

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	8 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC008488
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Halliwell Homes Limited
Registered provider address	1 Tape Street, Stoke On Trent ST10 1BB

Responsible individual	Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Louise Redfern / Paul Scott

Inspection date	8 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in 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	Inadequate

SC008488

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The house requires substantial improvement to the standard of the décor, in order to be a homely and safe environment for young people to live in.
- Action needs to be taken to improve records on fire checks and to ensure that fire doors are fit for purpose throughout the building.
- Risk assessments are either not in place or not being kept up to date in order to support staff to manage the current presenting levels of risk.
- The staff team is not receiving regular supervision in line with the organisational policy. Robust systems need to be in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice.
- The home's statement of purpose requires a list of staff and their individual experience and qualifications.
- There is a high level of incidents of physical intervention. Records lack evaluation of and reflection on how this is going to be reduced. There are no records to demonstrate that staff and young people have had opportunities to discuss these individual incidents.
- Processes do not allow for the consistent handover of detailed and relevant information between shifts.
- The manager is yet to complete any monitoring of the home. This means that she is not aware of the areas of strengths and weaknesses, in order to drive forward improvement in the quality of care in the home.
- Young people say that although they feel safe in the home bullying remains an issue. Records do not currently show how this is being addressed by the manager and staff team.
- Individual records of missing-from-home episodes do not capture the detail required to ensure that the manager can effectively monitor the actions taken by the staff team.

The children's home strengths

- Young people say that there are individual staff members whom they can talk to and who care about them.
- The manager and staff team remain committed to each young person, which results in placements that are stable and young people building good relationships with the staff team.
- Contact between young people and their families is well supported and facilitated in line with their individual contact arrangements. This promotes young people's sense of belonging and ensures that they maintain family networks.
- Since their admission, young people are making some progress in aspects of their lives. For example, they are attending education and enjoy participating in individual activities in the community, such as cycling at the velodrome.
- Social workers report that there has been an improvement in communication from the manager and staff at the home. They now receive key information without delay.
- Staff say that the ongoing training programme is effective and supports them in their role.
- The manager has secured a number of improvements to the grounds, which have significantly reduced the risk of young people running into the busy road at the front of the property.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(2)(c))	1 August 2016
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must 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. This is with particular reference to ensuring that; assessments are completed in relation to levels of risk and that up-to-date risk assessments are in place. (Regulation 12(2)(a)(i))	1 July 2016
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person is required to ensure that the day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep children safe. This is with regards to effective handover of information. (Regulation 12(2)(b))	1 July 2016
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1 and must notify HMCI of any revisions, and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement of purpose within 24 hours of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(b), Schedule 1(19))	1 July 2016
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or	1 July 2016

surveillance of children if the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(1)(b))	
The registered person must ensure that the requirements of the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005 are complied with. This is in direct relation to fire doors and records of fire equipment testing and drills. (Regulation 25(b))	1 August 2016
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	1 July 2016
The registered person must ensure that within five days of the use of a measure the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(c))	1 August 2016
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of a use of a measure of control a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequence of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(vii))	1 August 2016
The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	1 August 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))	1 July 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Staff supervision must enable staff to reflect and act on their own feelings and behaviour that may be affected by the behaviour of the children whom they care for. This specifically relates to physical interventions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.15)
- The registered person must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and that staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively ('Guide to the children's

homes regulations including the quality standards, page 39, paragraph 8.16)

- Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing. Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.59)
- The home should be a nurturing and supportive environment that presents as a homely and domestic environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

