

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC037762
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Portsmouth City Council
Registered provider address	Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, PORTSMOUTH, PO1 2BG

Responsible individual	Mr Stephen Kitchman
Registered manager	Mr Calvin George
Inspector	Mr Whatley

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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 last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people say they enjoy living in the home. Staff and young people share positive relationships which has helped many young people to settle, reduce their concerning behaviours and make successful transitions toward adulthood. The home has experienced periods over the course of recent months where young people have engaged in using 'legal highs'. This coincided with some unsettled behaviour and young people disengaging from their education and learning. In one instance a young person required hospitalisation as a result of suffering adverse reactions after purposefully taking large quantities. Staff ensured they received emergency treatment and kept them safe. However the matter was not notified to Ofsted as required. Young people say they are determined to stop using these substances and feel confident that they will. Despite the challenges staff support young people and link well with external services to bring about positive change. For instance working alongside substance misuse teams and developing and updating their knowledge of the impact of misuse and current intervention strategies. Staff also advocate strongly on behalf of young people to ensure they receive the services they require. For example by attending planning meetings and promoting the wishes of young people resulting in increased education and training opportunities. The Registered Manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and areas that need to improve. He acknowledges that the recent influx of unaccompanied young people seeking asylum has changed the dynamics of the home which is presenting the team with a different set of challenges. Nevertheless the Registered Manager has confidence in the stable and experienced staff team to manage such change with enthusiasm and purpose. The Registered Manager has addressed the requirement and a vast majority of the recommendations made at the last inspection. This includes ensuring care plans provide more clarity regarding targets and the level of progress made against them. Risk assessments highlight areas of risk and define the approaches that staff should take to reduce them further. One recommendation regarding improving the	

living environment remains unmet. The home provides young people with a generally suitable standard of accommodation and for the most part young people respect where they live. However a number of light fittings/covers were missing while a few areas were showing signs of wear and tear, such as bedroom door surrounds. The Registered Manager noted that the light fittings are no longer available to purchase due to their age and design. These shortfalls detract from an otherwise homely environment.

The leadership of the home remains focused on meeting the needs of young people and ensuring their needs come first. The Registered Manager is also the manager for the other children's home run by the city council. This is a smaller home that provides care and accommodation to young people of a lower age range. Following a period of consultation the intention is for the Registered Manager to run both children's homes; Ofsted have received the relevant application. The Registered Manager also oversees the young person's outreach service that is located at the home. He therefore has a considerable number of responsibilities. The Registered Manager creates the capacity to fulfil these roles by delegating areas of responsibility through a management team made up of experienced deputy managers and senior staff.

The home normally provides short to medium length care for older young people from the city. This provides them with a stepping stone in preparation for more independent lifestyles as they move out of care. For example the city's outreach programme runs from the home which helps in providing a cohesive response to young people as they move into adulthood. Close links with external housing providers include the use of a 'training flat' as part of transitions to independence. This process enables all parties to gain a greater appreciation and assessment of independent living needs and so aides the matching of young people to future accommodation options. Young people say they are looking forward to moving on as they, 'are now ready' with a clear idea of what their transitions plans are. This forward planning reduces anxiety and increases the chances of successful transitions.

The cohort of young people has changed in recent months. The home have recently accommodated a number of young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers. This type of care and accommodation is not in the homes statement of purpose; the Registered Manager stated this is being updated. Many of these young people are considered to have arrived in the country after being trafficked. Staff work hard to meet the needs of these young people and do not use language as a barrier to providing the same levels of care as they would for any young person. Staff have used their initiative and have developed flash cards in a different language which has provided some useful prompts for some young people. They show a reasonable understanding of the needs of young people from overseas, although it has been sometime since staff received any specific training in this area. There is also no agreed process to provide translated copies of written materials such as the young person's guide. While this has not caused any significant problems young people who do not clearly understand English may

struggle to comprehend the rules and boundaries of the home.

Relationships with agencies working with unaccompanied asylum seekers has enabled staff to gain increasing insight into the needs of these young people. In particular any specific safeguarding concerns. For instance some young people are subject to home office safety plans. Staff are swift to follow these, notably in reporting them as missing which ensures their safe return. However there is some uncertainty concerning who is responsible for enforcing other aspects of these plans. For example young people not allowed phones or cash. Staff have contacted the police and liaised with agencies working with these young people without any clear response as to who is responsible for enforcing this. This shortfall is not attributed to the home, but such a lack of cohesion is causing staff concern and uncertainty. Whilst this continues multi-agency safety plans will lack robustness.

The atmosphere in the home is generally settled with young people normally treating each other with respect and understanding. When issues arise staff respond in a firm yet sensitive way that keeps young people safe, enables them to consider their actions and ultimately resolve their differences.

Social workers praise the home and the work undertaken with young people. They say communication is excellent and staff go out of their way to do the best for them. Comments from external agencies note that staff are, 'amazing' in helping young people and following safeguarding plans.

Information about this children's home

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/12/2014	Full	Good
14/01/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
22/04/2013	Full	Adequate

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, with particular reference to training for staff in caring for young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers, the registered person must ensure: (3)(c) that the care is delivered by a person who— (i) has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care.	29/01/2016
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to maintaining a suitable living environment, the registered person must ensure: (2)(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to- Meet the needs of each young person; in particular ensure that repairs are completed without delay.	29/01/2016
7 The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, with particular reference to those young people for whom English is not their first language, the registered provider must; (2)(b) ensure that each young person has access to the homes children's guide and the homes complaints procedure, when the young person's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the young person's stay in the home; in particular ensure that copies are translated so they may understand them.	29/01/2016

12 The protection of children standard	29/01/2016
'In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to ensuring that agreed multi-agency safety plans regarding vulnerable young people considered at risk of being trafficked, are clearly known and understood, the registered provider must: (2)(b) ensure that the homes day to day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each young person safe and to protect each young person effectively from harm.	
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters in Schedule 1 (1), in particular demonstrate the range of needs of the young people for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 16(1))	29/01/2016
The registered person must notify Ofsted and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a young person which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4))	29/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- the registered person must ensure the necessary support is given to young people to enable them to access their education or training; in particular continue to seek ways to reduce the level of young people not engaging in education, training or employment. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations page 28 paragraph 5.13)

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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