

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC037762
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Calvin George
Inspector	James Harmon

Inspection date	16/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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 children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC037762
Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young people are currently considered to be at risk and the strategies in place are not adequately addressing the concerning behaviour. Staff are unable to keep some young people safe.
- The risk-taking behaviour of one young person has increased with no immediate plan of action to deter their behaviour.
- Risk assessments do not give staff sufficient guidance in how to address the risks identified. Admission practices have resulted in some young people having a negative impact on the behaviours of others.
- Some young people have formed recent relationships with peers outside the unit who are engaging in anti-social and criminal behaviour and staff have not been sufficiently engaged with them to successfully disrupt these behaviours. Young people continue to form inappropriate relationships.
- The home has an institutional appearance and there is some visible damage caused by young people.
- A young person has been going missing on a daily basis over a two week period and staff have not been able to prevent this from happening.
- There has not been an adequate response by staff to address fire safety concerns.
- Managers have failed to report notifiable incidents to Ofsted.
- The home is not conducting itself in accordance with the statement of purpose, and plans to meet the needs of some young people are not outlined.
- Managers did not provide an increase in support and guidance during a challenging time.
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The children's home's strengths:

- Young people moving to semi-independent living receive good quality support from staff.
- Some young people have developed good relationships with staff.
- Good quality relationships have been established between young people and all professionals because staff communicate very well on their behalf.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
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6. The quality and purpose standard In order to meet the quality and care standard, the registered person must ensure that: (2)(c) the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to: (i) meet the needs of the child. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i))	10/05/2017
11. The positive relationship standard In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on: (a) mutual respect and trust (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour (c) positive responses to other children and adults. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c))	10/05/2017
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(i) assess whether each child is at risk for 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 (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other (vi) take effective action whenever there is a concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi))	
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, 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 (2)(c) ensure that staff have experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experience of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(2)(c)(f))	10/05/2017
The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1)(5))	10/05/2017
The registered person must take precaution against risk of fire, and arrange for person working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25 (1)(a)(c))	10/05/2017

The registered person must without delay notify HMCI of any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers serious. (Regulation 25(4)(e))	10/05/2017
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Recommendations

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

- The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every young person in the home and gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each young person to achieve their potential; in particular, the staff team would benefit from additional supervision and training to reflect on and learn from the challenges of recent weeks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.5)
- 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', paragraph 3.9)

Full report**Information about this children's home**

This home is registered for up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is run by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/06/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/03/2016	Full	Requires improvement
03/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Young people's experiences are adversely affected because there is insufficient planning to keep them safe from their known risks. In the past two weeks, a young person has been admitted to the home despite staff struggling with the challenges presented by another young person already at the home. A young person has continued to engage in risk-taking and offending behaviour and this has compromised this safety and well-being. On inspection, two young people were observed to remain in bed until early afternoon, after staying out until early morning. Some young people enjoy living in the home and feel listened to by staff. Other young people have failed to establish positive relationships with staff and have limited interaction with them. The two young people being reported as missing were both returning to the unit where they were positively received by staff. Staff have been able to talk with these young people about their risk taking behaviours but at the time of inspection this was not deterring them.	

There has been no effective monitoring or intervention when young people have formed unsuitable friendships with each other or in the community. Young people from the community and other children's homes have, on one occasion, entered and spent time in the home without staff knowledge. This has negatively influenced the behaviour of the young people resident here.

Staff support young people to seek medical attention when they need it and to have regular health checks. A young person with an existing medical condition was admitted to the home, but staff have not completed any additional training to fully understand and support his medical needs.

Records indicate that staff have proven that they can successfully support and provide good quality care for young people who are in the process of moving to semi-independent living. Young people who left the home the day before inspection stopped by the home during the inspection and spoke about how staff contributed towards their ability to move on successfully.

The college conveniently located across the road from the home provides a good educational resource for the young people to engage in age-appropriate learning. Staff support them to register for classes and secure funding to which they are entitled. Staff have good communication with school and college staff to support the young people in their studies.

The home continues to have an institutional feel, despite a recommendation being made at the last inspection. A capital bid was made to the local authority in October 2016 and has been successful, with work due to start on some building improvements in June 2017. Damage to the home by young people has been slow to be repaired, resulting in restricted access to some communal areas and hazards in certain areas.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Staff have not been able to intervene effectively to stop a young person's risk taking behaviours from escalating. Some staff interventions are poorly organised, resulting in young people not improving their understanding of keeping safe. A member of staff stated that no formal training has been accessed or method of intervention implemented to deal with the behaviour of the young people. 'We just get on with it,' said a member of staff. This gives rise to inconsistency in practice. Risk assessments for the young people are poor. The information is presented as a chronology of behaviours, as opposed to an assessment of the information with specific strategies to combat risks. This has resulted in staff not being provided with sufficient guidance to protect young people from themselves, each other, or any unsuitable community networks. Some young people are engaging in risk-taking and offending behaviours. The frequency of one young person going missing has recently increased to daily. Staff	

implement the local missing person protocol and work closely with the police. However, staff are not sufficiently proactive in taking steps to find and return missing young people as they do not routinely go out to search for young people, and the number of attempts made to keep in contact with young people on their mobile phones is, at times, minimal. This lack of response may lead to some young people feeling that staff do not really care about them.

The action taken to address recent fire safety concerns was not sufficient. A young person set fire to curtains in his bedroom and matches have been flicked at staff. Fire safety plans have not been reviewed, nor were preventative measures evidenced and fire safety has not been strengthened despite the risks that young people present.

The requirement made at the last inspection regarding the notification of significant incidents has not been met. The manager failed to inform Ofsted of numerous events pertaining to behaviours of the young people, although these were serious and often involved the police.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
An experienced long-term manager is responsible for this home and another run by the local authority. He has responsibility for all admissions to the home, whether they are in an emergency or planned. He failed to consider the impact of introducing vulnerable young people into an already chaotic environment. As a result, the risk to young people increased. Managers have failed to put in place care plans that give staff useful guidance to care for young people who have been in the home for longer than a 72-hour emergency placement. As a result, planning has drifted for some young people. Staff have not received the support or guidance from managers that they need to meet the current needs of young people. Some staff are frustrated, as the challenges displayed have been exhausting. For example, some staff have been physically harmed and verbally abused by young people. The home is not functioning in line with the ethos around which it was established. The statement of purpose states that the service is for young people aged 16–17, although the two most challenging recent admissions have been of younger boys. In addition, the qualifications of staff are not included in the document as they should be. External monitoring of the home is good. The independent visitor is capturing the strengths and areas of improvement in the monthly reports submitted. The latest report highlighted the admittance of young people outside of the age range of the service and identified the need to review and revise the statement of purpose.	

The home has established positive relationships with local agencies to provide a holistic response for addressing the needs of young people. Social workers report that the staff keep them well informed about significant events involving the young people. However, the manager did not implement effective immediate behaviour management strategies to address the escalating behaviour of one young person whilst the multi-agency strategy meeting to develop a longer-term response was scheduled.

Senior managers of the local authority that operates the home are putting together an action plan to address the concerns raised at this inspection.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 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 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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