

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC033657
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Leeds City Council
Registered provider address	Leeds City Council, 3rd Floor, St George House, Great George Street, Leeds, LS1 3DL

Responsible individual	Robert Murray
Registered manager	Jenny Thwaites
Inspector	Jamie Richardson Rachel Holden

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC033657

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Some children are continually missing or absent from this home. This leaves them at significant risk of harm.
- Some children and young people remain at high risk of child sexual exploitation. Focused work does not take place with individual young people to help them to learn how to keep safe.
- Current risk management systems and plans are ineffective in reducing risks.
- Children and young people smoke in their bedrooms. The covered smoke detectors heighten the risk that a fire will not be detected. This places all at the home at significant risk of harm.
- Some children and young people continue to use illegal substances, consume excessive amounts of alcohol and smoke. Routine health appointments are not always attended. This is detrimental to young people's health now and has negative implications for their future.
- Sanctions are not evaluated effectively to assess if they are proportionate.
- The quality of the accommodation requires improvement. Children and young people are not supported by staff to learn how to keep their personal space tidy and clean.
- The registered manager does not make appropriate challenge to senior managers and placing authorities around the suitability of individual placements.
- Standards of care in the home have declined rapidly since the previous inspection. External visits by the independent visitor have not identified safeguarding concerns or provided the registered manager with effective oversight to help the home to improve.
- Weak management monitoring systems have not recognised the widespread shortfalls identified during this inspection.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/07/2015	Full	Good
18/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/06/2014	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met 5. In order to meet the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.	09/12/2016
The quality and purpose of care standard 6. In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must: (2)(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to (i) meet the needs of each child; and (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home.	09/12/2016
The health and well-being standard 10. In order to meet the health and well-being standard, the registered person must ensure: (2)(c) that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.	09/12/2016
The positive relationship standard 11. In order to meet the positive relationships standard, the registered person must ensure: (2) that staff— (a)(vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful	09/12/2016

relationship; (b) that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.	
The protection of children standard *12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to maintaining up-to-date risk assessments on each young person and ensuring that staff act in accordance with them, the registered person must ensure: (2)(a) that staff— (i) 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.	09/12/2016
*12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe.	09/12/2016
*12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	09/12/2016
The leadership and management standard *13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(a) 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; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home.	09/12/2016
Fire precautions With reference to fire precautions and meeting the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the registered person must: (2)(b) ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are	09/12/2016

complied with in respect of the home.* (Regulation 25(2)(b)) In particular, take steps to reduce the risk of fire due to young people who smoke in their bedrooms.	
Policies for the protection of children With reference to children receiving independent return home interviews after period of missing from home: Before implementing, or making an amendment which the registered person considers to be substantive to, the missing child policy, the registered person must— (b) have regard to any relevant local authority or police protocols on missing children. (Regulation 34(5)(b))	09/12/2016
Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home. (Regulation 35(1)(a))	09/12/2016
Independent person: visits and reports The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	09/12/2016

* indicates statutory compliance notice

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Efforts to involve children and young people in positive activities are unsuccessful. Children and young people spend significant amounts of time outside of the home. Consequently, it is hard for children and young people to develop strong relationships with staff. Additionally, due to their lack of time at the home, children and young people are not engaging with the in-depth work required to assist them in learning about their personal safety. This includes some young people who are engaged in damaging and exploitative relationships with peers and adults within the local community. As a result, risk is not being reduced and outcomes are not improving. Some children and young people continue to put their physical health at risk by smoking, regularly drinking excessive amounts of alcohol and using illegal substances. Being under the influence increases other vulnerabilities such as exposure to child sexual exploitation. In relation to their emotional health and specific difficulties, children and young people are not accessing any specialist or therapeutic support in order to address these individual needs and ultimately reduce risk. Standards of decor in the home require improvement. Children's and young people's bedrooms lack personalisation. Some bedrooms require cleaning to address the tobacco on furniture tops, dirt on the surfaces and clothes littering the floors. Staff fail to lead and set a positive example to help children and young people to maintain good standards of hygiene and cleanliness. As a result, children's and young people's pride in themselves and their environment is lacking. Some children who have been out of education for periods of time now have educational placements. Their attendance is variable. Regular attendance at education would provide children and young people with the skills that they need to gain employment in later life. Staff have not been successful in encouraging children and young people to attend routine medical appointments. For example, some children and young people have not attended dental appointments, and they have remained without dental treatment for unknown periods. This does not ensure that their basic health needs are being met and has negative implications for their future oral health. The rewards offered are not effective in providing incentives for children and young people to achieve and learn life skills. Consequently, children and young people are	

