

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037762
Inspector	Stephen Collett
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Portsmouth City Council
Registered person address	Portsmouth City Council Civic Offices, Guildhall Square PORTSMOUTH PO1 2BG
Responsible individual	Stephen Kitchman
Registered manager	Calvin Stuart George
Date of last inspection	03/12/2014

Inspection date	25/03/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

At the last full inspection in December 2014 the home was judged to be good in all areas of practice except safeguarding, which was adequate. Two requirements were made, and these have both been met. In addition, five recommendations were made to further develop practice. The home has acted upon the majority of these recommendations and is judged to have sustained the level of overall effectiveness.

The home now has a system in place for monitoring the effectiveness of sanctions, and team meetings provide management and staff with the opportunity to review the impact sanctions have had on young people's behaviour and their motivation to meet their goals and targets. The process is not yet fully embedded in practice, but substantial improvements have been made.

The format for regulation 34 monitoring reports has been revised, and the matters set out in schedule 6 of the regulation now form part of the monitoring process. Reports are now submitted to Ofsted within the required timescales.

There continues to be a fairly high level of cannabis use by young people in the home, but management take steps to ensure that external professionals visit the home to support young people to address the issue. There are plans in place for professionals to attend young people's meetings, in order that young people are familiar with how to access a range of support services.

There has been an improvement in the quality and quantity of information staff record regarding missing episodes. Staff are now prompted to engage in conversation with young people when they return from a missing episode, and any information that is forthcoming is now recorded in a central log. Specialist workers from a national voluntary organisation continue to offer young people independent return home interviews.

Management have addressed the shortfalls identified in the system for monitoring staff training, and are now able to demonstrate when staff have undertaken refresher safeguarding training, or when they are booked onto relevant courses.

Two of the recommendations made at the last inspection have not been sufficiently addressed. Young people's placement plans do not always specify the goals and targets young people are working towards, and often do not clearly define the work that staff will undertake to support young people achieve these. Consequently, the home cannot always demonstrate the progress young people are making, and what additional support may be needed.

Although some work has been undertaken to improve the physical environment of the home, some communal areas are in need of redecoration, and broken furniture and fittings were observed at this inspection. The Registered Manager is in the process of implementing an audit process, so that a higher standard of maintenance can be achieved in the home.

The home provides care and support for older teenagers who are working towards independence. Many young people who have not successfully managed semi-independent living are admitted to the home, and work is undertaken with these young people to better prepare them for their next transition. Several young people have moved on from the home in a planned way, and continue to benefit from outreach support provided by the staff team.

Young people are generally admitted to the home in accordance with the statement of purpose. However, there has been a recent example of a young person being admitted without sufficient consideration being given to the impact on the current residents. This has had a negative impact on some young people's progress, and resulted in disruption to the day-to-day smooth running of the home.

Many young people at the home struggle to fully engage with education, training or work. However, the staff provide high levels of support and encouragement to help young people address these issues, and take a pro-active approach to working with external agencies to ensure the young people's needs are met. This often results in a better understanding of young people's abilities and more appropriate resources being put in place.

Young people benefit from being cared for and supported by a skilled and committed team of staff. However, there has not been a consistent approach from management in dealing with poor staff performance, and this has impacted negatively on the relationship between staff and young people on some occasions.

Management and staff clearly identify individual young people's vulnerabilities and are alert to the dangers associated with missing from care and the risk of sexual exploitation. The Registered Manager takes pro-active steps to ensure a multi-

disciplinary approach is taken to addressing concerns for young people's welfare and safety. Communication with external agencies is excellent, and this ensures that young people can access the services they need to meet their needs.

Despite this positive aspect of safeguarding practice, the standard of young people's individual risk assessments could be improved. Some risk assessments do not contain sufficient information or specify the actions to be taken to reduce the level of risk. Staff do not consistently implement the actions identified in risk assessments and so minimise the potential for harm.

The home has an experienced manager in place, and staff feel well supported. The manager is familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and demonstrates a commitment to further improving practice.

As a result of this inspection, one requirement and four recommendations are made to develop and improve practice in the home.

Information about this children's home

This is a purpose-built children's home run by the local authority that operates as a reception and assessment centre. The home is registered to accommodate seven young people of either gender between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2014	Full	good
14/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
22/04/2013	Full	adequate
18/12/2012	Interim	good progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
25 (2001)	ensure there are sufficient competent persons working at the children's home; specifically, ensure action is taken to address poor performance by staff. (Regulation 25 (1))	30/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- provide a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- contribute effectively to each child's placement plan review; specifically, ensure that placement plans are regularly reviewed and amended if

necessary, and that progress towards goals and targets is recorded (NMS 25.3)

- ensure the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet; specifically, take into account the likely impact new admissions will have on current residents (NMS 11.2)
- ensure children's safety and welfare is promoted in the home; specifically, ensure risk assessments are detailed and specify actions to be taken to promote young peoples safety, and these are implemented in practice. (NMS 4.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.