

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	15/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC033817
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Direct Care Limited
Registered person address	Rutland House, 90-92 Baxter Avenue, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, SS2 6HZ

Responsible individual	Rebecca Ouellani
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	15/12/2015
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. This home has gone through a turbulent time. The registered manager has left. Although interim management arrangements were put in place, the acting manager also left. A new manager has been recently appointed and commenced his post the week before this inspection. He has recently undertaken the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. He is starting to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. His plans for improving the home include developing the staff team and the environment. He says his main priority at this current time is to ensure the young people have a good Christmas. Most staff are new and inexperienced. Only three staff are currently qualified, as the others are all on their probation. All young people in this home are at risk of sexual exploitation. The inexperience of staff has contributed to a serious incident where a young person put themselves at risk with an unknown member of the public. A police officer said that staff expressed concerns to her about their ability to manage young people in the home. They did not believe they were appropriately trained to manage young people at risk of sexual exploitation. Further training has been arranged for staff about sexual exploitation for January 2016. Staff are starting to build positive relationships with young people. A young person said: 'Staff are very friendly and considerate. Staff are funny and when you are upset they make you smile.' Young people also say that they get on well with their peers. They enjoy going to the cinema and playing on their games console. They like their rooms. Young people say they feel safe living in this home. Admission processes have failed to ensure young people are appropriately matched. A young person was admitted who quickly became difficult to keep safe due to her behaviour, which also put others at risk. Furthermore, the manager at the time did not ensure that there were sufficient resources in place to fully meet the needs of newly admitted young people. A serious incident occurred where young people went missing from the home during the night without staff knowing.	

Door alarms have now been fitted due to the risks associated with these young people.

Agreed plans for transport for school have not been consistently implemented. This means a young person was late for school on a number of occasions. Additionally, alternative transport took a long time to source. A teacher from the young person's school said her punctuality has improved with the new transport arrangements.

Staff do not ask young people what they would like staff to do when they are angry. A young person said: 'They don't know what to do with us when we're angry. No-one has asked me what I want when I'm angry. They just stare at us. When I'm angry I want to go out for a drive and play loud music.' Staff, however, have started to take a more positive approach to behaviour management by using incentives. This is working well with young people. Staff rarely use physical intervention but have received recent training.

Young people do not always understand reasons for decisions made about them. For example, when contact is cancelled at the last minute by parents, young people believe it to be because staff are not organised. Additionally, a social worker said that staff misinform young people. A social worker said there were delays in providing a young person with a mobile phone as agreed. The manager at the time told the social worker this was due to the young person refusing to sign the phone contract but the young person said this was not true. Furthermore, staff do not give consistent guidance. For example, staff confirmed that they had been unclear about the policy for allocating money for certain activities. This leads to the young people becoming frustrated and annoyed. However, young people and external professional agree that the home has improved with the new manager.

Young people have put themselves at risk by going missing from the home. Staff have followed good procedures to locate and return young people. Young people understand that they put themselves at risk by going missing and believe that staff worry about them when they are missing. Staff do not always inform the social worker, without delay, when a young person has gone missing.

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and is registered to provide residential placements for up to four children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/07/2015	Full	Good
10/12/2014	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
23/07/2014	Full	Good
25/02/2014	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
7 The children's views, wishes and feelings standard 7. In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, with particular reference to ascertaining the views of young people regarding their behaviour management plans and helping them to understand the reason for decisions made, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2) (a) (i) 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; (iii) 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.	31/12/2015
12 The protection of children standard 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to proactive measures to reduce the risk of young people going missing, 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, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	31/12/2015
13 The leadership and management standard 13. In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to placement matching, planning, staff experience and qualifications and consistency of approach, the	31/12/2015

registered person must ensure that staff: (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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
--	--

Recommendations

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

- Information about children who are missing should be shared with the placing authority without delay. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45 paragraph 9.31)

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015