not motivated to complete tasks and do not always choose to work on developing independence skills which will help them in later life.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Children and young people continue to go missing from home for significant periods. Risk management plans are ineffective in keeping children and young people safe. Contact plans created to keep children and young people safe are not adhered to. Some young people rarely sleep at the home. For example, one young person only slept in the home for five nights during one month. Some young people are, on occasion, found in dangerous situations and remain at high risk of child sexual exploitation. They continue to use substances and drink excessive amounts of alcohol while they are away. This heightens their vulnerabilities significantly. Actions taken by the provider to reduce risk are ineffective. When children return home after periods of missing, they do not receive an interview with an independent person. This does not allow them to share their experiences with someone not involved in their care. It does not provide the opportunity for an independent adult to gather information which would then inform an assessment of risk. This process might help keep them safe in the future, but it is not taking place. Assessments of individual risks are poor. Consequently, risk management plans do not always reflect children's and young people's current risks. Dangerous objects are not always immediately removed from children's and young people's possession. This lack of immediate action leaves the children and young people at risk of harming themselves or others. Other vulnerable children and young people are in contact with adults with an unknown background. This leaves them in close contact with adults who are not checked to ensure that they are safe and suitable to spend time with. Children and young people continue to smoke cigarettes and illegal substances in their bedrooms. Some smoke detectors are covered with clothes by young people. This compromises the effectiveness of the fire detection system. This increases the risk that a fire would not be detected. Despite knowing that serious fire-related incidents have occurred previously, the home has taken no effective action to reduce this health and safety risk. This places the whole home at risk of significant harm. There are inconsistent boundaries for children and young people. Therefore, children and young people continue to engage in risk-taking behaviour such as going missing from home, crime and substance misuse. This places them in immediate danger and exposes them to additional risks, such as child sexual	

exploitation.

The use of monetary sanctions is not proportionate. Poor oversight and evaluation of the effectiveness of such sanctions has left children and young people without their full entitlement of money.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The manager has been in post since April 2015. She became the registered manager in April 2016. She is suitably qualified and experienced to undertake the role. The registered manager does not always provide effective challenge to placing authorities and managers regarding the ability of the staff team to manage the risks of some children and young people currently placed. This leaves some children and young people in a home that cannot fully meet their needs and keep them safe. Expectations and aspirations for children and young people are extremely low. Current management monitoring systems fail to recognise the strengths and areas for development within the home and staff members' practice. In addition, external monitoring arrangements have failed to identify the shortfalls raised at this inspection. Weak monitoring and oversight mean that safeguarding concerns and poor practice are not quickly identified and addressed. This leaves children and young people at risk of harm. Staff receive regular supervision which helps them to feel supported in their role. One member of staff commented, 'The manager helps me professionally and personally.' This helps staff to feel valued and part of the team. The manager has not received formal, recorded supervision since April 2016. This has left her without structured guidance and support during her initial months as a registered manager. Oversight from the wider local authority has not been effective, and standards of care have rapidly declined since the last inspection. Positive working relationships with other professionals, such as youth offending teams, police and probation services, ensure that information is shared between services in the best interests of children and young people. The registered manager fails effectively to lead and manage staff members' practice to ensure that the care being provided is in line with the ethos outlined in the home's statement of purpose. Instead, children and young people are left potentially unsafe, and have poor outcomes and experiences of care.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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