

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC034301
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Emma Hood
Inspectors	Tina Maddison/Heather Chaplin

Inspection date	29/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC034301

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The young people are not looked after by a stable and consistent staff team. This is due to staff sickness and vacancies. This means that the manager has been covering shifts, which has taken her away from management duties.
- The healthcare needs of the young people are not centrally documented and staff are unable quickly and simply to find the up-to-date information that they need to ensure that these needs are met.
- The young people do not yet live in a home that offers them a domestic and homely environment. Work is underway to modernise and improve the home in accordance with the home's development plan, but this work is not yet complete.

The children's home's strengths

- The staff have warm and caring relationships with the young people, who say that they like the staff and are confident that staff will keep them safe.
- The manager and staff are committed and caring. They are fully engaged and work hard to implement the development and improvement plan for the home.
- The staff have improved their de-escalation strategies in order to avoid the need for physical intervention. As a result, the numbers of restraints have reduced.
- The staff tenaciously follow young people if they go missing and are curious to know where they are and who they are with. The numbers of incidents of young people going missing has reduced. If young people go missing, they are now offered a return to home interview with an independent person.
- This full inspection is a re-inspection following an inadequate judgement at the previous full inspection undertaken on 31 May 2016. Leaders and managers have worked very hard to meet all of the requirements made at this inspection in order to improve the quality of care at the home and to ensure improved outcomes for young people.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child and ensure that the home's workforce provide continuity of care for each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(d)(e))	23/09/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that case records relating to healthcare needs are maintained for each child and are kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Ensure that the home provides a nurturing and supportive environment, and presents a homely and domestic environment that seeks to provide a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural needs. The home is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/05/2016	Full	Inadequate
17/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/09/2015	Full	Good
20/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
24/10/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Information is now available to staff that informs them of the healthcare needs of young people and how these should be met. This information, although available and up to date, is not yet ordered into one document, so it is time consuming to find and hard to access for a member of staff who may be new to the home. The manager now ensures that young people who are engaging in drug taking receive guidance and information that will educate them about the danger of engaging in this behaviour. Leaders and managers are introducing a new format of placement plans that clearly identifies individual care needs, how these will be met and what outcomes young people achieve. This format gives young people and others involved in their care clear information about what progress they are making, what they need to achieve and how they will do this. Since the previous inspection, one young person has moved out of the home and into a specialist health placement. Much of the tension and difficulty observed at the previous inspection was caused through staff struggling to meet the care needs of this young person. One young person commented: 'since [the young person] has moved out, it is good now... I feel safe living here now they have gone.' Another young person commented: 'I like living here now, since [the young person] went it has been better, staff have more time and there is not a tense atmosphere. I was isolated before as I stayed in my room.' Admission processes for young people have been improved by leaders and managers. Any proposed admission of a young person to the home is discussed between the registered individual and managers. The referral is then be subject to a comprehensive impact risk assessment to ensure that staff have the skills to meet the young person's identified care needs and that the group of young people are compatible. During the inspection, staff were observed offering positive nurturing support to the young people. Young people said that they were looking forward to going shopping and, later in the summer holidays, are going to go with staff on a holiday to Wales. Many days out during the holidays are planned that the young people have chosen, such as trips to theme parks, London, shopping and the cinema.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
At the previous inspection, a risk was identified when managers failed to follow up on a safeguarding concern. This incident has now been followed up by the manager and resolved, to ensure the safety of the young person. New, robust reporting procedures have been put in place, but are not yet tested as there have been no new safeguarding concerns. The manager has a good understanding of potential risk and works with external professionals to evaluate and manage this effectively. Incidents of missing are reduced for most young people. One young person is going missing, but the staff are able to explain and understand why she is not returning to the home, as agreed, but staying with her boyfriend, who is not deemed to be a risk. The staff are negotiating with her, in conjunction with the placing authority, to reach an agreement about this arrangement. Staff are proactive and curious when young people go missing, follow them and bring them home, whenever possible. Return to home interviews are now undertaken by an independent person, as well as debriefings by the police, if necessary. Behaviour management is improved. The staff now have clear strategies to manage behaviour and feel supported by managers. This means that they are more confident. For example, the number of restraints has reduced as staff are using de-escalation strategies effectively to manage behaviour, rather than using restraint as a behaviour management strategy. The behaviour of young people is improved and there have been no more complaints from neighbours regarding any antisocial behaviour from young people, or incidents of young people being locked in the lounge to keep them safe from other young people. All young people spoken with said that they felt safe living at the home and could identify a member of staff whom they would speak to if they felt unsafe.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The manager, with support from senior managers and the registered individual, is transforming the home in accordance with the operating local authority's improvement plan. This plan aims to ensure that the home has robust leadership and management through the restructuring of the staff team, additional training and effective support for the manager. The manager has not yet been able to establish a consistent and stable staff team,	

due to long-term sickness and a vacancy. To cover these gaps on the rota, staff have been doing extra shifts, and the manager has used staff from the bank and has covered shifts herself. This has put additional pressure on her time to undertake all of the required management tasks.

Records are now more ordered, therefore it is easier for staff to find information. The manager is now notifying Ofsted of any serious incidents. Team meetings are now taking place regularly. These meetings also include sessions that support staff. A psychologist recently visited to lead a session with staff following the challenging placement of a young person whom staff struggled to care for. Supervision sessions are now regularly taking place so that staff feel supported, and any performance issues are being addressed effectively.

Leaders and managers are succeeding in changing and modernising the culture in the home. A number of staff have been identified as champions of good practice with a remit of sharing this with other staff members. The staff also attended a session focusing on the use of institutional language in the home. Staff themselves gave examples of the language that they use, such as referring to the home as a 'unit', then offered alternative, more appropriate examples. This session was effective in encouraging staff to think about the language that they use when working with the young people. Managers have also benefited from visiting children's homes judged as outstanding in order to observe practice and share ideas.

The young people and the staff are fully involved in the improvement plan for the house. The young people have chosen colour schemes and furniture, and designed the rooms. For example, the previous office is now being transformed into a sitting room to be called 'the snug.' The office has been relocated to a small room to ensure that staff spend time with the young people, not in the office. The grilles at the window have been removed and the door replaced with a domestic door. The bathrooms have been refurbished and a wet room will soon replace the shower room. The side of the garage has been painted. The garden has been made child friendly with fairy lights, garden ornaments and a seating area. The young people have been consulted on what new front door they would like. The improvement plan is a work in progress, and there are still some areas of the home that have an institutional appearance, but the manager, the staff and the young people are working hard to complete the plan and are making good progress.

The bathrooms have been refurbished to a high standard and the garden now contains a pleasant seating area. One young person said: 'The house looks better, this is a like a home now, they should remember that we live here. I am really happy that the office has gone, we aren't different so we shouldn't have a house that is different.'

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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