

SC025420

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people. This includes young people who may have experienced being at risk of criminal exploitation and involvement in gangs. The home is registered as a specialist service for young people with drug and alcohol dependency.

The registered manager was registered by Ofsted in June 2019.

Inspection date: 2 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 26 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/05/2018	Full	Good
08/08/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The health and well-being standard The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)) Specifically, that records clearly indicate when a young person has attended a medical appointment and the outcome of this; and that medicine administration records contain the correct instructions for staff and are clear when medicines have been disposed of.	10/01/2020
The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(v)(vii)(b)(d))	10/01/2020
The leadership and management standard. The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	10/01/2020

(Regulation 13 (1)(2)(a)(h))	
Fire precautions. After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(a))	10/01/2020
Fitness of workers. The registered person must ensure that an individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform. (Regulation 32 (3)(c))	10/01/2020
Employment of staff. The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	10/01/2020
Notification of a serious event. The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(e))	10/01/2020

Recommendations

- Ensure that the location of the home supports its aims, objectives and ethos, as described in the statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.23)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Weaknesses in safeguarding practice have resulted in a judgement of inadequate for help and protection at this inspection. This is a limiting judgement and consequently the overall experiences and progress of children and young people are judged inadequate.

Outcomes for young people have been variable since the last inspection. While some have made a planned move on from the home, others have left the home following a serious incident, as staff have been unable to manage their behaviour. There are currently only two young people living in the home, who are both reasonably settled. However, they do talk about the disruption that other young people have caused since they have lived here, with this resulting in them being reluctant to bring friends back to the home.

Young people's views of the home are mixed. One young person commented, 'I get on with most of the staff, but there have been a lot of staff changes. I have had four key workers since I have been here.' Changes in staff affect young people's willingness to invest in the development of relationships with staff. It is these relationships that help make a positive difference to young people's outcomes. One young person is no longer engaging in a support group to help him with his cannabis addiction, as the staff member who supported him is no longer working here.

The home is currently registered as a specialist service to support young people with drug and alcohol dependency. However, staff have not received any specialist training to provide this support to young people. Furthermore, because of the turnover of staff, only five staff, including the manager and deputy manager, currently have a formal childcare qualification.

Young people benefit from good-quality placement plans, clearly outlining their routines and needs. These are shared with young people's social workers. However, it was not clear if all new staff in the home were familiar with these, as they had not all signed to confirm they had read them.

Practice relating to meeting young people's health needs is mixed. Staff encourage young people to have a healthy diet and promote home-cooked food. One young person, who is overweight, has successfully lost some weight as a result. Staff also encourage young people to take regular exercise and have recently installed a gym and an outside assault course for young people, to encourage them to keep fit. However, it was not clear if staff had taken action to arrange a health appointment for a young person when he had requested one, nor if he did attend what the outcome was. Thus, the young person's health record remains incomplete.

Staff have helped one young person reduce his reliance on prescription medication. However, the arrangements for the administration of medication are not robust. When the medication dose has been reduced, this is not clear on the administration record. Similarly, when medication has been disposed of, this is unclear. In addition, staff are not acting in accordance with the young person's healthcare plan that states that medical advice must be sought if the young person misses a dose of his prescribed medication. This does not ensure young people's well-being.

On a positive note, young people are currently engaging in education and attend college regularly. They have career aspirations, which will help motivate them to achieve. Similarly, staff are proactive in their support of young people's family contact. They

provide both practical and emotional support. Consequently, young people are experiencing improvements in these relationships.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Staff practice has failed to keep young people safe. On one occasion, a young person enabled a male to access the home and subsequently his bedroom, in the early hours of the morning, without staff knowing. This was despite there being two waking staff on duty, closed-circuit television (CCTV) outside the property and all external doors being alarmed. Staff did not discover the presence of the male until the following afternoon. The presence of other individuals in the home, without staff knowledge, poses a risk to all young people living in the home.

On another occasion, staff removed a quantity of small tablets and seeds, thought to be cannabis seeds, from a young person. He was known to be a drug user. These items had been kept in the home for a number of months, with the intention of returning them to the young person when he moved on from the home, as he claimed they were vitamin tablets. However, staff did not know what these substances were and did not contact the police. This is a naïve approach, for a home reporting to specialise in drug dependency. Action was taken to pass these on to the police during the inspection.

Young people benefit from good-quality risk assessments, highlighting the particular needs of each young person and the best strategy to adopt to alleviate the risk. However, similarly to placement plans, not all staff appear to be aware of these. Individualised missing protocols make it clear what action staff should take if a young person fails to return to the home when expected. Staff try to contact the young person and seek information about their whereabouts and plans for returning home. However, young people are not always reported as missing from home to the police, in accordance with their individual plan, thus increasing their vulnerability.

Staff receive training in behaviour management, including a recognised form of physical intervention. However, during one serious incident staff resorted to an unrecognised intervention and the young person alleged that he had been injured. The police were called to assist, and medical attention was sought for the young person. However, the manager failed to ensure that the home's procedures in relation to managing such an allegation were followed. The incident was only reported to the designated officer from the local authority when the incident was reviewed by the independent visitor, some weeks later. This lack of transparency does not help to ensure that young people are safeguarded.

Health and safety practice in the home is not robust. An independent fire risk assessment recently identified a number of issues requiring attention. While action has been taken to address some of these, they have not all been completed within the recommended timescales. In addition, there has not been a review of the document used by staff to complete their monthly health and safety checks, to ensure that matters identified in the independent report are routinely checked. This includes checking that escape routes outside of the home are free from debris and that fire doors are routinely checked. Furthermore, young people have been using the new assault course in the

garden and the recently constructed tree house, despite risk assessments having not yet been completed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She is supported by an experienced deputy manager. However, weaknesses in management monitoring and oversight have contributed to the shortfalls identified at this inspection.

Some records have been reviewed and signed by managers, who have failed to identify and address errors within them. This does not help improve practice or ensure the quality of records maintained in the home. Furthermore, the manager has not adequately evaluated serious incidents that have occurred, to identify shortfalls in staff practice and to highlight any patterns and trends.

Ofsted has not always received notification about serious incidents in the home, for example when a young person stole a significant amount of money from within the home. This is despite the police being involved. This prevents Ofsted from evaluating if the home is taking appropriate action to ensure the well-being of young people.

While there have been gaps in staff supervision over the summer, this has now been rectified. However, staff who have worked in the home for over a year have not benefited from an annual performance appraisal. This includes the registered manager and deputy manager. Appraisal provides an important opportunity for an individual to reflect on their practice and consider personal targets for the year ahead.

Similarly, staff do not always receive a good level of support when they are unfit to work. On one occasion, following an assault while on duty, a staff member returned to work early, against medical advice and without a return-to-work interview, due to financial commitments. This does not ensure that staff on duty are prepared physically or mentally for the challenges of working with challenging young people.

The leadership and management of the home have not ensured that the aims and objectives of the home are being achieved. The home is not located in a suitable location to meet the needs of its current target group. Senior leaders acknowledge this and there are plans in place to change the ethos of the home. The home is in the process of being redesigned to primarily address the health and well-being needs of young people.

A lack of rigorous oversight by managers and a diversion of their attention to a new type of provision have not helped the home to maintain good enough standards of care. This has resulted in young people's safety and well-being not being promoted at all times.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children

and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC025420

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Ltd

Registered provider address: Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Mellissa Gittens

Inspectors

Mandy Williams, social care inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector

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