

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	09/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC007290
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered Manager	Deborah Pacquette
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	09/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC007290

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Staff do not proactively and systematically promote internet safety. The home does not have a policy on this important aspect of safeguarding.
- The management of the risks to young people's safety is not robust. The young people's individual risk assessments and management plans do not fully reflect the known risks to their safety.
- The staff practice is not firmly evidence-based. Staff do not efficiently keep young people's files.
- The progress in resolving the issues that the manager has identified as areas for improvement is slow.

The children's home strengths

- The manager and staff respect and listen to young people's views and opinions. They respond to the young people's needs as the utmost priority.
- The home effectively fosters a family feel of the service. Young people describe the home as a calm, enjoyable and happy place. They have built positive relationships with the staff members.
- Staff effectively share information and work in close partnership with other professionals to promote young people's progress. Young people receive additional specialist support that enhances their health and wellbeing.

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
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must make sure that young people's individual risk assessments and risk management plans are comprehensive and robust. They must update these documents whenever a new risk to a young person's safety has come to light.	01/11/2015
13. The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that— (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must develop and implement an internet-safety policy and make sure that all other policies and procedures are updated to reflect current legislation and statutory guidance.	01/01/2016

The registered person must ensure that all employees— (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4))	01/12/2015
The registered person must implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home; and (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. This in particular relates to achieving consistent implementation of the policy by making sure that all staff are aware of and follow the individual children’s behavioural plans; and have a clear understanding of sanctions. (Regulation 35(1))	01/12/2015
The registered person must maintain records (“case records”) for each child which— (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. This in particular relates to having information regarding the child’s general medical practitioner with whom the child is a registered patient recorded in a way that it can be easily accessed. (Regulation 36(1) Schedule 3.21)	01/10/2015
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— (a) the quality of care provided for children. This in particular relates to improving the system for recording significant incidents, so that it enables easy monitoring. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a))	01/11/2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private home provides accommodation and support to up to four young people who are between 11 and 17 years old and might have emotional or behavioural difficulties or a mild mental disorder.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/12/2014	Full	Good
27/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
28/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Young people do not consistently receive effective care and support. Safeguarding and the leadership and management of the home require improvement. The main improvement areas are around developing more effective evidence-based practice and clear written guidance to staff. Many aspects of the staff practice are good and the shortfalls in the provision have not resulted in young people's welfare not being protected. The outcomes for young people have been varied. Some young people had to move as staff could not meet their needs and could not keep them safe. The move has contributed to the instability in their lives. One young person has settled in the home really well, after experiencing multiple placement moves. Staff have done a great job at promoting a sense of permanence and belonging in her life. She describes the home as 'amazing and very enjoyable'. Having returned recently from a holiday that she spent abroad with the Registered Manager's family, she says that the manager treats her as 'her own child'. She is still in contact with one of the young people who left the home. She describes this young person as her 'big sister'. The manager uses the authority that has been delegated to her by the placing authorities to make decisions that effectively foster a family feel of the service. Young people have good access to a wide range of social and recreational activities that they enjoy very much. Through regular house meetings and individual sessions with their key workers, they have many opportunities to express themselves and to make informed choices. Staff respect and listen to young people's views and opinions. Young people enjoy having positive relationships with staff members. Another young person has recently decided to turn his life around. A virtual education officer says, 'It is a credit to his social worker and the home that he has started engaging with his education.' The young person's social worker describes the quality of the support provided in the home as 'fantastic' and the staff approach to care as 'effective'. Another educational professional comments on how staff have created a positive atmosphere that is conducive to learning. However, one young person has continued to struggle with going to school. She has achieved an average school-attendance of only 40%. This is a decrease in relation to the previous school attendance figure. In the Ofsted on-line survey, a social worker commented how	

another young person's educational engagement went downwards while she lived in the home.

Staff work in close partnership with other professionals to promote young people's progress across different aspects of their welfare and to address any barriers to this progress. Young people receive additional specialist support that promotes their health and wellbeing, such as from mental health professionals or substance misuse workers.

