

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023739
Inspector	Lucy Chapman
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited
Registered person address	Cheesemans Farmhouse Alland Grange Lane, Manston Ramsgate Kent CT12 5BZ
Responsible individual	Leslie Peter Davenport
Registered manager	Tracey Bowden / POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	13/01/2015

Inspection date	19/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

This home has declined in effectiveness since the previous Ofsted inspection. One requirement from the previous inspection has been met, with consent now on file for the Regulation 33 visitor to check young people's files. Two recommendations have been met: staff receive guidance on sharing information with visitors in respect of the home's escape plan; and the training programme undergoing review, now including training on child sexual exploitation and pathway planning for young people. One requirement and three recommendations from the previous inspection remain incomplete.

After a period of vacancy the registration of a new manager is in progress. The new registered manager has previously worked as deputy manager in this home so is familiar with the setting, staff and young people; however the recent inspection showed areas of weaknesses in respect of the management and oversight of this home. The previous inspection emphasised the need for a member of staff to deputise in the manager's absence. There has been some organisational discussion around this issue but no deputy manager is in place. This means that in the manager's absence no staff member takes a clear lead in the home and management tasks remain incomplete. Staff and young people experience the negative impact of this staffing issue. One member of staff said, 'at the moment it has been a rough few days, the manager is on leave; it has been an unsettled period.' Inspection monitoring of missing from home records also highlights that a rise in young people missing from home corresponds with the manager's annual leave period.

The previous inspection highlighted the need for improved management monitoring, also raised by the regulation 33 visitor; this remains an area of weakness within the oversight of the home. Record checks at the interim inspection found that management monitoring of significant event, missing from home and restraints was

inconsistent. The insufficient management monitoring identified means that young people's behaviour lacks observation and analysis. This means that young people are not consistently receiving support and care plans are not always updated after significant events.

This home cares for three girls with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties; the day-to-day care of young people within the home is good. Young people say that they like living in this home and talk of positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'I like all the staff, they make me happy' and another young person said, 'they talk to you and listen and help when I need help; all the staff are genuinely nice.' The inspector observed positive interactions between staff and young people on the day of inspection. The positive attachments that young people build with staff enable them to develop trusting relationships and to discuss their feelings and concerns with staff.

Young people respond positively to the structure and routine offered by staff. All are engaged in education and staff maintain close liaison with young people's schools. Young people make educational progress and one young person has recently progressed from a part-time to a full-time educational timetable. Young people in this home receive appropriate health care and specialist health services to meet their needs. Staff also work with a qualified and psychologist to support the care of young people and to produce young people's care plans. Additional specific services are in place for young people as required, for example voluntary agency support for young people who may be at risk from child sexual exploitation. This means that through staff support and partnership working, young people receive the services and support that they need to make progress in their individual areas of need.

Young people are encouraged join clubs and activities. One young person enjoys trampolining; another attends drama classes and is undertaking drama qualifications. Staff gently encourage disengaged young people to test out new activities and talk proudly of young people's achievements, supporting young people to develop resilience and self-esteem as they achieve new goals.

Staff consult young people for their views in the day-to-day decision making within the home, for example, young people have recently given feedback in the recruitment of a new member of staff. Regular key-work sessions are in place; however key-work discussions do not consistently address the issues faced by young people in their daily lives. One young person experienced a serious threatening incident at school however there was no evidence as to how staff followed this up or supported the young person. This means that young people discussing issues with the trusted adults caring for them may not receive the emotional support that they require after difficult experiences, or the adult intervention that they need to be safe.

Poor response to safeguarding issues was evidenced during this inspection. One young person made an allegation of physical abuse; recording of this allegation

lacked detail and there was a lack of robust follow up. The in-house safeguarding manager, without liaison with the local authority designated officer, assumed decision making in the follow-up of this safeguarding issue. This does not follow working together to safeguard children guidance and undermines the accountability of the management of this home in terms of safeguarding young people. The safeguarding log could not be examined on the day of inspection as in the registered manager's absence no staff had the key required to access this document.

The home environment has recently undergone redecoration in colours chosen in consultation with young people. There is a homely atmosphere in communal areas and young people's bedrooms are well furnished and decorated to their individual tastes. A new carpet is due to be fitted in the communal areas which will enhance the home. Health and safety is up to date as are fire safety checks and fire drills. Staff comment that helping young people to feel at home is a strength of the staff team, and young people also say that they like their bedrooms and the food in this home.

New requirements have been made at this interim inspection. The home's statement of purpose needs to be individualised and the children's guide needs to include Independent Reviewing Officer, children's rights and advocacy details. Not having this information in the children's guide means that young people may not have information on advice services external to the home and this diminishes young people's welfare and safety. Safeguarding policies and procedures need to undergo review with written records kept of any safeguarding issue and the action taken in response. Management monitoring of incidents involving young people needs improvement to enhance young people's safety and to ensure that young people receive appropriate follow up support. Deputising arrangements are required to ensure that management tasks are completed and that leadership of the home is in place in the registered manager's absence.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for a maximum of three children, who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children living in the home are able to access education through registered provision provided by the organisation. Therapy or counselling is also available to children if this is appropriate.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2015	Full	good
30/01/2014	Interim	good progress
24/04/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure the home's written statement includes all the matters listed in Schedule 1 and in particular clear links to the young people's behaviours, the home's location and therapeutic input (Regulation 4 (1))	30/04/2015
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated; in particular ensure there are strategies to reduce the number of incidents of children going missing (Regulation 11 (1)(a))	17/04/2015
16 (2001)	ensure written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect, and of any action taken in response (Regulation 16 (2)(d))	17/04/2015

34 (2001)	ensure the registered person establishes and maintains a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 (Regulation 34 (a))	17/04/2015
25 (2001)	ensure that there is at all times, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home; specifically provide a deputising contingency to cover the registered manager's absence. (Regulation 25 (1))	17/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's guide includes the young person's independent reviewing officer's, Children's Rights Director, and independent advocate's contact details (NMS 13.5)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.