

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC023646
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Acorn Homes (UK) Limited
Registered provider address	424 Margate Road, Westwood, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6SJ

Responsible individual	David Knowles
Registered manager	Tiffany Healy
Inspector	Ruth Coler

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people say that this is a good place to live. They like it here because staff care for them well, take time to get to know them and understand who they are and what is important to them. Young people clearly feel valued. How young people move into the home and leave are managed well and this helps them to understand how to cope with changes by understanding what to expect and being able to question things that they worry about. When young people move out, staff ensure that they can talk about how their care may be different elsewhere and how their daily routines might change, such as how they get to school. Staff also ensure that they have photos and items to help them remember their time at the home and the staff. When young people arrive, they settle quickly and are helped to be in education as soon as possible. They receive good information about what it is like to live here. Basic compatibility assessments are undertaken before a young person moves in. This assessment reviews the young person's needs against those of other young people living here. The assessments have been improved with the introduction of a new format. This change will support the level of review undertaken verbally to be reflected in written documentation. The manager confirmed that she kept summaries of all the young people when they leave so that she can consider these when she thinks about taking a new young person. Young people generally live here for some time and have a sense of permanence. Their strengths, needs and achievements are carefully monitored and reviewed, which leads to young people making good progress. Staff know how to safeguard young people and act appropriately when concerns arise. Only one safeguarding concern has arisen since the last inspection and the staff worked collaboratively with the local authority that placed the young person. However, the concern was not reported to the local authority where the home is located. This inaction did not affect the young person but it is a concern that due process was not followed when a safeguarding concern arose. Satisfactory risk assessments are in place from the time a young person comes to	

live here. The assessments are updated as staff get to know young people and reviewed frequently. Specific assessments to identify concerns regarding child sexual exploitation are being trialled.

Fire safety records and plans indicate that fire safety may not follow good practice guidance at all times. Fire induction records for young people ask a question about how to exit a bedroom window which could be misleading. The fire door seals in the office do not appear to be in a satisfactory condition and may not function in the event of a fire.

The registered manager provides good leadership and management of all aspects of the service. She places emphasis on the progress and outcomes for the young people. She helps her team to progress and develop too. The home's statement of purpose is up to date but it does not reflect the individual nature of the home. For example, the home's aims and objectives do not reflect this particular setting.

Training is effective. It supports staff to develop the skills to meet young people's needs and for senior staff with supervision responsibilities to manage their responsibilities to staff effectively.

Partnerships with relevant agencies are supportive yet challenging when necessary. Staff attend regular meetings about the young people and provide regular information on how young people are being cared for, which social workers appreciate.

Plans for monitoring and developing the service are well organised, up to date and evaluate the home's progress effectively. The recommendation regarding staff supervision made at the last inspection has been met.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/11/2015	Full	Good
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

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

- The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
In particular the Statement of Purpose should reflect the individuality of this home, and its aims and objectives should be more clearly emphasised.
- The policy for the protection of children from abuse or neglect should be available and explained to children and their families as well as to all staff, whatever their role. The registered person must make sure that all staff are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with it, in particular how to report a concern. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.21)
In particular, if a safeguarding concern relates to a child placed by any local authority this is reported to the safeguarding team with responsibility for the area where the home is located.
- Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
In particular, the registered person should ensure that all aspects of fire safety are met fully.

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 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 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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