

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC029950
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Somerset County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY

Responsible individual	Robert Eveleigh
Registered manager	Tammie Rose
Inspector	Janice Hawtin

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 Declined in effectiveness.	
The manager did not follow the current safeguarding policy when managing a child protection concern. Her actions had the potential to compromise an investigation into the incident. The manager has since reflected on this error and was able to explain how she would correctly follow the policy in the future. The quality of care and frequency of short breaks for some children is negatively affected as a result of an arrangement to also accommodate a full-time placement. The decision for this child to live in the home was made in their best interests. However, the continuing arrangement is beyond the immediate control of the manager and the placing authority while seeking to find a suitable alternative placement. This arrangement has resulted in the cancellation of short breaks for some other children. In addition, the staff on duty are focused on dealing with the complex needs and presenting behaviours of one child. Not all of the staff team allocated to work with a particular child have the skills, experience or training in autism to effectively support them. Risk assessments, behaviour management plans and care plans for this child do not provide staff with clear, up-to-date and accurate guidance. Some additional guidance, provided electronically by the manager to staff, has not been incorporated into the written plans. The agencies working specifically with one child have differing views on the best behaviour management techniques to use in response to the child's self-injurious behaviour. These differing views limit how effectively staff in the home can intervene and keep the child safe. The manager and staff team are unclear about their delegated authority to care for this child. The manager has on occasion been over reliant on other agencies to instruct her on the best course of action rather than using her professional judgement, experience and skills to ensure the child is at the centre of all decisions. This has resulted in delays to resolve concerns about the child's school. Action was taken following the inspection to resolve these concerns.	

The manager has delayed referring an issue to the disclosure and barring service following the dismissal of a member of staff. The manager took immediate action to address this weakness following the inspection.

Accommodating a child on a full-time basis has negatively impacted on the manager's ability to deal with a previous requirement and drive forward improvements to develop staff member's practice.

Significant gaps in the frequency of formal supervision sessions for permanent staff members remains evident; these were a weakness at the previous inspection. In addition, it is not clear that all temporary staff are receiving any formal supervision. Staff members are under additional pressure in dealing with a child with complex needs who presents with self-harmful behaviour and needs constant care and supervision. In these circumstances, support, guidance, and opportunities to reflection on their work with the child is not being provided and fails to safeguard both children and the staff.

Some improvements that benefit children have been made since the previous inspection. A review of the fire evacuation records has improved the safety of children and staff. It is now clear who has practiced the fire drill and ensures the manager is assured that everyone can evacuate the home in the event of an emergency.

The availability of, and variety of activities provided to children, has improved. Additional planning and discussions in shift planning meetings are driving these changes. In addition, children complete feedback forms following each visit and can highlight or request any activities. As a result, activities are more personalised. For example, staff facilitated a young person's desire to be involved in playing football.

Action taken following enhanced consultation with children has resulted in several improvements. The way menus are produced and the choice of food has changed to better suit the preferences of children. Children's likes and dislikes lists are kept up-to-date and fears raised by a child have been successfully dealt with.

A book has been introduced inviting visitors to comment on the home and make suggestions for improvements. Comments are positive and complimentary of both the services provided and the staff team. A professional commented on the partnership working by the staff team to keep a young person safe, describing them as 'good communicators with a flexible approach to providing care'.

All children now have a keepsake book which they have decorated with the help of care staff. Photographs, art work, and other memorabilia collected from trips out into the community are stored in the book. These books provide a reminder and reference point for children once they move on to adult services.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered as a Children's Homes providing short breaks for children with physical and learning difficulties.

The home is owned and managed by a local authority and the majority of the children accommodated are from the local area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/06/2015	CH – Full	Good
28/01/2015	CH – Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
19/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. In particular ensure the quality and frequency of supervision is consistent for all staff. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	04/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff- (2)(a) (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	04/04/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must ensure that staff- (2)(b) have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the of each child. In particular, the additional skills relating to children with autism.	04/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the homes policy on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. (The guide to the Quality standards page 62 paragraph 14.4)
- Staff should act as effective advocates for and on behalf of a child who maybe experiencing difficulties with education, including but not limited to attainment, or behaviour, as a good parent would do. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 28, paragraph 5.12)

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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