

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	18/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC023739
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered person address	Ethelbert Specialist Homes, Cheesemans Farmhouse, Alland Grange Lane, Manston, RAMSGATE, CT12 5BZ

Responsible individual	Leslie Davenport
Registered manager	Tracey Bowden
Inspector	Anna Williams

Inspection date	18/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Following the last inspection, two compliance notices were issued. These related to safeguarding arrangements in the home, and to the notification of serious events. Actions taken to meet these notices were considered during this inspection. Both notices are met.
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	Requires improvement

SC023739

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Weaknesses still remain within the Registered Manager's oversight of the quality of care provided. A previous requirement to improve internal monitoring systems is repeated.
- The management of the only missing from care incident since the previous inspection was uncoordinated and not in line with the organisation's own policy. Requests from a child to be collected were not responded to until the next day. This left this child at risk of harm. Previous recommendations relating to the response of staff when children are missing have not been met and are repeated.
- The inspector identified one medicine that had expired yet staff were still administering it to a child. Internal medication audit systems had not identified this shortfall.
- The statement of purpose describes two adults providing overnight 'sleep in' care to children. This has not been followed in practice. One staff member completed a 'sleep in' shift with two children without formal assessment of the risks involved. Information provided to placing authorities and parents within the statement of purpose is incorrect and does not reflect this practice.
- The independent visitor has not completed any safeguarding training for some years. This visitor does not have up-to-date knowledge and skills to suitably evaluate and report on how well children are effectively safeguarded.

The children's home strengths

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Children are well-prepared for transitions and successfully move back to the care of their family in line with their care plan.■ Staff plan and facilitate a wide range of activities, including holidays for children.■ Children speak positively about living in the home. |
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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
13. The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must- (2) (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	19/10/2015
16. Statement of purpose The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16(5))	19/10/2015
23. Medicines The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	19/10/2015
34: Policies for the protection of children The registered person must implement "the missing child policy". (Regulation 34(4))	19/10/2015

Recommendations

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

Ensure the home's procedures take into account the views of appropriate local

services and have regard to police and local authority protocols for responding to missing person's incidents in the area where the home is located. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.29)

Ensure Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) are informed about missing and away from placement without authorisation episodes. Ensure care staff inform the child's social worker and the IRO that the child has returned. (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, pages 20 and 22, paragraphs 56 and 57)

Ensure that the independent person appointed has the skills and understanding necessary to relate to children in a children's home, assess all relevant information, and form an impartial judgement about the quality of the home's care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.8)

Ensure there are contingency plans in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. Ensure if it is likely that there might be only one member of staff on duty at any time the manager makes a formal assessment of the implications for children's care. Ensure this assessment is recorded and available for inspection by Ofsted and placing authorities. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care for up to three children with emotional and behavioural needs. It is run by a private organisation. The statement of purpose states that the home provides care for children who have a history of going missing and who may be at risk from sexual exploitation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/06/2015	CH - Full	Inadequate
19/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
30/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Observations show that children build strong relationships with staff members. Children are relaxed and at ease in their home. They speak positively about the home, describing it in words like 'awesome, fun', and 'incredible'. Children talk with enthusiasm about a recent summer break where they stayed at a holiday park with staff. Photos and videos capture them dancing, laughter and their new friendships made through the holiday experience. Activities are what children enjoy most about living in the home, especially dance club and seeing peers locally. Children continue to make good progress at school. One child won an outstanding achievement award for literacy from their local authority. Staff attend school events and open evenings to help children advance academically. A previous requirement to ensure that the outcomes of any psychological assessments are implemented in practice has been addressed. Health profiles, following a thorough review, are up to date. This ensures all relevant information is available for staff to follow. Attendance at routine health appointments continues to be suitably facilitated by staff. Children continue to maintain attachments with family members and siblings. One child has successfully moved back to live with their family in line with their identified care plan. Staff sensitively prepared the child ahead of their leaving date through key working and facilitating extended home contact visits. Staff celebrated the child's time in the home with a goodbye meal, presents and a memory book. Children are actively involved in planning activities. As a result, they engage well and build confidence to try new clubs and go to local community events. The wide range of activities includes trips to wildlife parks, swimming, picnics and theatre shows. This provides children with varied experiences and new interests. Children continue to acquire age appropriate life skills. Staff members undertake regular, focused key working sessions with children to help them to learn how to keep safe. They discuss topics such as stranger danger, road safety and the dangers of the sea. Children know what to do if they are worried. They readily identify staff to talk to if they are upset or unsure about anything. Staff members positively address matters relating to children's identity. Children and staff learn together about different cultures through the internet and positive discussions.	

