

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	22/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC035971
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Children & Young Peoples Services, Atlas House, 2 Corporation Street, ST. HELENS, Merseyside, WA9 1LD

Responsible individual	Jason Pickett
Registered manager	Paul Spencer
Inspector	Chris Scully

Inspection date	22/02/2016
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. The home has made some progress in addressing the issues from the last inspection. However, the registered individual has been slow to address the issues pertaining to receiving of monitoring reports by the independent person. While visits have been carried out there are no written report from the independent person since February 2015 as to their findings. Consequently, monitoring by them is not robust and does not help the service to move forward or provide them with the scrutiny to make changes. The Registered Manager has been actively chasing this with the registered provider and has made notes from the visits by the independent person in order to act straight away. A new system and training for independent people to carry out these visits is now being initiated. The Registered Manager and deputy regularly monitor and review practice within the home. This has resulted in a number changes, for example, enhancing the safety of the egress into the home. Tarmac has been laid to remove any trip hazards. However, the Registered Manager's six-monthly reports are not detailed or evaluative. Consequently, they do not identify any patterns, trends, shortfalls of the action taken to address these. Parental and young people's views are intrinsic to everything the home does but this is not reflected within the manager's reports. Young people are cared for by a highly committed and enthusiastic staff team. There have been some appointments in the last year but the home is still carrying a number of vacancies. These are being covered by the staff, deputy and Registered Manager and the homes bank staff. While this is providing consistency for the young people this is not a long-term solution. Staff state they feel well supported by the Registered Manager and deputy and can talk to them about anything. However, as a result of the additional shifts staff are not receiving regular formal supervision in line with the organisations policy. Informal discussions take place on a regular basis as do team meetings to keep staff updated on the young people. The Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed by the home to ensure it contains all of the necessary information. This enables parents, carers and the local	

authority to know what type of care and support each young person can expect to receive. For example, how staff's competencies are assessed to carry out a physical intervention.

Young people's safety and well-being is enhanced because of the improvement in their individual risk assessments. These identify the risks associated with each young person and how these are minimised. For example, individual sleeping arrangements to ensure their bed is made correctly to provide them with the maximum support. Similarly, health care plans clearly show how much liquid a young person needs to have each day and this is monitored to demonstrate when this has or has not been achieved and the action taken by the home to ensure young people are appropriately hydrated.

The home is starting to look tired and worn. The lounge and dining areas have peeling wallpaper, the pipework in the thoroughfare from the kitchen to the dining room has not been painted, and remedial work to the wallpaper requires attention. There is peeling paint and damp in the laundry room. This could pose a risk to young person health as well as detracting from the homely environment the staff are striving to maintain.

The home provides a wealth of fun activities for each young person that are planned to meet each individual young person needs and interests. Excellent relationships between staff and young people sees several young people enjoying playing 'tricks' on staff or visitors. For example, their current favourites are to doctor staff or visitors drinks and watch them pretend to be ill as a result as well as placing a cushion on the door frame that falls onto the unsuspecting staff member or visitor when they respond to being called into the room by young people. This fun and positive engagement reflects a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for young people to enjoy their stay.

One young person excitedly explained he was going to the pub for tea. He laughed as he said he was going to drink five pints or larger! When challenged on this he laughed and said no, although he confidently explained how he was going to order everyone's meal but staff were paying. He assertively reprimanded visitors for asking if he had, had a good day in school. 'No college!'

Parents said they are very happy with the care their child receives. They are safe and feel safe here. They explained how it was not an easy decision for them and on the first occasion it left in tears. However, the support and reassurances of staff helped them understand that this was the right decision for their child. One said 'he loves coming here and gets excited when we start to pack. But, he likes to make sure he is getting his tea.' Parents said 'the staff are wonderful they are always there for us and help plan his stays so we can get away. They keep in touch when he isn't here which keeps that continuity for us and for him.' They said 'we cannot thank them enough for all that they do.'

Information about this children's home

The home provides short-term breaks and respite care for children and young people with physical and learning disabilities, aged from 7 to 17 years. The home is owned and managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/08/2015	CH - Full	Good
10/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
12/06/2014	CH - Full	Good
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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
12: The protection of children standard 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard the provider must ensure that staff: 2(d) the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished, and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. In particular the damp and peeling paint in the laundry. The décor to the ground floor and ensuring remedial work is completed.	31/03/2016
The independent 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 the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. The registered person must ensure the independent person provides a copy of the independent person's report to the HMCI. (Regulation 44 (4) (a) (b) (7) (a))	31/03/2016
The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the quality of care provided for children, the feedback and opinions of children about the home, its facilities and quality of care they receive, and any actions the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided. (Regulation 45 (2) (a) (b) (c))	31/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure the registered person monitors and reviewed the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, to ensure a full complement of permanent staff are employed and all staff receive adequate supervision. (The guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.19)

- Ensure the registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of the information from independent and internal monitoring; in particular they identify any shortfalls and the action taken to address these. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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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