

## **Children's homes - interim inspection**

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>04/02/2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC008488</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Interim</b>         |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Post Vacant</b>     |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Paul Scott</b>      |

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| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>04/02/2016</b> |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Good</b>       |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>None</b>       |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |
| <p><b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b></p> <p>This home was judged <b>Good</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has <b>declined in effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>Suitable action has been taken to address one of the three requirements made at the last full inspection. The Statement of Purpose has been updated and now includes the qualifications of education staff. It is also clear in describing the arrangements for their professional supervision and that of the clinical team. Written consent for the use of electronic monitoring was not on file for three placing authorities.</p> <p>The home has made some improvements to the processes of notifying Ofsted and other relevant persons of allegations and safeguarding concerns. However, further improvements are required to ensure relevant persons are kept up to date and informed when investigations or matters of concern are concluded. Also, a number of social workers commented on the need for the home to improve its consistency in sharing information. They spoke about unreasonable delays between incidents occurring and them being notified or provided with the written reports. One social worker spoke about a 15-day delay between staff verbally reporting a safeguarding concern and them receiving the serious incident report. These types of delays can make it difficult for professionals to assess whether robust action has been taken to safeguard their respective child.</p> <p>Four recommendations were also made at the inspection in June 2016. A system for recording when professional supervision takes place, including that of the manager, is now in place. However, these records are incomplete because staff are not receiving regular formal supervision from an appropriately experienced person. The manager recognises that this is a missed opportunity to reinforce the support and professional development that is being offered to staff on shift and via clinical supervision.</p> <p>Some improvements have been made to the language staff use when making entries into children's records. For example, records of individual sessions are written in plain English with less reference to therapeutic language. This is making it easier for the children to understand. However, a number of records, including keywork sessions, are still missing staff signatures and are not consistently signed</p> |                   |

by children. The manager acknowledged that the need to focus on the delivery of care has resulted in a decline in the way records are managed. For example, she found it difficult to easily locate a number of records including those relating to notifications and incidents of a safeguarding nature. While these were in the main produced, it did in some cases take a significant amount of time and further adds to the concerns expressed by some professionals about the way information is managed and shared.

The home has experienced a turbulent and challenging time since the last inspection. Significant disruption was noted throughout September 2015 with a high number of incidents, many of which resulted in the police being called to the home. This was mainly as a result of children challenging staff and damaging property, in the main working as a group, being encouraged by each other. These concerns were raised with Ofsted and a monitoring visit was undertaken in November 2015, where it was noted that the manager was taking action to address the inherent issues. Progress in relation to the five requirements and one recommendation has been considered as part of this inspection. While the home is in a better place than previously reported, there is still some significant distance to travel and a number of these continue to be relevant.

There has been a change of manager since the last inspection. The current manager, who has managed this home previously, is suitably experienced and qualified and is currently in the process of registering with Ofsted. She demonstrates a good understanding of the underlying issues and has the skills and experience to take this home forward with the support of senior managers. Comments made by the majority of social workers confirm that they are confident in the manager's skills and ability and happy with placements. One social worker said: 'Georgina is on the ball and always responds to questions, issues and concerns. Her commitment to (Name) has been brilliant and things are in a significantly better place that they were. (Name) is in the right place and is doing really well now.'

Staffing levels have improved and there is an improved balance of gender following the recruitment of a number of male staff. Once recruitment checks are complete it is envisaged that there will be at least one member of male staff on each shift. The introduction of waking night staff has also improved staffing arrangements by providing 24-hour supervision for these exceptionally vulnerable children.

Behaviour management has improved. The staff team has been strengthened and they are well supported in their development of more proactive and less reactive behaviour management strategies. Care staff are working hard to establish positive relationships with children and are more effective in using these when managing conflict and challenging behaviour. They have worked hard to separate the group and break the cycles of behaviour through the use of these relationships, and engagement in positive activities. This has proven effective in reducing the levels of disruption in the home; the use of the police to manage children's behaviour has at present been eradicated in the home. However, there is still some way to go in

order for all staff to be confident and consistent in their approach to managing the challenging behaviour of some children. For example, on the day of the inspection some care staff were hesitant in their efforts to manage one particularly challenging child whose behaviour was escalating over a significant period of time. There was clearly a need for adults to take control as the child was routinely kicking doors and banging hard on windows without anyone assuming control until directed to do so by the manager.

All children attend the organisations school which is situated next to the children's home. This brings about added complexities that are associated with sharing the same location. The manager recognises the need to improve consistency between education and care staff. During the inspection she spoke about her concerns about some of the practice in school. These were mainly about school staff being inconsistent in their responses when managing children's behaviour and keeping them safe. Indeed, on the day of the inspection a full evacuation took place following the activation of a fire alarm. School staff failed to prevent a child from running around the perimeter of the house or stop two children re-entering the building before the evacuation was complete. Had there been a genuine risk of fire the welfare of those children involved could have been seriously compromised, a concern that has been shared with the Department for Education. Positively, the manager has taken initial steps to raise her concerns with education managers and is clear about what responses she expects from them.

