

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	30/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC034922
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Melanie Ambrose
Inspector	Michelle Bacon

Inspection date	30/03/2017
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 judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Action has been taken to address two of the requirements that were made at the last inspection. However, one requirement is repeated, and further shortfalls have been identified as a result of this inspection. There are improvements in the revised sanction and physical intervention records, and these now include all the regulatory requirements. The records demonstrate what other measures have been used to support a young person prior to consequences being imposed by staff. This ensures that the manager is able to fully evaluate the appropriateness of any disciplinary measure and the impact that it has on a young person's behaviour. A requirement was made at the last inspection to ensure that the independent visitor reports on whether, in their opinion, young people are being effectively safeguarded. The reports show that the visitor is still not consistently reporting on this, and therefore this requirement is repeated. A young person who moved to the home in February 2017 is struggling to engage in the placement. He is persistently missing from home, which means that he is not accessing any of the support services available to him. The manager and staff work effectively with key professionals to promote the welfare and safety of all young people. Despite this, the manager acknowledges that they are struggling to meet the needs of this young person because he is unwilling to engage with them. Consequently, the local authority is seeking a safer placement that will be more suited to his needs. Some young people regularly smoke cigarettes and cannabis. However, there is specialist help and advice available to support them with stopping this. Records show that some young people on occasions are smoking in their bedrooms. This potentially places them and the staff at risk. Risk assessments do not provide staff with clear strategies in terms of managing a young person should they return home under the influence of cannabis. Furthermore, it is not clear what strategies are in place to prevent the young people from continuing to smoke in their bedrooms.	

Since the last inspection, two young people have moved into the home, and there have been three departures. One young person was moved in line with his wishes and feelings, although this was after he had experienced some bullying from the other young people. Minutes from the young people's house meetings and key-work sessions only reflect that bullying has been discussed in the most general of terms, and they do not demonstrate that the issue of bullying has been addressed with the individual perpetrator or victim. Potentially, this leaves the victim at risk from further bullying, and it does not help the perpetrator to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

Despite the best efforts of staff, several young people continue to go missing from the home. Where there are safeguarding concerns in relation to an individual young person, the manager attends regular strategy meetings and shares information appropriately. Records show that staff follow agreed protocols and safeguarding plans to ensure a young person's prompt return to the home. Not all young people have a return interview from an independent person, despite the manager chasing this. This means that young people are not provided with the opportunity to speak to someone who is independent of the home when they return home.

The young people and staff have experienced a short period of disruption. The home was temporarily closed while building work and redecoration of the home was undertaken. This meant that the young people and staff had to move to another of the organisation's empty homes on a short-term basis. The young people had only just moved back into the home two days before this inspection. The home provides young people with a homely and comfortable environment.

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2016	Full	Good
31/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Good
05/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
11: The positive relationships standard (1) The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— (a) mutual respect and trust; (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (v) communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; (xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children; (xii) understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and (xiii) have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.	28/04/2017

12: The protection of children standard (1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe.	28/04/2017
The registered 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 children are effectively safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))	28/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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 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'.

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