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. This home offers education on site at a registered school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
4 February 2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
29 June 2015	Full	Good
17 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11 December 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Young people have developed relationships with key members of staff. They enjoy spending time with staff members and say that they feel that they are listened to. One young person commented: 'It's definitely got better since X has been the manager.' Keyworkers support young people on an individual basis, and individual sessions are offered to address individual issues with young people. Young people say that they get together as a group and share their views and choices. They have recently been involved in choosing some of the finishes for a newly created playroom and have put forward further ideas as to how the house can be improved, including converting the one large room into two separate rooms. They say that this will provide an extra room and a cosier feel. The manager has submitted a request for this work to be carried out. Young people have made progress from their starting points. Placing social workers share the view that all the young people have remained stable in the home. One commented: 'X is safe and stable in placement, the staff really care about X.' The majority of young people attend education on a regular basis and are making some progress. Routines have been established to support young people to attend education daily, with strategies put in place to improve home/school communication, including handovers at the end of each school day. These have resulted in some improvements to the relationship between school and the home, although, the manager commented that there is still some way to go to ensure that young people are reaching their full potential. Young people attend regular health appointments and are supported to understand the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. They are all encouraged to engage in regular activities that they enjoy both around the home and in the local community. Young people were observed during the inspection going out to the local park with the staff. Young people are encouraged to engage in activities both as a group and on an individual basis. This enables them to develop appropriate social skills and to meet peers in the community away from the home. Staff support young people to maintain contact with their families and people who are important to them, despite distance. They ensure that contact is safe and in line with individual care plans. This promotes young people's sense of belonging and ensures that they are afforded continuity of care. A parent commented: 'The staff are always there to make arrangements. They do give X a good level of care and I have seen a massive improvement. I am not sure what they are doing, but it's good, whatever they are doing.'	

Young people living in the home are generally younger children. The living skills that they develop are appropriate to their chronological ages and understanding. Transitional planning centres on preparing them emotionally to move on from the home, usually into foster care, given that they only remain in placement for approximately two years. This process is underpinned by staff consultation with the internal clinical team.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Young people spoken with during the inspection commented that they feel safe in the home and that staff care about them. Professionals commented that, given the stability of the individual placements, young people have reduced some of their risk-taking behaviour and have become increasingly safe living in the home. However, risk management plans were not available to view at the inspection. This means that staff also do not have access to up-to-date risk management plans with the agreed strategies to manage and support the reduction of risk-taking behaviour by individual young people. Young people continue to go missing from the home, although for some the number of episodes has reduced. Young people say that they are welcomed back to the home after being missing and that staff are concerned about their whereabouts. The manager ensures that young people have access to an independent person, after they return to the home to share any issues or concerns with. Records for individual missing-from-home episodes do not record specific details, such as how the young people present on their return or any action taken by staff while the young people are missing. This demonstrates that there is a lack of effective management overview of the incidents. Consequently, incidents are not reviewed holistically in order to identify any patterns or trends, or actions to prevent further episodes of missing. Young people identify bullying as an issue in the home, but they said that staff have made attempts to manage this with limited success as bullying remains an issue. Recording of how bullying is challenged and addressed is poor and does not show the action taken by the manager and staff team to support individual young people to feel safe and free from bullying in the home. Staff have established relationships with young people and encourage and support positive behaviour. As a result, some young people have responded positively to individual incentives and enjoy the benefits of achieving their goals. However, there continue to be a high number of challenging incidents that have resulted in staff being assaulted and having to use physical intervention to keep themselves	

and young people safe. The manager does not monitor and evaluate individual episodes of physical intervention effectively. This means that records are not routinely reviewed to ensure that they are compliant with regulations, and that no patterns or trends in the use of physical interventions are identified. This results in the continued use of physical intervention to manage behaviour. Young people say that they are spoken to after a physical intervention. However, the records do not consistently show that they are. This is a missed opportunity for young people to reflect on and move on from the intervention.

The manager has taken some action to address concerns raised in the last inspection about the risks associated with the locality of the home in relation to a busy road. A new fence has been erected, and the manager has ensured that the electronic gates are in working order. These measures have provided the staff with further mechanisms to manage young people safely around the site. One member of staff commented: 'The gates and fences give staff time to engage with young people if they are making attempts to leave the site. This extra time has reduced the number of reported missing episodes and prevented any incidents of young people running into the road.'

Since the last inspection, some areas of the home have been redecorated and the office has been moved to provide another room for young people to access. This room has been decorated and furnished to a high standard. However, young people and staff comment that they are unable to use this room regularly because it is often used as a storeroom. However, most areas of the house remain in a very poor state of repair. There are a number of broken windows. Some young people are unable to open their bedroom windows for ventilation. Radiator covers are damaged and in a poor state of repair, and there is considerable damage to internal walls. A large number of windows have no curtains, and a sheet is being used on one young person's bedroom window. The current system and arrangements for managing repairs and the ongoing maintenance of the house are ineffective. Some action is being taken to manage daily cleaning tasks. However, some areas of the home remain unclean and unsanitary. Young people do not have access to hand soap or towels in bathrooms. Individual young people who have enuresis are not provided with adequate adaptations in their bedrooms to ensure their bedrooms remain clean and welcoming private spaces.

