

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035154
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Northgate House Northgate Halifax West Yorkshire HX1 1UN
Responsible individual	Gary Pickles
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	18/07/2014

Inspection date	04/09/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	As a result of the last inspection conducted on the 18 July 2014, Ofsted issued three statutory compliance notices to the registered provider on the 28 July 2014. The first was because of the inadequate leadership and management of the registered provider and manager which was impacting significantly on the safety and welfare on young people. The second was because of inadequate arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare, care and supervision of children and young people. The third was to improve the quality of consultation with parents and social workers about the conduct of the home. The registered provider was required to comply with the first two notices by the 22 August 2014 and has until 1 October to comply with the third notice.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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A new manager was appointed at the end of July 2014. She is working closely with the provider to implement a number of improvements. This has resulted in more effective management of the home, better safeguarding arrangements and outcomes for young people. This has taken place in a short period of time and the overall effectiveness is now judged to be adequate. The sustainability of current improvements will affect future outcomes for young people and inspection judgements. There are also four recommendations for future progress

The provider is judged to have met two of the three statutory compliance notices served on 28 July 2014 and is making progress with the third notice.

The quality of care provided for young people is adequate and personalised but does not always take account of individual needs. Staff listen to the views of young people and support them to have a say in the home and their care. Care practice promotes improved outcomes in family contact, education, developing life skills and has reduced the amount young people are absent from the home.

Changes have led to better relationships between staff and young people. Young people have positive views of their care as a result.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and knows what needs to change to continue to improve young people's lives

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is provided by a local authority. It is registered to provide care for up to five young people of either gender, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/07/2014	Full	inadequate
10/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
21/05/2013	Full	good
15/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children feel safe (NMS 4)
- ensure children live in a healthy environment and in particular are able to reduce their substance misuse (NMS 6)
- ensure staff work with education providers to maximise achievements, including understanding the meaning of exam results and impact on future education (NMS 8.4)
- ensure action is taken when needed to improve the quality and accuracy of record keeping, specifically with regards health assessments, contact arrangements, care plans and risk assessments. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Outcomes for young people have improved since the last inspection and are now adequate. There is a reduction in the amount of time young people choose to spend out of the home and they are engaging more with staff. Improved behaviour management and very recent changes to the number and needs of young people means there are less violent and disruptive incidents. As a result young people live in a more homely environment and are building better relationships with staff.

Young people are able to understand more about their backgrounds and improve their confidence when they engage with the individual work staff strive to complete with them. For example individual work about hygiene, self-image, relationships with others and impact of their behaviour.

Young people have access to a range of health care services including agencies that provide specific support to reduce substance misuse, promote sexual health and reduce exploitation. However despite the efforts of staff and other agencies substance misuse remains a problem that impacts on health and potentially education when young people continue this behaviour.

Young people have good attendance at school and college. They achieve awards at school and pass exams, which assists their entry into college and further education. Some young people educationally achieve what is expected of them.

Young people have regular contact with family and friends. There have been significant improvements in progressing to overnight stays at home. This helps young people maintain important family relationships. Staff facilitate and encourage communication offering individualised support in order that visits and contact can be successful and positive.

Young people acquire some skills which will benefit their transition to adult life. Young people become more confident in their skills through the regular opportunities to go shopping and cook meals. Young people like their long-term plans and look forward to the transition to adulthood.

Quality of care **adequate**

Care plans and risk assessments specific to young people's needs and support require updating. For example current contact arrangements and outcomes of health assessments are not up to date or available to staff when stored electronically. On another occasion staff have not communicated decisions about a young person's use

of a panic alarm. This compromises the ability of the manager and staff team to provide appropriate support to meet the individual and diverse needs of young people. Although care plans are reviewed these shortfalls also undermine how the manager evaluates the effectiveness of care afforded to young people.

Young people report having good relationships with some staff members and feel able to talk to them about their worries and concerns. Staff listen to them and attempt to assist them with the difficulties they may be facing. This includes staff building relationships with young people's relatives and promoting family contact. As a result young people feel their backgrounds and diverse needs are respected by staff, which helps build positive relationships.

Staff want young people to achieve their potential and work towards improving the health, welfare and safety of young people. This is done collaboratively with external professionals and agencies supporting young people with substance misuse, sexual exploitation, safe relationships and emotional well-being.

Staff take into consideration young people's views and involve them with the maintenance, decoration and running of the home. There have been a range of improvements to the décor making the environment more homely. Staff care practice is more flexible, for example with meal times, young people's access to the kitchen and food. Young people are listened to more and given greater responsibility which has reduced conflict and improved cohesion.

