

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	01/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC036026
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Sheffield City Council
Registered person address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH
Responsible individual	Vacant
Registered manager	Patrick McGeeney
Inspector	Jennifer Fenlon

Inspection date	01/02/2017
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. Children and young people have made good progress since the last inspection. For example, one young person has engaged in meaningful conversation with staff about their future, when previously they had limited engagement with staff. Family relationships for some young people have improved. In addition, one young person has been nominated for a 'Diana award', in recognition of their personal challenges and response to coping with adversity. Children and young people appreciate the positive experiences they are gaining. One young person said: 'I went on holiday to Blackpool', and that this was one of their greatest experiences. Another young person also recalls how staff recently helped her to celebrate her birthday, creating a memorable day. One young person said: 'I feel like staff are kind and caring. I feel happy living here and relaxed. It has been great to live here, and staff are brilliant'. Children and young people's care plans help them to secure positive outcomes and to move on in life. This is particularly effective in terms of transition planning to independent living or rehabilitation with family. Safeguarding practice continues to protect children and young people. Staff support children and young people through complex behaviours. When concerns emerge, they quickly respond to ensure that children and young people are safe. For example, the manager has worked with the licensing agency to address the sale of cigarettes and alcohol to young people. In addition the home took immediate action and implemented procedures in relation to taxis arriving or being called to the home. However, further management oversight is required to ensure that records consistently reflect the actions taken. Children and young people continue to enjoy good health. Staff work with various health professionals to achieve good emotional and physical health outcomes for children and young people. For example, one young person has lost a significant amount of weight, leading to an increase in their mobility, self-confidence and self-esteem.	

Improvements have been made to consultation with children and young people. Staff created a bi-monthly magazine and a central e-mail address is being developed. The topics in the magazine have prompted discussions with young people, such as facts around the use of alcohol.

Another positive change since the last inspection is that the manager has strengthened relationships with the wider community. This has had a positive impact on the safety and well-being of children and young people. For example, a neighbouring housing complex has been given a 'sensitive area' marker by the housing association, ensuring that it does not house individuals who could negatively influence or harm children and young people.

The manager gives careful consideration to the needs and mix of children and young people within the home when looking at new admissions. The impact assessment is strong and is created through multi-agency consultation, enabling sustainable placement matching. Care plans and risk assessments are created but would benefit from clearer analysis of the actions taken to protect children and young people.

Children and young people's cultural needs are appropriately met. Staff work closely with interpreters to enable effective communication and care for children and young people where English is not their first language.

The home continues to be managed effectively and shows capacity for further improvement. The manager has maintained a consistent stance in response to standards of practice and continues to challenge staff practice. This demonstrates the manager's continual drive to improve the care that children and young people receive.

A number of new procedural shortfalls are identified from this inspection. The manager should develop and use the consultation responses from external agencies to inform the analysis of the six-monthly monitoring report. In addition, the manager should ensure that case records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry and that there are clear records supporting the practice of room searches.

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. It is registered to accommodate five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/04/2016	Full	Good
30/06/2015	Full	Requires improvement
24/02/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/05/2014	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

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

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4). This is with particular reference to the manager using the consultation from external agencies to inform the analysis of the regulation 45 report.
- Staff must also be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4).
This is with particular reference to staff ensuring that risk assessments identify those measures that have been successful in safeguarding children and young people. In addition, staff should consistently evidence the actions that have been taken to safeguard children and young people when they leave the home in a way that is concerning to staff.
- Regulations 35–39 detail the records that must be kept in children's homes. Case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- A child's bedroom should not generally be entered without permission. Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.20)

This is with particular reference to ensuring that there are clear records supporting the practice of room searches.

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 whom 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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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
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