

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	09/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC035439
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Joan Osgood
Inspector	Jackie Line

Inspection date	09/02/2016
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 judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Safeguarding practice continues to be good. Staff are responding well to current concerns regarding one young person's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. They are alert to the risks, and their vigilance and persistence has resulted in intelligence being shared with the police. A multi-agency response plan is in place, and support is provided by specialist services. Consequently, risks are monitored and managed to protect her welfare. Some incidents of bullying have occurred between inspections, and one young person has been subjected to unacceptable levels of harassment by another resident. These concerns are robustly addressed and staff are on hand to intervene quickly. Although at times the young person has said she feels unsafe and uncomfortable, she reported to both the inspector and her social worker that staff have helped to keep her safe. As a result of staff intervention, incidents have reduced, and she no longer feels worried. This demonstrates that staff manage challenging behaviours, and safeguard young people. The registered manager fully recognises the home cannot continue to meet the needs of one young person. She accepts that whilst staff are doing their best to safeguard him he is not making sufficient progress in other areas of his life, and needs more specialist input. The manager has escalated concerns within the placing authority because they have not acted quickly enough to identify a more suitable placement for him. Consequently, she has a good understanding of the impact of care provided on young people, and when this is not sufficient she takes action to secure better outcomes for them in the longer term. Most young people are maintaining levels of progress identified at the last inspection. They enjoy time away from the home with established peer groups, and maintain safe and positive contact with those who are important to them. Energies are channelled constructively through physical exercise like the gym and football, diverting them away from anti-social behaviour. Most young people do not go missing, and when incidents do occur staff act appropriately to secure their safe	

return. Two young people continue to use cannabis, and work is ongoing to help them reduce their drug taking behaviours. Consequently, staff are demonstrating their commitment to improving young people's health and well-being.

At the time of the last inspection the registered manager was asked to take steps to engage education partners more effectively, and to develop a better understanding of the educational needs of young people in her care. Sufficient action has been taken and good links have now been established with the virtual school, and special educational needs department. The registered manager has used her increased knowledge to challenge providers when their service falls short of what is expected, and to explore more creative options for learning.

However, the impact on young people's educational progress is mixed. For example, one young person who was in receipt of part-time tutoring now goes to school full-time. She has 100% attendance, and this demonstrates significant progress. Another young person who dropped out of college now attends alternative training provision following prompt action and encouragement by staff. For two young people their attendance at school, and participation in education remains worryingly low. Improvements are noted in routines and boundaries when they are not in school. For example, they are persistently encouraged to get up, they are not allowed out with friends in the school day, and they are expected to participate in some form of learning activity. Further work is therefore needed so that they respond more consistently and effectively, and build the confidence, skills, and resilience necessary to return to school and progress their learning. A requirement made at the last inspection is repeated so that staff can build on efforts to try and increase their participation in education. Although several meetings have been held to review the education needs of young people, all personal education plans are not yet available in the home. A further requirement is also raised to ensure appropriate records are maintained in line with regulation.

Behaviour is managed largely through discussion and negotiation, and is based on good quality relationships between staff and young people. Any consequences that are imposed are fair and proportionate. Staff support young people to understand how their behaviour impacts on themselves and others. As a result, they are developing consequential thinking and empathy.

Occasionally physical intervention is required to keep young people safe from harm, and three such incidents have occurred between inspections. Recording of incidents is variable with different formats being used. Moreover, although young people reported to the inspector that they are spoken to after a restraint and have no concerns, there is no record of these discussions having taken place. A recommendation is raised to improve practice in this area so that the views of young people and staff involved in, or witness to, a restraint are clearly recorded.

At the time of the last inspection one young person needed individual support to organise her room which was in a chaotic state. Some steps have been taken to

address this through key working sessions and practical help. As a result, she has decluttered her bedroom, creating a tidier and more organised space.

This inspection found that the standard of cleanliness in all young people's bedrooms requires improvement, and damage is not always repaired in a timely way. The remainder of the home is maintained to a very good standard, and the disparity between downstairs and upstairs needs to be addressed. A requirement is raised to ensure that all young people's private spaces are well maintained, comfortable, and clean.

The registered manager has effectively worked through staffing shortages resulting from sickness absence. Recruitment of new staff, good use of casuals, and flexible working by those remaining means that staffing levels have been maintained. Good leadership, and the team pulling together has afforded young people consistency and stability, which in turn promotes their welfare.

Action has been taken to address a recommendation made at the previous inspection. External monitoring visits are now carried out by people who are sufficiently independent, and this improves the quality assurance arrangements in place.

Three requirements and one recommendation are raised from this inspection to secure improvements moving forward.

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. This service is registered for up to six young people of either gender, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/10/2015	Full	Good
14/07/2015	Full	Inadequate
17/03/2015	Interim	sustained effectiveness
05/12/2014	Full	Outstanding

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.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality of care standard the registered person must ensure – (2)(b) that staff – (vii) provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably, in particular that good standards of cleanliness are maintained in young people's bedrooms, and damage is repaired in a timely way.	31/03/2016
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered person must – (2)(a)(viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. In particular, efforts to engage young people in suitable activity whilst not in school are consistent and clear in order to facilitate their increased participation whilst work is ongoing to secure full-time attendance at school.	31/03/2016
Ensure the registered person maintains records for each child which includes the information and documents listed in Schedule 3, specifically personal education plans (Regulation 36(1)(a)(Schedule 3, 19).	31/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that following an incident of restraint all the staff and children who have witnessed the restraint, or been involved in any way, should be given the opportunity to be debriefed about the incident to inform the strategy needed to

prevent any reoccurrence, and specifically that this is recorded (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes, page 33, paragraph 2.102).

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 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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