

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	29/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC034301
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Emma Hood
Inspector	Tina Maddison

Inspection date	29/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 as requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last full inspection, three young people have left the home. One young person successfully moved on to live in his own accommodation and continues to be supported by the staff from the home. The other two young people who have left the home were not appropriate admissions and stayed at the home for less than one month. Leaders and managers fail to always ensure, through effective impact risk assessment, an appropriate mix of young people at the home. This failure led to one young person making a serious allegation about a young person who was admitted to the home. One other young person admitted to the home was led into high-risk behaviours by another young person living at the home. The admission of these young people had a de-stabilising effect on the existing young people, who report that, now that these young people have left the home, they are happier and more settled. One young person said, 'Inappropriate children have come to the home. They need to look at making sure there [are] no emergency placements. Short-term people ruin it. We have worked hard to make it nice here.' The manager and staff continue to work on their improvement plan. They are making progress in changing the culture of the home and ensuring that the young people make progress in all areas of their lives. Work continues by leaders, managers and the staff to improve the appearance of the home. Since the last inspection, a new carpet that was chosen by the young people has been installed in the hallway and up the stairs. The second office has been converted into a snug room, where the young people can relax and have quiet time. Work is continuing to improve the bathrooms as they retain a dated and institutional-type appearance. The young people have personalised their bedrooms and really take a pride in the appearance of the home. All of the internal doors in the home have locks fitted. The young people report that, on occasions, the staff lock doors at night. This means that they are unable to go down and get a drink from the kitchen if they need one. The young people are consulted on all aspects of their care in the home. Relationships between the care staff and the young people are respectful and nurturing. The young people report that they love their pamper nights, when the staff help them to paint their nails and do their hair. The young people have had much input into the re-decoration of the home and choose their menus and activities. However, the young people report that ideas and requests that they	

make at house meetings are not always acted on and they do not receive feedback at the next meeting to explain to them why not.

The behaviour of the young people is well managed, and the use of restraint is minimal. When restraints happen, they are with minimal force and for the shortest time possible. The staff do not use sanctions, preferring to encourage and praise the young people's positive behaviour. Any safeguarding concerns are robustly managed by the managers and the staff and promptly reported to the relevant professionals. Incidents of the young people being missing from home and engaging in risk-taking behaviours are reducing. On their return, young people are always offered a return to home interview with an independent person. Information from these interviews is shared with staff in order to inform individual risk assessments and safeguarding strategies.

Healthcare plans are now in place for all the young people and clearly document their healthcare needs and how these will be met. The staff are pro-active in referring the young people to the necessary specialist health professionals to ensure that all of their identified healthcare needs are met.

There is now a settled staff team in the home. The staff report that they are well led and supported by an experienced manager who holds the relevant management qualifications. Staffing ratios are high and currently sufficient to meet the care needs of the young people living in the home.

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement
31/05/2016	Full	Inadequate
17/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/09/2015	Full	Good

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) meet(s) 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
Ensure that staff take into account the wishes, views and feelings of the young people in their care. In particular, ensure that feedback is given to the young people following a young people's meeting. Ensure that this feedback is documented and includes the reasons why a young person's wishes or request are not able to be granted. (Regulation 7(1)(c))	28/04/2017
Ensure that no measure of control which is excessive is used in relation to any child. In particular, ensure that downstairs doors are not locked at any time and that the locks are removed from the doors. (Regulation 19(1))	28/04/2017
Ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are in the range of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation. In particular, ensure that a comprehensive impact risk assessment is carried out prior to a child being admitted to the home to ensure that the mix of children is appropriate. (Regulation 14((2)(a))	28/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home provides a homely and domestic environment that seeks to provide a domestic rather than 'institutional' appearance. In particular, ensure that the bathrooms are re-furbished to reduce their 'institutional' appearance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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 that 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 whom 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'.

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