

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC023646
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Acorn Homes (UK) Limited
Registered person address	424 Margate Road, Westwood, Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 6SJ

Responsible individual	David Knowles
Registered manager	Tiffany Healy
Inspector	Mark Blesky

Inspection date	03/03/2016
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 Sustained effectiveness. Two requirements and six recommendations were made at the last inspection, the Registered Manager has effectively addressed them all. Staff understand young people's wish to keep in contact with friends and family and make personal calls. A new telephone has been provided which is generally kept in the lounge, but as it is portable phone they can use it in their rooms for greater privacy. Staff are aware of risks within the community; an area risk assessment plan is in place detailing the suitability of the home's location. Consultation with key agencies, including the police and health authority, informs the assessment. For example, information regarding crime trends in the wider area, has helped shape the homes referral criteria. Key working discussions effectively help young people develop their risk assessments. Staff and young people consider potential and identified risks and agree strategies to minimise them. One young person commented, 'staff know me well and when I am being unsafe they look after me'. The home has established effective anti-bullying procedures through discussions with staff in team meetings and supervision sessions. This has become a rolling agenda item in team meetings and is used by staff to consider when young people are particularly vulnerable. New training has been provided to look at exploitation and protecting young people on-line. With these increased insights, staff better understand the signs and symptoms of abusive behaviours increasing their ability to protect children. Bullying is uncommon in this home and one young person stated, 'there is no way staff would put up with bullying'. Another young person said, 'if anyone tried to bully me I would tell staff immediately, we don't have bullying here'. Where	

matters of bullying are logged they are filed within the home's general incident records. Recognising and addressing bullying is complex, dedicated recording systems would promote greater focus on managing incidents of bullying.

The home has used themed team meetings to revisit subjects such as whistleblowing and practice development. Staff say that this creates a learning environment where they feel comfortable to question their practice, that of others and consider the culture within the home. The role of the local area designated officer, the local authority and the homes internal child protection procedures have been raised in staff training. This has enabled staff to understand the roles of safeguarding agencies, the support that they have and consider the responsibilities they hold in their safeguarding role.

The home has a formal complaints procedure, however, complaints are uncommon with the last being made over 18 months ago.

The home is well maintained in most areas and the maintenance team promptly undertakes any repairs necessary. The home is clean and tidy, providing a pleasant and homely environment. Young people are encouraged to take a pride in their home and keep the communal areas and bedrooms tidy. One young person's bedroom had been allowed to become untidy; the deputy manager took immediate action to address this.

The home has recently reviewed its fire safety planning and has drawn up new fire building plans. The fire equipment in the home is well maintained with regular service and maintenance. The fire plan did not indicate the location of all fire appliances within the home; this presented a potential risk as young people, staff and visitors may not be clear about the location of firefighting apparatus.

Young people's education is keenly encouraged and staff have high aspirations for them. Young people who previously refused school now go regularly. This has been achieved through the hard work of staff in engaging with schools and their tenacious efforts to find the right schools to meet young people's needs. Young people spoke about their schools with enthusiasm, one said, 'I never went to school before I came here, it was boring'. Another commented 'I want to get a good job when I'm older, and I now know that won't happen unless I go to school'.

Young people typically live in harmony, they form and maintain good relationships with one another and establish trusting, respectful relationships with staff. Relationships were seen to be warm and friendly, with staff engaging young people sensitively. Sanctions are uncommon and the home uses reparation, young people talk through incidents of negative behaviour. This results in young people gaining a

better understanding of how their behaviour affects others and impacts on their progress.

The home is using Regulation 44 and regulation 45 assessments effectively to look at trends and patterns of behaviour within the home. The manager and staff undertake an analysis when shortfalls or areas for development are highlighted. For example, in response to promoting community membership, more emphasis is now placed on encouraging young people to find individual interests and more structured hobbies and clubs. This has increased young people's self-confidence, helped them sustain relationships and resulted in them forming friendships within the wider community.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is one of six owned and operated by an independent provider. It is registered to accommodate and provide care for up to 8 young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/11/2015	Full	Good
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/01/2015	Full	Good

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
The registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the children's home. In particular ensure that the fire plan accurately provides the location of firefighting equipment (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	10/04/2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure practice in the home is effective and results in young people's bedrooms being maintained and cleaned regularly. (The Guide to the Quality Standards p16 paragraph 3.20)

Ensure staff take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers. In particular the home should take steps to keep records specific to bullying to alert staff and inform development. (The Guide to the Quality Standards p16 paragraph 3.12)

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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