

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	24/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC022447
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Nugent Care
Registered person address	99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool, L7 2PE

Responsible individual	Anne-Marie Carney
Registered manager	Susan Hatton
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd

Inspection date	24/02/2016
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. Children's progress and experiences since the last inspection have been mixed. One child has continued to make slow but steady progress and is benefitting from engaging with partner agencies, supported by staff. The home continues to support the child's physical and emotional well-being by providing a safe, stable environment during a challenging period in her life. The staff team are fully committed to helping the child achieve better outcomes. The home is encouraging her to prepare for transition to a semi-independent placement and plans are in place for staff she knows well to provide some limited outreach in her new placement. This is in recognition of her very high levels of vulnerability. Two children have moved on since the last inspection. Both made good progress initially but had a decline in their outcomes after Christmas. One went missing from her family home, over the Christmas holidays, shortly before her planned discharge. This unplanned ending to the placement was a shock to all professionals, as the home had done much to strengthen the bonds between her and her family in preparation for a return home. For example, two staff accompanied the child on public transport for long journeys home and to court, until she could be trusted to make the journey independently and safely. The staff team had encouraged regular phone contact and helped the child to envisage a more positive future, teaching her independence skills and supporting her at college. The child remains missing and there are serious concerns about her safety and welfare. Another child, who had previously made very good progress, returned to unsafe behaviour by going missing several times and engaging in unsafe sexual relationships with men she did not know. She was sexually exploited. She refused to engage with a specialist agency in learning about safe social and sexual	

relationships. The home recognised she was no longer safe. They worked with the placing authority and other agencies as part of a multi-agency team but were unable to prevent her escalating, dangerous behaviour. They supported her to access treatment and appropriately shared information with the police to promote her future safety. Staff supported her to move to an alternative, specialist placement following a planned, short transition.

Both children had been admitted to this home from a secure setting. Both had a history of sexual exploitation and serious concerns for their welfare during previous episodes of being missing from home. Prior to their admission, both had engaged with a specialist agency and completed a short programme of work focusing on staying safe. Both returned to dangerous lifestyles.

The need for staff to do more to help educate children about grooming, the safe use of the internet and social media and the dangers associated with their previous lifestyles had been identified at the last inspection. It was recommended that the home install Wi-Fi to enable access to NSPCC u-tube videos and other specialist resources to support this work. Delays in setting up computers with internet access in the home meant that staff did not carry out the work.

Records of key worker sessions, children's consultation meetings and staff team meetings are minimal. They do not show that the home addressed safety issues in any meaningful way with the children concerned. Similarly, children's individual plans and records do not demonstrate that helping children understand about safe, social and sexual relationships is a key area of work with these children, despite their high level of need. Consequently, the children did not receive good support in preparing them to stay safe in the community. The home is not doing enough to set out how it will support children's individual needs, measure their progress and meet its statement of purpose.

Assessment of risk is not always strong and this does not ensure children are fully protected. For example, it was assessed that a child could not have a mobile phone as they were in danger of misusing it and being at risk of sexual exploitation. No plans were put in place about how the risk was to be reassessed over time and what action staff needed to take to reduce those risks. After several months, the child was provided with a mobile phone. There was no indication of how the home had assessed that the originally identified risks to the child's safety had reduced. This meant that a child at risk of sexual exploitation through social media was provided with a mobile phone without an assessment of risk and no clear action plan for how to protect her. The child subsequently misused the mobile phone and

her dangerous behaviour spiralled out of control.

Following most, but not all, incidents of children going missing, an independent person interviews the child on their return. Where these visits do not take place, there is no indication of the reason for the shortfall within children's individual files. Nor do files demonstrate that the home has taken action to follow this up with the social worker or the assigned independent agency. This does not show the home is being proactive in ensuring partner agencies meet their obligations to protect children, by exploring with them the reasons they went missing and their safety while missing.

A new responsible individual has been appointed since the last inspection. During the transition of this role, support to the home was not good. For example, during the manager's annual leave, the deputy manager did not feel well supported to make clear decisions when faced with safeguarding matters and conflicting advice from different police forces.