Although some areas of the home have been refurbished the home still requires a significant amount of investment to reach a high standard of accommodation. Improvements include a new kitchen and re-carpeting of a number of rooms and walkways. Children have been helped to make their bedrooms more personalised but further improvements are required in a number of rooms. For example, the plaster is missing from below the window in one child's room, exposing the brick work and one bedroom, which is currently unused, is damp and in need of major attention before a child moves in. The speed at which damage is repaired has improved. However, there are still a notable number of outstanding repairs that are incomplete such as damage to radiator covers and the laundry room door for example. Some decoration has taken place resulting in the majority of communal areas being painted magnolia in colour. This is already looking tired and worn with dirty marks and scuffs being present in a number of areas. There is an absence of pictures and soft furnishings throughout the home resulting in a sterile and less than homely feel to the environment, a shortfall consistently noted by social workers and reinforced by some staff who describe the building as 'feeling unloved.'

The home is located on a very busy main road. This is recognised in the home's location risk assessment which identifies the home's electronic gates as a means of safely managing the risk of children running out into the road. However, during the inspection it was noted that this gate was not secured at all times. Also, the gate at the front of the house was missing having been damaged by a child that day. A resident in the community has recently raised concerns with Ofsted citing an

incident when a child ran out of the home and into the road, narrowly missing oncoming traffic. This is a pattern of behaviour for two children currently living at the home and is acknowledged as a concern for the manager. Current arrangements to prevent this occurring are ineffective and require swift action in order to fully safeguard children. The manager realises the urgency of this matter and is due to meet with the organisation's health and safety consultant. In the interim, remedial action has to be taken to adequately safeguard children.

Internal monitoring has improved. The manager has recognised the impact children's negative behaviour has had on staff and has taken a supportive approach to helping them adapt their practice. There is evidence of learning from this challenging period and efforts are being made to regain control and drive improvement. This is without doubt having a positive impact on the direct care of children, who are beginning to find some stability and make progress. The manager recognises that the need to focus on the problematic areas has resulted in a number of shortfalls that have not been picked up through her monitoring and oversight, evidenced by the number of shortfalls identified at this inspection.

## Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people who may be experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A multi-disciplinary team support children and young people with their mental health needs. This home offers education on-site at a registered school.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 29/06/2015      | CH - Full       | Good                    |
| 17/02/2015      | CH - Interim    | sustained effectiveness |
| 11/12/2014      | CH - Full       | Adequate                |
| 31/10/2013      | CH - Interim    | Inadequate 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   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met.</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met standard, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff-</p> <p>(a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that any information shared with placing authorities is done in a timely manner and is sufficiently detailed in content.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          | 04/02/2016 |
| <p>5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met.</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system to ensure each child's needs are met standard, the registered person must ensure that-</p> <p>(c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to addressing the concerns about schools ability to effectively manage children's behaviour and keep them safe from going missing from home.</p> | 03/03/2016 |
| <p>6. The quality and purpose standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose standard, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 03/03/2016 |

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| 2(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |            |
| <p>12. The protection of children standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure-</p> <p>2(a)(v) that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring that appropriate levels of supervision and control are maintained during fire evacuations and that children are not under any circumstances allowed back into the school or home until the drill is complete.</p> | 04/02/2016 |
| <p>12. The protection of children standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure-</p> <p>2(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to reviewing, improving and making effective the measures that are in place to minimise the risk of children running out onto the busy road.</p>                                                          | 04/02/2016 |
| <p>13. The leadership and management standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the standard in (1) requires the registered person to-</p> <p>2(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate.</p> <p>This is with particular reference to developing a cohesive working relationship between the education and care teams to promote a consistent response to meeting each child's needs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                              | 03/03/2016 |
| The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1) (b))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 03/03/2016 |

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| The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))                                                                                                                                                         | 03/03/2016 |
| The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in schedule 3 and that these records are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (b)(c))                                              | 03/03/2016 |
| The Registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child protection enquiry involving a child is concludes, in which case, the notification should include the outcome of any enquiry. (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(iii))                                                          | 04/02/2016 |
| The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(c)) | 03/03/2016 |

## Recommendations

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

- Staff should have the skills to respond to respond to each child's individual behaviour and where necessary they should manage conflict and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. This is with specific reference to ensuring that all staff are proactive in their efforts to manage each child's behaviour (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 39, paragraph 8.14)

## **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*.

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