Staff successfully promote young people's constructive relationships with their parents and other family members. One young person was able to go back to live with his mum after a short stay in this home. The home has facilitated this move well.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The management of risks to young people's safety is not robust. Staff do not always update young people's individual risk assessments when new risks come to light. As a consequence, these documents do not fully reflect the known risks to the young people or the protective strategies that are needed to minimise those risks. Although staff take actions to promote the safety of young people, the home cannot demonstrate that they are consistently doing everything they can to enhance the young people's welfare. The records relating to the management of significant incidents, such as when a young person ran away with her medication, lack detail on the follow-up actions. The home does not have a policy on internet safety. This means that staff do not have a guidance on this important aspect of protecting young people from harm. Only the manager has had training on this subject. Technological measures to minimise the online risks are in place. However, the manager and staff are unable to clearly explain what those measures are and how they monitor the effectiveness of these measures. When young people raise concerns relating to the e-safety, staff give them advice on how to protect themselves. The young person talks positively about how the staff have helped her when she experienced cyberbullying. However, the weaknesses in the risk management process and the lack of policy and training for staff mean that a high profile is not given to internet safety and it is not systematically promoted in the home. Staff have access to a behaviour management policy, but do not consistently implement it in practice. Although young people have written behaviour management plans, not all staff are aware of them. Some staff lack full	

understanding of what constitutes a sanction. The independent visitor has already identified this as an area for improvement.

A reward system effectively promotes young people's positive behaviour. Staff proactively build young people's confidence and a positive self-image through highlighting their strengths and helping them to develop skills. Apart from one young person frequently missing from care, other incidents are rare. One young person describes the home as a 'calm place'. Another said that it was 'a happy place'.

When young people go missing from home, staff work closely with social services, police and the young person's family to ensure the young person's safety. However, their actions and support have not led to a reduction in this worrying behaviour. One young person spends most of his time away from the home; staff are not sure where he is and what he does during this time. The improvement is that he now responds more often to telephone calls from the staff. Another young person had to be moved from the home due to the concerns around her safety and the high risk of being sexually exploited, as she continued to go missing. Staff have had training on child sexual exploitation and on strategies to prevent radicalisation. There are no current concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation in the home.

Positive relationships with the staff enhance young people's protection. The manager carefully recruits staff and carries out all required checks before allowing them to start working with young people. Regular health and safety checks ensure that the physical environment is safely maintained. The manager has carried out a review of the suitability of the location of the premises.

In addition to this review, the manager assesses any risks for each individual young person related to the location, before she agrees to accept any placements. This is an example of strong safeguarding practice.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
An experienced and appropriately qualified owner/manager has been in her role since the home started operating, 18 years ago. She is passionately committed to providing a good home for looked after young people. She has comprehensively laid out her vision in the home's statement of purpose. She leads by example and is very much involved in providing direct support to young people. She has a clear understanding of their needs and progress. Her leadership style is child-centred, practice based and collaborative.	

However, the reduction in the management resources in the recent months has had a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the service. The home's only team leader is on a maternity leave. The drive to recruit to this post on a temporary basis has not been successful. The recruitment of other staff took longer than planned. This has resulted in the manager leading the shifts and at times, covering residential staff duties. She has also at times covered for the absence of the Registered Manager in another home. The manager and staff have focused on responding to young people's needs as the utmost priority. However, they have not been able to maintain a good standard across the provision. Staff members highlight the lack of time to focus on records as one of the difficulties. The decline from what was consistently a good children's home shows in a number of different ways.

Staff receive regular professional supervision, but the annual appraisals of their individual performance are overdue. The appraisals are scheduled to take place later this month. This is late for all staff and for at least one staff member, this is three months overdue.

Staff do not have access to up to date written guidance on good practice. They have received training on new legislation and the new inspection framework, but the written guidance has not been updated, as yet. The existing policies and procedures still refer to the old legislation and the revoked national minimum standards. The staff have identified those policies that need updating, but the revision has not taken place to bring them in line with the legislation that came into force in April 2015; this is a significant delay.

The staff care practice is not firmly evidence-based. In addition to the already mentioned weaknesses, there are some other issues with record keeping.

Staff do not keep records on the young people's files efficiently. An example of this is that the manager and staff said that they did not have the name of the general practitioner with whom the young person has been registered. This was despite the young person living in this home for almost three months. While trying to evidence their previous attempts to get this information from the relevant parties, they found two hours later that, they actually had this information since June 2015. This is another example of the staff not knowing what is on the young people's files.

An experienced independent person regularly monitors the quality of the service and raises helpful points for improvement. The Registered Manager also monitors and countersigns the records. However, the inefficient system for the logging of incidents undermines the quality of the monitoring. The log of incidents only covers the incidents that happened in the home or witnessed by the home's staff. This means that when a young person sustained an injury while she was out on her own, this was not logged in the home as an incident. This was not recorded in any other log either.

The manager has identified the majority of the issues raised in this report as areas for improvement, but the progress in addressing them successfully is slow.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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*.

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