Staff use appropriate, consistent approaches to manage concerns and conflict with young people giving a clear message regarding consequences. A restorative justice approach is taken by staff to help young people understand the impact of their behaviours on others and consider making amends. Additionally staff support young people in making complaints for example about the new gas fire installed, without any consultation from the provider. A monthly residents meeting is facilitated by staff to encourage young people to become involved and responsible for the running of their home and place in the local community.

Staff actively encourage and support young people to participate in education through attendance at school. This includes partnership working with relatives when young people have had overnight stays with their family. The manager is developing relationships with other professionals involved in young people's education. This helps ensure there is continuity in education with transition to college and that there are plans for young people to return to mainstream school after an exclusion. Understanding about exam results and impact on future education was unclear but the manager had arranged to resolve this the week after the inspection.

Staff engage young people with positive activities not only to help maintain a healthy balanced lifestyle but to ensure they engage in age appropriate and enjoyable leisure activities.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

The manager and staff have improved the safeguarding arrangements to keep young people safe. However young people do not always feel safe living in the home as there have been five incidents of bullying since the last inspection. Staff provide close supervision of young people and responses to these incidents are adequate. As a last resort staff take young people away from the home to help them feel safe. In the meantime the manager has taken steps to review the mix of young people living at the home to ensure all their needs are met. Two days before the inspection a change was made with regard to which young people live at the home. This is to further improve the safety and welfare of young people who remain living there.

Practice is improving with regard to young people who are missing or absent from the home. Staff now actively implement suitable risk assessments and go out looking for young people who are missing. Positive encouragement to return and better arrangements for family contact has reduced the frequency of missing episodes by 50%.

Behaviour management practice has improved. Staff are now trained to use physical intervention as a last resort to keep young people safe during incidents of aggressive behaviour. This has happened once and staff used their new skills appropriately. Record keeping of such incidents is detailed and monitored by the manager and independent visitor. Alternative measures such as supervised spending of pocket money are used more appropriately when young people have misused taxis or smoke in the home. These are individualised to young people to help improve their behaviour. Rewards such as positive praise and occasional takeaways are also in place to encourage young people's good behaviour.

In-house care planning identifies risks to individual young people and protective factors are put in place to reduce risks and keep young people safe. Risk management is satisfactory and reviewed to meet the needs of young people reflecting their age, gender, progress and development. Staff are knowledgeable about risks to young people's safety and current strategies to keep them safe. The number of different risk assessment forms and various places they are stored potentially compromises consistency and clarity of what is the most up-to-date version.

The manager and staff know the appropriate safeguarding procedures so that any concerns about a young person's safety are reported to the appropriate authorities. The manager works well with the police and local authority to plan agreed multi-agency strategies addressing risks in relation to sexual exploitation and missing from home.

The physical environment is safe and appropriately secure.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Provider appointed a new manager at the end of July shortly after the last inspection. She has applied to Ofsted for registration and has relevant qualifications and experience. Along with support from senior management a number of improvements have been made to the way the home is run. These are recent changes, some happening just days before this inspection. Evidence of sustainability and the long-term impact on young people is not yet available.

Some shortfalls in practice still remain. Up to date records of young people's needs for example health assessments of young people were not available to staff. On one occasion staff have not communicated changes in care practice. This compromises the effectiveness of the manager and staff team in ensuring good quality and consistent care for all young people.

The frequency of staff supervision has improved and recent development days have helped the staff team all contribute to changes in practice. Staff feel supported and changes in management are helping them promote better standards of care for young people.

The manager has reviewed the home's Statement of Purpose making it clear to stakeholders the approach to behaviour management. Improvements in staff training ensure that staff have the skills to follow this approach and to meet the aims and objectives of the service.

All permanent staff are now enrolled on the required care qualification to promote their competence. Staffing levels are adequate to meet the needs of young people.

There is better notification of incidents to Ofsted promoting a more robust approach and oversight of the management of issues that impact on young people's welfare.

Monitoring of the quality of care has improved and previous significant shortfalls have been addressed by the new manager. There is better management oversight of records of consequences, rewards, physical intervention, bullying incidents and missing from home records. The manager has responded to issues raised by the independent visitor. The independent visitor's reports have also improved in regard to assessing the welfare and safety of young people.

These improved quality assurance processes help the manager identify concerns and take action to improve the welfare of young people. For example the manager has reviewed safeguarding arrangements and mix of young people who live in the home.

Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. There is a suitable planning process to address the issues raised at the last

inspection. This has improved the management of the home, safeguarding practice and outcomes for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.