

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	06/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC036262
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Derbyshire County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3AG

Responsible individual	Mary Wilton
Registered manager	Malcolm Brocklehurst
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Inspection date	06/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Adequate
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 serious and/or widespread failures that mean young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC036262

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Staff have failed to safeguard a young person. They have allowed the young person to spend considerable periods of time, unsupervised, with an adult who is known to present a risk of abuse and exploitation.
- Care plans, in some instances, are poor. They lack important details about young people's needs.
- Some risk assessments do not contain strategies to minimise identified risk.
- Young people's health needs are not fully met because staff do not always administer medication as prescribed. Significant errors were noted during this inspection.
- Staff do not always record restraint in the central restraint log as required. This prevents managers from accurately assessing if restraint practice is appropriate and safe.
- Monitoring and quality assurance systems are not effective. Both internal management audits and the home's independent visitor have failed to identify serious shortfalls that impact on the welfare and wellbeing of young people.
- The standard of decoration and furnishings in some bedrooms is poor and does not create a nurturing or comfortable environment.

The children's home strengths

- Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. They know that staff listen to them and they are central to decision making about the day-to-day running of the home.

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 and purpose of care standard the registered person must: (2) (b) (vii) ensure that staff provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. This is with particular reference to the standard of decoration and furnishings in bedrooms.	22 September 2015
12. The protection of children standard. In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure: (2) (a) (i) that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	22 September 2015 *
13. The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that – (1) (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	22 September 2015

registered person to – (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))	22 September 2015 *
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes a description of the measure and its duration; the name of the person who used the measure; and of any other person present when the measure was used. (Regulation 35 (3) (a) (iv) (vi))	22 September 2015
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 whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (4) (a) (b))	22 September 2015

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home, which provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home's Statement of Purpose indicates that the age range will be between 11 and 18 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2015	CH - Full	Adequate
19/11/2014	CH - Full	Inadequate
27/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
23/10/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Admission practices are poor. The registered manager has failed to obtain sufficient and up-to-date information to be able to make an appropriate decision regarding the suitability of the placement for one young person. The matching assessment form completed by him lacked important details about the risks faced by the young person. Essential information provided by the local authority, such as the placement plan, was out-of-date and did not reflect the young person's current situation. The management team had not identified this. Most young people receive care and support based on their individual needs and risks, but some do not. Placement plans and risk assessments, (known as 'safe care plans'), vary in quality. Some give clear details of young people's needs, and how to meet them. However, others are poor because they do not promote the welfare or safety of young people. For example, one care plan states that a young person can spend considerable periods of time each day with an adult who is considered a high risk to them. Their risk assessment does not give sufficient detail of how to minimise identified risks. In this instance, the care plan also lacks detail as to how to meet needs with some sections being incomplete. Staff received additional medication training, and a new recording system was introduced, after serious failings were identified at previous inspections. However, young people's health needs are not always being met due to the failure of staff to follow medication procedures. Young people are not always given medication as prescribed. In some cases, prescribed pain management medication is not administered. Management monitoring systems have failed to identify these errors. Young people have access to routine appointments as well as specialist health services. Staff work collaboratively with relevant health agencies including the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). Staff have monthly meetings with the CAMHS team to discuss young people's behaviours and needs. This close working helps to meet young people's physical and psychological health needs. A young person has not engaged in any form of education since moving into the home. This is because she is allowed to spend most of her time away from the home. However, most young people have continued to engage in education and some have worked very hard, achieving good results in their examinations. These young people are proud of their achievements. Staff have supported them to enrol on college courses where appropriate.	

The home is a detached house situated in a residential area and has good access to community facilities. Some communal areas have been refurbished since the last inspection, which has made the environment more pleasant and welcoming. However, the standard of decoration and furniture in some young people's bedrooms is poor. For example, in one young person's bedroom a blind was missing; there was no light bulb in the ceiling light; the chest of drawers was in a poor state of repair and the bed base was badly stained. This demonstrates a lack of oversight by staff and management. It does not help young people feel valued.

