

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC035154
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	Mr Gary Pickles
Manager	Mr Aaron Mcloughlin
Inspector	Mrs Pauline Yates

Inspection date	12/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are widespread failures that mean children and young people's welfare is not promoted and their experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC035154

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Not all young people make progress in their education. Some young people do not have access to 25 hours educational provision per week and educational placements are not stable.
- Behavioural boundaries within the home are not firmly established and young people's responses to authority are negative and challenging. Their health is compromised by regular drug use and smoking.
- The staff do not provide suitable care for the young people to develop emotional resilience and skills to manage their emotions in acceptable ways.
- The requirement made at the previous inspection has not been met. There are omissions in the recording of key information which affects care planning and the managerial review of care.
- Newly established management arrangements are yet to embed and monitoring is not effective. The home does not achieve the aspirations for the young people as laid out in its Statement of Purpose.

The children's home strengths

- The newly appointed, but experienced registered manager, is aware of the weaknesses of the home. He has prioritised key areas for improvement and is implementing a plan. The manager has stated that no more young people will be admitted to the home until improvements are made.
- A behaviour management policy has been implemented. Young people have been consulted over these changes and there are indications of positive change.
- The home communicates well with other professionals and young people's families and contact is well supported.

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.

ensure that staff understand and apply the home's statement of purpose (Regulation 6 (2) (a))	16/06/2015
ensure that staff understand the barriers to learning that each child might face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers (Regulation 8 (2) (iii)). This is with particular reference to any specialist assessments and their recommendations	30/06/2015
ensure that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning (Regulation 8 (2) (b))	16/06/2015
ensure that staff encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(iii))	30/06/2015
ensure that staff appropriately challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans (Regulation 5 (c)). Specifically ensure that appropriate educational plans are put into place and implemented	30/06/2015
ensure that the registered person manages and reviews the placement of each child in the home (Regulation 14 (2) (b)(ii))	16/06/2015
ensure that each child has access to such psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and their services as the child may require (Regulation 10 (2) (c))	30/06/2015

Recommendations

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

ensure that staff provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming and a supportive (The Guide, page 15, paragraph 3.7) with particular reference to providing a comfortable home

ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided (The Guide, page 22, paragraph 4.11) with particular reference to the young people's views about having been restrained.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and registered for 5 young people from the ages of 12 to 18 years, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/12/2014	Interim	sustained effectiveness
04/09/2014	Full	Adequate
18/07/2014	Full	Inadequate
10/02/2014	Interim	Inadequate progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Not all young people make progress in education. In the last five weeks progress has been made for some young people, but prior to this attendance was inconsistent. Other young people have had a reduction in the hours they attend and some young people do not have a provision identified. Some young people benefit from privately commissioned tuition in English and maths which supports their future training but this is not followed through within the home. Young people do not have access to a computer and there is no area in the home which young people can use to support their education. Educational staff report that young people speak fondly of the home and that there have been recent positive changes in the young people's willingness to engage. Staff have been unable to help young people to decrease or cease their drug use and smoking. This impacts on young people's lives, affecting their health, education and behaviour. Staff have not implemented or actioned the recommendations from psychiatric assessments. As a result some young people are not getting the care they need. Care planning or risk assessments do not incorporate the advice given. Positive relationships between the staff and young people are not established. The young people do not make progress with managing their behaviours in an acceptable way. The frequency of challenges to staff authority is high. Staff support young people emotionally and practically to enjoy contact with individuals who are important to them. This supports their identity and understanding of family history. One Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) commented that, 'Contact is a priority for X and the staff are very supportive and have gone beyond what was expected.' The young people attend their statutory care reviews and progress was noted by one IRO that, 'X presented as much better, was settled, could participate, had matured and would listen to us.' Newly developed paperwork ensures that contact arrangements are clear for staff and the young people. This is reflective of the home's Statement of Purpose. This states that the home will, 'facilitate contact with family and friends in a planned and safe way by promoting, maintaining and developing links with family and extended networks where it is safe to do.'	

