

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC029950
Inspector	Janice Hawtin
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 Jane Rose
Date of last inspection	09/09/2014

Inspection date	28/01/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

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

The home has declined in effectiveness because leaders and managers have made inappropriate placement decisions. Since the previous inspection, managers have accommodated two children in an emergency, and on a full-time basis. Managers say they have placed these children because of a lack of suitable resources and placement choice within the wider organisation. Leaders and managers have made these decisions contrary to the home's Statement of Purpose and conditions of registration. As such, a child has come to live in the home despite not having a learning and/or physical disability.

Children who live in the home are not provided with enough familiarity for them to form strong attachments to others. A high number of staff work in the home and all other young people visit for short-breaks which results in constant changes in the setting and instability for the young people who live there.

The Statement of Purpose lacks key information about the age range of children whose needs can be accommodated in the home. As a result, placement commissioners/managers cannot be fully clear about who can be accommodated in the home and therefore, their capacity to make well-informed placement decisions is restricted. Leaders and managers are not clear that staff have the necessary skills, understanding and experience to care for very young children and/or those who do not have learning or physical disabilities.

Leaders and managers have failed to improve weaknesses in the maintenance and refurbishment of the home in a timely way despite these being raised at the previous inspection; the home continues to need improvement to make it a comfortable and welcoming place to stay.

Some areas of the home are hazardous to children and young people. Leaders and

managers have not ensured that the garden is safe and that hazardous substances are stored securely. In addition, some young people's ability to see out of their bedroom windows is restricted because the windows are not kept clean. The Registered Manager cannot confirm that all young people have been able to practise the emergency evacuation procedure. Evacuation records maintained by the Registered Manager do not evidence whether all young people have practiced these procedures so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Managers have failed to provide all staff with regular, formal supervision and reflective practice discussions; a weakness at the previous inspection. Therefore, not all staff are able to reflect on ways to improve their practice and care of young people.

The records maintained by staff following an incident of restraint require improvement. The Registered Manager is unable to confirm from the records that staff only use restraint as a last resort because staff do not routinely identify the action they take to avoid using these interventions. The Registered Manager has recently revised the recording format in order to gather more useful information about these incidents. However, it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these revisions.

Managers and staff continue to provide good care to children and young people who visit the home for short breaks. These young people's particular vulnerabilities are understood by staff who work hard to meet their needs. Staff communicate well with young people who visit for short breaks and actively promote their choice and understanding. A parent commented that 'they (the staff) managed attachment and separation anxiety beautifully; changing the bedroom around several times so that my child could see the night staff. I cannot fault the staff; they have built my child's self-esteem and confidence. His independence has massively increased.'

Progress in the development of young people's social skills was also confirmed by a parent who stated that 'social skills have improved. They can sit at the table to eat and have learnt to wait. Now they are learning to dress themselves. They are sleeping better at home, right through the night sometimes because of clear daily routines'.

The staff team does its best for all the children and young people using this service even when providing a home here is not in the child's best interests.

Information about this children's home

This local authority service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to ten children and young people. The service can provide a home and a short break service for children and young people who may have a physical disability and/or a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/09/2014	Full	adequate
19/02/2014	Interim	good progress
14/08/2013	Full	adequate
19/06/2013	Full	inadequate

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)	compile a written statement in relation to the children's home (referred to as the statement of purpose) which consists of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. In addition ensure that at all the children's home is conducted in a manner which is consistent with it's statement of purpose (Regulation 4(1) & (6))	25/02/2015
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of the children accommodated (Regulation 11(1)(a))	25/02/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's homes are kept clean, well maintained and suitably furnished. Provide suitable and sufficient shower facilities for	28/02/2015

	the children accommodated (Regulation 31(2)(e), (4)(a)&(5)(b))	
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons you have employed in the children's home receive appropriate supervision, this applies both to permanent, temporary and agency staff (Regulation 27(3)(a))	28/02/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include detail of the matters listed in(3)(a)-(i) and (4)(a)&(b) of this regulation (Regulation 17B(3)(a)-(i), (4)(a)&(b))	28/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an emergency escape plan which all children and staff are familiar with and have practiced so that they know what to do in an emergency (NMS10.9)
- ensure that avoidable hazards are removed from areas to which children have access (NMS 10.3)

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.