

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	6/6/2016
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	Sarah Newman
Registered manager	Calvin George
Inspector	Keith Riley

Inspection date	6/6/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 to require improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Senior leaders within the local authority recognise the difficulties and challenges that the home was facing at the last inspection. They have discussed strategies that they, with the registered manager, have now implemented in practice. Consequently, the environment is far calmer and the staff are no longer exhausted by the constant extremely challenging and violent behaviour from young people. Some young people have moved to alternative placements and others are now able to manage their behaviour more appropriately. There has been no need for the use of physical intervention. Staff show a good knowledge of de-escalation skills, and there is no longer any bullying in the home. Staff are consistent in their approach. Group dynamics have significantly improved and morale is good. A member of staff said, 'It is a fantastic team.' The number of serious incidents requiring notification to Ofsted have dramatically decreased. One such incident was not notified within the required timescales. A requirement is made to address this to ensure Ofsted receives this important information on time. The management team has introduced a contract of expectations that young people and other individuals who are involved in their lives sign up to. This clearly sets out the expected behaviour and the consequences of poor behaviour. This has yet to be embedded in practice. For example, staff are trying to structure the day for young people who are not in education, using an individualised daily timetable. Timetables do not include clear education or training goals. They do not demonstrate how such goals incorporate young people's interests. This means that young people do not have any learning opportunities clearly incorporated into their day. Written protocols do not underpin good practice, such as the strategies used to minimise and disrupt the misuse of illegal substances. Staff were not aware of the recent published police protocol to reduce the criminalisation of children looked after, and this is not reflected in the home's protocol on police involvement. However, staff adopt good practice in their day-to-day care of young people. They	

seek to disrupt inappropriate relationships and are hyper-alert to the conversations that young people have. For example, they make a swift response when they hear young people using known slang names for illegal substances. They work with other agencies, such as the prison service, to deter young people from criminal behaviour. Young people visit the local prison and get an impression of what life is like there. Staff work extremely well with the police to keep young people as safe as possible. An officer stated, 'There is lots of interaction and we appreciate the lengths that the home goes to.' Young people are deterred from offending behaviour.

Staff work well with other professionals, such as the 'through care' team, to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. They work with education and health, using interpreters, to get an all-round picture of each young person to identify their needs. This often includes an age assessment. Young people describe their experiences on their journey to the United Kingdom and say that they are happy to be in a safe place now, where they feel cared for. Staff demonstrate an empathy with them in their predicament and seek to meet all their cultural and religious needs. There is success, such as finding a local church with attendees from the same country of origin. Staff are also successful in identifying young people's interests. They ensure that they have the opportunity to engage, for example in football or boxing. One unaccompanied asylum seeking young person had been missing for five weeks at the time of the inspection. Police confirmed that the asylum application had failed and the young person was avoiding detection. They had no concerns about the practice of staff.

Staff have responded enthusiastically to the challenge to improve the physical environment. They have worked tirelessly to do what they can, such as repainting and buying new furniture. The registered manager has ensured that professional contractors have made any other necessary repairs, such as fixing the fire door closers. This work is complete in the rooms that are used by young people. Young people have a comfortable, homely bedroom that they individualise. This gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Maintenance staff have not completed some work on other rooms that are not in current use. The registered manager has secured funding to renew all the fire doors. While not yet complete, there is a timeframe for doing this work. Other areas still need work, such as the window bar restrictors and thumb-turns on all internal doors that detract from the homely impression.

Staff report that an independent person visits the home regularly and provides a written report. They discuss the contents in a team meeting. No reports have been sent to Ofsted since the last inspection in line with the regulation for the independent monitoring of the home.

There have been no complaints from anyone since the last inspection and the requirements from the previous inspection are met.

Information about this children's home

This is a home that is registered for up to seven children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is run by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2016	Full	Requires improvement
03/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
03/12/2014	Full	Good

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
In order to meet the quality of care standard the registered person is required to— ensure that staff protect and promote each child's welfare; Especially through clear written protocols to underpin practice (Regulation 6(2)(b)(ii)).	6/9/2016
In order to meet the education standard the registered person is required to— ensure that staff help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; This applies especially to recording education targets in the daily structured timetable (Regulation 8(2)(i)).	6/9/2016
Take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment in the home; In particular, to complete the installation of new fire doors (Regulation 25(1)(a)).	6/9/2016
Notify HMCI without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to the child which the registered person considers to be serious (Regulation 40(4)(b)).	6/9/2016
Provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI (Regulation 44(7)(a)).	6/9/2016

Recommendations

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

- Seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic environment rather than an institutional impression ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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