Staff said that they carry out regular checks of the fire system in the house. However, these checks were not available to review at the inspection. During the inspection, a fire drill took place. This was much improved from the drill observed at the interim inspection. Education staff were able to ensure that young people remained out of the building until directed to return. One young person failed to leave the home. Staff were aware of their position and were observed discussing this with the young person following the drill. A number of fire doors around the home were propped open with door wedges, despite a number of the doors having had self-closers installed. Furthermore, a number of the fire doors have holes in them, from where locks have been removed. This means that the integrity of the doors has been compromised and they would not give adequate protection to

young people and staff in the event of a fire. This is compounded by the fact that there have recently been a number of incidents involving young people fire setting in the home. These shortfalls represent a significant risk to young people in the event of a fire in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The manager has been in post since last year. She has not yet completed the registration process. There has been a significant delay in Ofsted receiving the completed application This has now been received and is being processed. Consequently, this service has been without a registered manager since October 2015. The current manager is suitably qualified and has a significant amount of experience, having previously been registered as manager of this home. She had remained employed by the organisation in an alternative role after resigning her previous registration. There have been changes to the management team since the last inspection. A new deputy has now been appointed. These changes to the management team have yet to be embedded. This has resulted in the staff team and young people being unclear about the structure of the management team, and the managers have not yet addressed all of the previous shortfalls raised at the last inspection. The manager is not undertaking any internal monitoring of the home. Consequently, she is unable to determine areas of weaknesses and strengths in the home, or to prioritise key areas for improvement. This was raised at the last inspection as a shortfall, and the requirement is restated. External monitoring from the independent visitor is in place. The visitor has developed working relationships with young people, because of the consistent and thorough visits. Young people and staff were observed positively interacting with the visitor during the inspection. However, the visitor does not make a clear statement of their opinion as to whether the young people are effectively safeguarded in the home. The staff team has gone through some changes since the last inspection, with new members of staff commencing their employment. Records show that individuals do not receive regular supervision. This means that staff do not receive support to help them to carry out their roles. As a result, individuals do not have the opportunities to share their feelings about challenging incidents and physical interventions, in order to learn from individual incidents. Records show that team meetings are being held regularly and, on the whole, are well attended by the staff team. Individual team members commented on the good	

quality of the training provided. The manager has ensured that staff are either qualified or working towards qualification within the appropriate timescales.

However, handovers are ineffective. Key information is not handed over to shift leaders, leaving young people and staff potentially compromised. For example, on the day of the inspection, the managers left the home without informing the senior on duty that the fire alarm was not working. This was brought to the attention of the senior on duty, by the inspector. The senior did, then, make arrangements to ensure the safety of young people although the fault was not rectified until the following day.

The statement of purpose was reviewed in April 2016. However, HMCI had not received a copy of this revised document at the time of the inspection. The manager commented that since the last inspection there had been a continued focus on the delivery of care to the young people, resulting in her not being able to prioritise management tasks. This was evident in the number of shortfalls identified in management monitoring and oversight of records. This focus has continued to support young people to be stable in their placements, resulting in longevity of placements and young people making progress from their starting points.

Professional relationships between the home, education and placing authorities have improved since the last inspection. Social workers commented that, in general, information is being received more quickly and communication is more effective. However, the manager acknowledged that there are still some improvements to be made, in particular in day-to-day information being shared, given that all young people live some distance from their placing authorities. The manager commented that there is some improvement in communication between the home and school, but there is still a way to go to ensure that young people are accessing the onsite school without incident and making good progress. Formalised communication between home and school, including regular senior leadership meetings and formal handovers built into the school day, has improved information sharing and is starting to provide consistency for young people.

The manager has continued to use door alarms on young people's bedrooms, despite some placing authorities not providing their consent to this practice. The manager has made attempts to gain consent. However, this has not been fully pursued to ensure that young people are being cared for in line with the agreed plans.

The manager has satisfactorily addressed seven of the requirements raised at the last inspection. Four remain outstanding and have been restated. A further seven requirements and five recommendations have been raised at this inspection. The manager acknowledges that there is still some way to go to secure significant improvement in the home, and, in particular, to ensure that the physical environment of the building provides young people with a home that is well decorated and homely.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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