, ROSSENDALE, Lancashire, BB4 6HR

Responsible individual	Mrs Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Mr Simon Bottomley
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Inspection date	24/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness. Suitable action has been taken to address two requirements raised at the last inspection. As such safe recruitment practice is now implemented to ensure only those whom are suitable to work alongside vulnerable children and young people do so. In addition further work has been undertaken to ensure children and young people's feelings of intimidation are addressed and responded to appropriately. As a consequence there have been no further reports of bullying since the last inspection. The one recommendation; to ensure that the placing local authority complies with its statutory duties to undertake independent return home interviews, has not been suitably addressed. As such it is harder to evaluate these behaviours, and ensure suitable care plans are in place to promote young people's welfare. The home has experienced a period of instability and crisis over recent months as young people have joined the home and experienced staff members have left. Although the manager has taken action and worked alongside young people, staff, social workers and partner agencies to support young people in managing their emotions and behaviour to reduce their increased risk taking behaviours, this has had minimal effect for most young people. Inappropriate matching and transition arrangements for young people have had a detrimental effect on most young people's placements. The current process for matching young people's needs is ineffective and has resulted in young people placing themselves at risk of harm and experiencing further placement disruption. Following the admission of one young person, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of police calls outs to the home to support the staff in managing the increased numbers of missing from home incidents and increase in anti-social and criminal behaviours of all young people. This has been necessary as not all the staff have had the knowledge, skills and training in working with young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation and in managing and de-escalating potentially difficult situations effectively. Furthermore an increase in missing from home	

incidents, physical restraints, complaints from the local community and an increase in violent and aggressive behaviour has resulted in three young people receiving referral orders and two young people moving on prematurely since the last inspection.

Not all young people's educational needs are being adequately met; as individual education provisions are not identified, nor available at the point of admission. One young person has left the home before suitable education provision was identified and in place for them, and one young person has moved into the home despite no suitable education provision being identified. As such a young child has been without suitable education, or a plan to be reintegrated into a school since joining the home on 10 November 2015.

While most complaints are investigated to a satisfactory conclusion these are not always done so within the prescribed timeframes outlined in the home's complaints policy. Furthermore one complaint from a young person about their mistreatment from a member of the public whilst out in the community, which was shared with the local police, was not passed directly onto the allocated social worker to be investigated. Furthermore significant incidents, such as a concern raised by a placing local authority about the homes management of safeguarding issues, have not been individually highlighted to the regulatory body. As a result Ofsted cannot be assured that the provider has taken all necessary steps to discharge its duties and ensure young people are kept safe.

Suitable internal and external monitoring and reviewing systems support the manager and his senior leaders in identifying the strengths and areas for continued development within the home. The manager is acutely aware of the difficulties that the young people, the staff and he have faced over recent months. He is committed to learning from these experiences to drive improvements forward to ensure all young people benefit from safe, suitable and stable home environments.

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that is part of a large national organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and, or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/05/2015	CH - Full	Good
20/01/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
05/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
03/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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 meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. With particular regards to ensuring that any revisions to the staff team are amended accordingly. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	28/12/2015
8: The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – (a) that staff – (viii) help each child who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of non-attendance and return to school as soon as possible.	28/12/2015
12: 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- (a) that staff- (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. With particular reference to ensuring that any disclosures made	28/12/2015

by a child are referred back to the allocated social worker without delay for the appropriate investigations to be carried out.	
13: The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that – (b) promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to – (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. With particular regards to ensuring that staff are suitably trained and: understand the risk associated with young people who may go missing; who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation and, ensuring that all staff receive regular refresher training in team teach, prior to providing care and support for young people.	28/12/2015
14: The care planning standard is that children receive well-planned care from the home and have a positive experience of admission and transition processes. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.	28/12/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- The registered person must notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in the regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs. This specifically relates to ensuring that all notifiable incidents, such as complaints made against the home, are individually recorded and referred to the appropriate agencies. (The Guide to The Quality Standards, page 63, paragraph 14.10)
- Ensure the manager advocates for and challenges the local authority when safe and well checks and return interviews are not carried out by the responsible organisations. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015