

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	11/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC008490
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	Julie Hamilton
Registered manager	Sylvia Eboigbe
	Claire Brady
Inspector	Ceri Evans

Inspection date	11/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 Requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Improved effectiveness. At the last inspection in June 2015 the home was experiencing a period of instability and crisis. Five requirements were made in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of young people. Evidence gathered at this inspection indicates that the Registered Manager has sufficiently addressed the shortfalls. Following the last inspection staffing numbers have increased. The manager has recruited new workers and shifts are now covered by a core group of staff, not agency workers. As a result young people are cared for by staff they know and feel comfortable with. Staff at the home work hard to develop caring and trusting relationships. The team value young people as individuals and show a great deal of care and consideration towards them. They are supportive, approachable and have a good understanding of the young people's needs. This allows young people to feel that staff are there to support and guide them on important issues in their life. Young people spoken with during the inspection confirm that they like the staff and feel cared for. One said: "things are much better now. I'm doing well and I'd rate this home as 7.5 out of 10, that's better than the last time you (the inspector) visited. I like staff and I know they care". Young people are helped and protected because staff have a good awareness of individual risks. Risk assessments are sufficiently detailed. Staff are fully aware of potential risks and understand how to prevent them. Overall there has been a marked improvement in the home's ability to manage challenging situations. Staff have attended behaviour management training and take time to reflect and consider different ways to manage situations. Professionals also confirm that things have improved. A social worker stated: 'The team have been able to step back, reflect and taken appropriate action to work through some difficult times. Our concerns have been taken seriously and the home has made appropriate changes to safeguard the young person.' Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint. Records confirm that there has been a reduction in the use of restraint in recent months. When restraint	

has been necessary it has been used appropriately and for the least amount of time possible to keep young people safe. Following the incident young people are given the opportunity to explore their experiences and communicate any concerns they may have. The manager evaluates all records to ensure actions taken by staff remain appropriate and in the young person's best interest.

There has been some bullying within the home. However, this has been quickly addressed with the young people; through individual sessions, discussions in young people's meetings and increased staff support. One social worker stated: 'the staff team are working on developing the relationship between young people, there has been an improvement and they are getting on better.' This positive intervention has resulted in young people feeling safe to discuss their bullying concerns and is confident that staff will take action.

Missing from home incidents continue to be a concern. Some young people's missing episodes have decreased significantly while others have increased. Records confirm that when young people go missing staff take swift action and go out and actively search known areas, and make several attempts to contact them. The home is now well resourced which means that staff can spend time looking for young people when they are missing and return them home. While good practice is noted in relation to staff action, records of missing incidents are less robust and are not completed with sufficient rigour. Overall, records lack clarity in relation to what action has been taken, where they were located and the circumstances of their return. More positively, the home has forged good links with other professionals to address missing from home concerns. Close working relationships and regular professional meetings provide a basis to review current strategies and look at ways to help prevent young people going missing in the future.

The Registered Manager deals with significant events appropriately, ensuring that these are investigated and reported to relevant agencies such as the placing authority, parents and the Local Authority Designated Officer. That said, not all notifications are sent to Ofsted in a timely manner. Furthermore, the quality of information within notifications is varied. Some offering a good level of information while others lack clarity. This is not good practice, as records made in this way hinder the regulators ability to ensure that the provider has taken all necessary steps to keep young people safe. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is in the process of identifying appropriate development opportunities to enhance recording practice within the home.

Young people live in a home which is safe and well maintained. Following a requirement at the last inspection the manager has improved health and safety arrangements. Hazardous and dangerous equipment, such as tools are now locked away. Furthermore, the home has been re-decorated and all repair work has been undertaken. This provides a basis for a more homely and comfortable environment.

The leadership and management arrangements are effective. The quality assurance and monitoring systems are used well by the manager to ensure she has a clear overview of the service. The manager has high aspirations for, and expectations of all young people, and expects staff to deliver a good standard of care. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and action plans are implemented within clear timeframes; this demonstrates the manager's ability drive developments for the benefit of young people placed.

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home which is part of a national organisation. It provides care for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
06/01/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
30/07/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
10/03/2014	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.

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified within 24hours, to the appropriate people. Notifiable must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event (the guide page 63, 14.13)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understanding the importance of careful, objective and clear records. With specific reference to improving the quality of information within Missing from home and incident records (the Guide p62 14.4)

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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