The home has in place a suitable assessment and independence programme to assist young people. In preparation for this programme all young people are currently encouraged to develop basic skills of self-care, keeping tidy their bedrooms and food preparation. It was noted by a teacher that there is improvement for some young people in basic hygiene and independent travel.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The staff do not sufficiently support young people to reduce or cease their drug use. The risks are identified and support is made available but young people do not engage with these services. There are occurrences of young people using drugs within the home. This is identified by staff as influencing negative behaviours and increasing aggression. The staff have not provided a positive environment for the young people. Until recently the staff managed challenging behaviour by frequent use of sanctions and few rewards. The sanctions were used inconsistently by staff and were not evaluated for their effectiveness. The responses to young people have not been sufficiently consistent or robust enough to meet their complex needs. Young people have been consulted with regards to a newly established behaviour management agreement and the staff take a more considered and reflective approach to meeting their needs. Recently, there has been an increase in the use of rewards. Damage to the home has reduced and morning and night-time routines are improving. Due to the recent introductions of these changes the full impact upon young people's sense of personal responsibility and their overall progress is still to be realised. All staff have been trained in a newly adopted de-escalation, conflict resolution and restraint strategy. The staff report that this approach is more effective and responsive to the needs of the young people. When physical intervention is used, it is appropriately recorded and reviewed, although young people's views are not always consistently recorded. The views of young people about living at the home vary. Some young people state they do not feel supported and some state they wish to remain at the home and their views are positive. One young person now states he does not want to be involved in criminal activity and is more willing to engage with the social worker and Youth Offending Officer outside the home. The young people identify key members of staff with whom they trust and can talk to. The young people understand how to make a complaint and participate in regular meetings about the	

running of the home.

Incidents of missing from home has reduced and when they do occur, staff are proactive in making contact and physically searching for young people until located. There is active and regular liaison with agencies such as police and social workers. Information is shared in a timely manner and the manager is active in escalating any safeguarding concerns or, when it is considered a young person's needs cannot be met at the home. Allegations and complaints are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
There is no registered manager in post. The current manager has been in post at this home since 22nd April 2015. He is suitably qualified and is registered to manage another home in the local authority. The manager has held registered manager status since 2011. Elsewhere he has demonstrated good management and leadership skills in the delivery of good quality services to young people. He has 14 years' experience in residential care of young people. The requirement from the last inspection has not been met. Direct work with young people and educational attendance is not recorded consistently by staff. Previous managerial improvement plans have not been fully implemented. Shortfalls have included absence of exit interviews with young people, lack of involvement of young people in the development of their care plans and keyworker support not being consistently recorded. Other omissions also include the lack of young people's memory books and a young person's phone room not being provided. Management oversight and audit is lacking. Improvements in behaviour for some young people have not been recorded and specialist reports have not been incorporated into care plans. Care planning within the home is not up to date and young people have not yet benefitted from recent specialist assessment. The current format of the plans lack specific and measurable outcomes for the young people. Some young people's progress is not captured within these documents. This limits the acknowledgement of achievements and the feedback which is made available to professionals and the young people. The staff have not been clear nor consistent in their expectations of young people. Some young people have begun to attend their education on time and with more consistency. Not all young people make progress in education and emotional	

health and the young people use drugs on a regular basis. Managers do not provide challenge when educational provision falls below 25 hours per week.

The overall comfort of the home has deteriorated and recent repairs are of poor quality. Damage to the home is still evident and the home is sparsely furnished. Most areas of the home require repainting and on-going repair.

The manager has recently implemented a review of the approaches employed by staff to achieve consistency for the young people. There are clear expectations and messages given to staff with regards to reinforcing positives and developing sustainable relationships with young people. The manager demonstrates insight into the previous and current weaknesses of the home. He has developed plans to address these. He is clear about priorities and the timing of these in order to embed long term changes

The manager is active in challenging decision-making regarding suitability of young people placed and this is recognised by other stakeholders. The manager and staff work positively and proactively with other agencies. Relationships with immediate neighbours are positive and cordial.

The frequency and quality of supervision offered to staff has recently improved. Staff report good levels of support and guidance and consider the manager to be easily available and approachable. Daily communication between staff members regarding the progress of young people is active and reflective in nature. Staff undertake regular essential training and all staff have undergone training in the newly implemented de-escalation and restraint policy.

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

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