Arrangements for the administration and disposal of medication require improvement. It was identified on the inspection that one medication had pharmacy directions to dispose of it after 28 days of opening. Currently there is no system in place which documents when a medication is opened. Staff had continued to administer this medication without considering if it required disposal. This risks a child's physical health as the medication deteriorates after 28 days.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
There are improvements in the knowledge base of the Registered Manager and the wider staff in regards to their roles and responsibilities in the management of safeguarding matters. Some staff members have attended focused training on child sexual exploitation and how to respond if a child is at risk in the community. Staff members demonstrate a wider awareness of signs of possible exploitation. They are now clear about their role in reporting such concerns. Further safeguarding training is planned in September 2015 in relation to risk management. The remainder of the staff team will also complete the child sexual exploitation training in the near future. There have been no safeguarding matters since the previous inspection. As a result, the revised child protection systems cannot yet be fully evaluated for their effectiveness. Senior staff members within the organisation have worked with the Registered Manager to implement an action plan created following the last inspection. A previous requirement to ensure the Registered Manager requests a formal review of a child's care plan has been addressed. There have been no instances of children placing themselves at risk or persistently missing. The Registered Manager demonstrates an increased awareness of the need to take prompt actions if a child displays such behaviours. A revision of the notification of serious events policy has taken place and is now in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. There have been no serious events which required notification since the previous visit. The Registered Manager is aware of the need to keep external parties informed and up to date in relation to safeguarding incidents. Since the previous inspection, there has been one child reported missing from the home. While the staff did undertake initial searches of the local area, the searching stopped when the child had informed staff they were in a city 100 miles away. The child contacted the home on two occasions and requested that a staff member collect them. The child was told no drivers were available to collect them. This left	

the child, who had already been missing overnight, away from the home for a further night. Staff members were aware of the child's address some hours before and no staff travelled to see the child to check on their well-being. The lack of application of the missing child policy and the uncoordinated response left this child at risk of harm. At the previous inspection a recommendation that the Independent Reviewing Officer is informed of missing episodes remain outstanding. Similarly, the local police missing protocol was not followed.

The home continues to provide a safe physical environment for children to live in. Redecoration of some bedrooms has taken place. They provide cosy and warm spaces which children personalise. New soft furnishings in the lounge brighten an already welcoming communal area. The garden provides outdoor space for children to relax and play in. Overall, the accommodation is maintained to a good standard.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The Registered Manager has been working within this children's home since June 2014. She formally registered with Ofsted in January 2015. She has obtained a level 3 childcare qualification. She has relevant experience of working in children's homes with children with emotional and behavioural needs since 2007. She is currently working towards her Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services, which she commenced in January 2014. The Registered Manager has made significant changes to how they will respond to incidents and serious events. The impact of the recent improvements in the systems to keep children safe cannot be fully tested and evaluated. Following the implementation of a targeted action plan, five previous requirements and one recommendation have been addressed. Overnight care for children is described within the statement of purpose as being two adults present in the home with children. In recent weeks, there have been two children in the home and only one adult on 'sleep in' duty. This is due to staffing shortages across the wider organisation. This change in the staff structure has happened without formal written risk assessment considering the risks involved. For example, if a child requires hospital treatment. The current staffing levels therefore fail to meet the objective of the statement of purpose. This means that social workers making placements and parents will not be aware of this	

change.

A previous recommendation set to ensure all staff supervision records are complete has been met. Records are now up to date and now show that all staff including the Registered Manager receives regular performance review. These sessions include discussions around behaviour strategies and individual children. This supports staff of all grades to reflect and improve their professional practice.

Staff members continue to attend training which is available to them through the wider organisation. This keeps their professional skills and knowledge up to date. Three staff recently completed behaviour management training which has helped them keep the use of restraint and sanctions extremely low. Other staff have attended health promotions and introductory mental health training, which positively supports children's emotional and physical development within the home.

A previous requirement to ensure that the independent visitor's reports provide an effective level of challenge to the management has been addressed. The organisation is in the process of reviewing the format and focus of the external monitoring visits to ensure it is effective. A key aspect of the independent visitor role is evaluating whether children are effectively safeguarded. However, the external visitor completed safeguarding training some years ago. The responsible individual has not ensured that the external visitor has the skills and up to date knowledge to assess such information and to make a sound judgement on the quality of the home's care.

The Registered Manager has revised monitoring systems and processes. Weekly checks take place and action plans are created to prioritise and manage her workload. The system, although improved, has not been wholly effective in identifying shortfalls in the management of the only missing from care incident, which occurred when the registered manager was away. Similarly, weekly stock checks of medication take place, but had not highlighted one medication's disposal date. A previous requirement to use monitoring systems to make continuous improvements in the home is therefore repeated.

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 looked after children 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 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 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 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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