

SC030677

Registered provider: West Berkshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It provides short breaks to children and young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities. The home is registered to provide care for up to six children and young people.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 2018

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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.

Date of last inspection: 27 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/02/2018	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Good
18/02/2016	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
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c))	31/01/2019
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(b)(c))	31/01/2019
The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who— develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare; help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;	31/01/2019

help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care; help each child to understand how the child's privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited; help each child to prepare for any review of the child's relevant plans and to make the child's views, wishes and feelings known for the purposes of that review; and make each child aware of and, if necessary, remind them of each of the matters in sub-paragraph (d)(i) to (iii); ensure that each child— is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives; has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home; and is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(b)(i)(ii)(iii))	
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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;	31/12/2018

manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii))	
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— use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))	31/01/2019
The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	31/01/2019
Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing— injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child); or a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2))	31/01/2019
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which—	31/01/2019

is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular— provide for liaison and co-operation with any local authority which are, or may be, making a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated in the home; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located; provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about past abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the alleged abuse or neglect occurred; provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response; describe the measures which may be necessary to protect children following an allegation of abuse or neglect; and describe how and to whom staff are to report, without delay, any concern about abuse or neglect of a child. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e)(f))	
Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	31/01/2019
The registered person must ensure that— within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child;	31/01/2019

details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;
 the date, time and location of the use of the measure;
 a description of the measure and its duration;
 details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;
 the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;
 the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and
 a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;
 within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—
 has spoken to the user about the measure; and
 has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and
 within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.
 (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The decor and general appearance of the home are looking 'tired' and neglected, and it lacks a homely feel. However, all the rooms are functional and have a wide range of resources including toys and games to keep the children occupied. Children are also encouraged to choose their own bedding and can bring items from home to personalise their bedrooms.

Staff work together as a team to ensure that children are looked after and have fun

during their stay. Shifts are planned well and focus on meeting children's individual needs. The quality of care that children receive while staying away from home is good, and parents spoken to during the inspection said that their children look forward to their stays. Children benefit from participating in a range of activities that they would not normally get the opportunity to engage in.

Staff work hard to help children to develop new skills. They encourage children to be as independent as possible, and staff have high aspirations for them. Parents and social workers share these aspirations. However, written plans lack clear goals and targets, making progress difficult to measure.

Staff try to capture children's views on a day-to-day basis. Children are given choices routinely and they are also asked whether they have enjoyed themselves. However, staff do not always appear to listen to children or to take their concerns seriously. When children make an allegation, there is a lack of proactive thinking and this does not help children to learn how to keep themselves safe.

In the event of a child being involved in an incident with a member of staff there is little evidence that opportunities are seized to repair relationships. There is also insufficient work undertaken with the children to help them to understand what has happened and to reassure them.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

At the time of this inspection, a safeguarding incident was in the process of being investigated by the appropriate agencies. This was not yet concluded. Although, it was noted that there was a delay in reporting and recording the incident by the staff on duty at the time. Upon receipt of the information about the incident, the registered manager also failed to initiate the home's own safeguarding procedure. However, the information was passed to the service manager who dealt with it appropriately.

Staff are committed to the children. However, over the past six months there have been some instances of poor performance which have led to complaints from parents. While these issues have been taken seriously by the registered manager, records do not evidence whether complaints were resolved and what, if any, action was taken to prevent a reoccurrence.

Not all staff files demonstrate that all the necessary pre-employment checks have been done. The registered manager has relied on and followed the local authority's recruitment process. This does not always match the children's homes regulations.

Staff do not always have clear written guidance and strategies to guide them in managing children's challenging behaviour. This has led to inconsistent care in some instances. On occasion, physical intervention has been used to get children to comply with requests when they are struggling to move from one activity to another.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager left the service in October 2018.

Since the last inspection, the registered manager has failed to keep Ofsted up to date regarding changes to, and decisions to work outside of, the statement of purpose. Changes include a lowering of the age range from eight years old to four years old, and keeping a young person post-18. During this time the information in the statement of purpose has been reviewed, but it still does not accurately reflect what the home is doing or what it sets out to do.

Staff morale has dipped over the past few months. The home has not been fully staffed and this has created additional pressure for staff. They say that they have not felt valued or listened to by managers. While the team has made a conscious decision not to allow this to have a negative impact on the children, there has been an overall drop in performance.

There has been an improvement in staff supervision and appraisal. Meetings now take place regularly and staff have clear development plans. Appraisal includes addressing poor performance, where appropriate.

The monitoring systems in the home are not effective. They have not identified or addressed the shortfalls in practice. The review of the home is descriptive and lacks analysis.

A new manager with relevant experience and knowledge has recently been appointed and is in the process of registering with Ofsted. Having already identified areas for development, he has a clear vision for the future which puts children at the centre. Staff are feeling very optimistic and are already embracing the changes he is making.

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: SC030677

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: West Berkshire Council

Registered provider address: Council Office, Market Street, Newbury, Berkshire
RG14 5LD

Responsible individual: Jane Seymour

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector(s)

Amanda Harvey, social care inspector

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