Areas for development identified at the last inspection have not been fully addressed. The management oversight of the home is not sufficiently strong to ensure that changes to staff practice are embedded and that recommendations for improvement are actioned swiftly. For example, a recommendation to cease the institutional practice of checking on children's sleep patterns every half hour through the night was made at the last inspection following a child's complaint that this was disturbing her. Despite instructions from the manager not to carry out checks, unless placement plans identify this is necessary, night staff have continued to do so. Management oversight of the home has not been good enough to identify that night staff have not implemented the agreed changes in practice.

A recommendation to review the arrangements for children's use of the phone has been partially met. Children no longer use the phone on the landing and are able to have telephone conversations in private, in the dining room. However, apart from when they contact emergency and child support agencies, children cannot make phone calls without asking staff for permission to use the phone. This means their contact with family continues to be unnecessarily restricted for those children who don't have their own mobile phone, even when there are no restrictions on contact in place.

Although the home has secured a computer for children's use in the home, it has not been yet set up for safe internet use and is therefore not yet in use. This does not enable staff to promote children's learning through the use of safe technology. However, the manager has taken action to speed up the installation of Wi-Fi and

the relevant safety software.

The organisation's clinical psychologist has begun meeting with the staff team once a month to reflect on their practice and help them to identify effective strategies for promoting better outcomes for children. Staff do not have access to the minutes of these meetings. While staff value the opportunity to reflect on their work, they are unable to identify how it has helped them to improve their practice. This does not indicate that the home has used this opportunity for learning to improve children's experiences.

The home has worked well with partner agencies including colleges and the voluntary sector. This has enabled children to have opportunities to enjoy and benefit from voluntary work and part-time college courses. The home engages fully with the local multi-agency safeguarding hub, police forces across the country and placing authorities, thereby helping to protect children who go missing.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with emotional and / or behavioural difficulties. The home provides transitional placements for children moving on from the adjacent secure children's home as well as short and long term care for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/09/2015	CH - Full	Good
07/01/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
12/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
13/03/2014	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
8: The education standard 8 – (1) The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – (b) that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. This relates to the installation of a computer on which children can learn how to use the internet and social media safely.	15/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard 12.—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to	15/04/2016

protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. In particular, risk assessments based on children's known history must identify where children are at risk of child sexual exploitation and include clear direction for staff about how those risks are to be mitigated. Decisions to withdraw or reduce safety measures that have been put in place to protect children must be based on a robust assessment of a child's progress in relation to their safeguarding needs.	
11: The positive relationships standard 11.—(1) The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— (a) mutual respect and trust; (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (vi) help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful; (vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. In particular, do more to protect children at risk from unhealthy sexual relationships by educating them about self-respect, grooming and on-line safety.	15/04/2016
22: Contact and access to communications	15/04/2016

Ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home – (a) a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private; and (b) facilities to send and receive post, and, if the necessary facilities are provided for the use of children, electronic mail, in private. In particular, review the arrangements for use of the phone by those children who have no restrictions on contact and do not have a mobile phone (Regulation 22 (3))	
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Recommendations

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

- Ensure that each child's day to day health and well-being needs are met. In particular, risk assess and review the need for night staff to carry out checks on individual children throughout the night and make sure that the need for such checks, where appropriate, is agreed in a child's placement plan. (The Guide, page 33, paragraph 7.3)
- Review the arrangements for children's use of the telephone. In particular, provide access to a telephone that children can use privately in line with contact arrangements laid out in their individual placement plans. (The Guide, page 58, paragraph 11.17)
- Ensure that children's case records are kept up to date and that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that records demonstrate clear and robust planning and review of children's progress including details of work completed with them in key worker sessions and evidence of measurable progress. (The Guide, page 62, para 14.4)
- Demonstrate any action you take to prompt partner agencies to fulfil their duties, as outlined in statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. In particular, ensure records show how you achieve engagement and escalate concerns when children do not receive return interviews after a period of being missing. (The Guide, page 11, 2.3 and page

45, para 9.25)

- Ensure clear lines of accountability and that everyone, understands their roles and responsibilities. Ensure arrangements are in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. In particular, ensure that the responsible individual effectively supports the deputy manager when she is in charge of the home. (The Guide, page 54, para 10.20)

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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