Young people say that they feel listened to. They are consulted about the day-to-day running of the home as well as their futures. They receive good practical and emotional support from staff to maintain relationships with their families where appropriate. Staff work collaboratively with relevant agencies to ensure continued contact is in the best interest of the young person. Staff support many young people to pursue their individual interests and hobbies and give them encouragement to try new activities. Young people have fun, while, at the same time, their confidence and social skills improve. They have recently been on holiday, which they thoroughly enjoyed, and another holiday is planned before the end of the summer school/college holidays.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Staff have failed to appropriately safeguard a young person as they have not provided care in line with the local authority placement plan. Managers and staff have not recognised the significant vulnerability of the young person. The young person has been allowed to visit and spend time alone with an adult who is known to present a risk to her. As a result of insufficient planning, the young person has been at significant risk of harm, including sexual exploitation. However, other young people say that they feel safe. They have good relationships with staff who they know will support them. The management of young people's behaviour overall is appropriate. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to enable young people to change their risk taking and unsafe behaviours. Most young people continue to make progress in this area of their lives, which improves their safety. A recent deterioration in a young person's behaviour has led to an increase in the use of restraint. Restraint records are poor. They do not fully describe the method used or who was involved. Additionally, staff do not always record incidents of restraint in the central restraint record as required. These shortfalls do not enable managers and the independent visitor to accurately assess	

if restraint is appropriate and safe.

Missing from home procedures are in line with joint protocols and are implemented when necessary. Staff follow or go out and look for young people who are absent without permission. They contact appropriate agencies and parents/carers so that information is shared promptly. Return interviews by an independent person now take place, which has addressed the requirement made at the last inspection. The number of incidents of going missing has decreased greatly for those young people who have lived at the home for some time. This has improved their safety. Staff work closely with the local police. The police have commented that they have a very good working relationship with the home and that the registered manager is good at contacting them and seeking advice.

Young people know the complaints procedure and use it whenever they have concerns. They know they will be listened to as complaints are taken seriously and acted upon promptly. This helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Clear records of actions taken are now kept which has addressed the requirement made at the last inspection.

The management of health and safety helps to keep young people safe. Installations and equipment are serviced as required. Staff carry out regular fire safety checks and fire drills also take place regularly.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The management of the home is ineffective because it does not ensure that the safety and well-being of all young people is promoted in line with the home's ethos, as set out in its statement of purpose. Although the statement of purpose contains all required information, giving clear details of services available, practice is not always in line with the stated objectives of the home. Leaders and managers have failed to work in the best interest of young people in some instances. This includes not providing care and support to a young person in line with the local authority placement plan. The registered manager is suitably qualified and has many years' experience of working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, he is currently absent and temporary management arrangements are in place. There are also high levels of staff sickness absence, which have the potential to affect the consistency of care. Staff from other homes have been redeployed to work at this home. This has helped to provide some continuity of care.	

Staff are experienced and suitably qualified. The majority of staff have a level 3 qualification in working with children and young people. A number have achieved the level 4 qualification in working with children and young people. Nevertheless, shortfalls identified during this inspection call into question the competency of some staff, and their accountability. There is a lack of shared ownership in the identification of shortfalls and a failure to consistently address weakness. For example, no one had taken any actions to make sure that medication errors are not repeated.

Staff are provided with a range of mandatory training as well as training specific to individual's needs, for example, child sexual exploitation and self-harm. This demonstrates that they are supported to develop their knowledge and skills. However, particularly in relation to safeguarding and medication administration, this training has been ineffective. Significant shortfalls in these areas continue despite considerable investment in training. This further calls into question the capacity of the home to provide young people with a high standard of care.

Quality assurance systems are ineffective in identifying shortfalls in practice even though managers check records monthly and undertake regular audits of the home's systems and procedures. Significant weakness, which have the potential to place young people at risk of harm, have not been recognised. This demonstrates that managers are not sufficiently robust in their monitoring or evaluation of practice.

The home commissions an independent visitor to undertake monthly audits and assess the quality of care provided. However, the visitor has failed to identify any of the shortfalls identified through this inspection. Because the home does not benefit from rigorous external scrutiny, the welfare and safety of young people is not promoted.

Despite identified shortfalls, there are areas of management strength, particularly in relation to multi-agency working. The home builds effective working relationships with a range of partner agencies including the police, advocacy groups and health specialists. This contributes to the fact that many young people's care plan objectives are achieved.

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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