

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	26/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC042147
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Child First Limited
Registered person address	c/o, 40 Oxford Road, WORTHING, West Sussex, BN11 1UT

Responsible individual	Mr Terry Goble
Registered manager	Mrs Sandra Whyte
Inspector	Miss Jennie Christopher

Inspection date	26/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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 widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and 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

SC042147

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- The Statement of Purpose is not reflective of the service provided. Staff do not have the skills required to implement the service as detailed and training is lacking.
- Staff do not have a sufficiently coherent understanding of behaviours that may make young people vulnerable in the community. Risk assessments are not sufficiently robust and do not focus on protective factors and responses to risky behaviours. This is particularly so in regards to self-injurious behaviour, exploitation in all forms and sexually harmful behaviour.
- Behaviour management techniques are not consistent or sufficiently embedded within the practice of the whole staff team. Low level behaviours such as inappropriate language are not challenged.
- When young people have been assaulted by others in the home they have not been adequately supported to pursue this with the police through fear of recriminations.
- Assessments prior to placements commencing have not been completed in order to determine the impact members of the group could have on each other.
- Children are not supported to make complaints when appropriate. The home is unable to respond and develop practice as a result.
- Child protection, safeguarding and missing policies do not contain signs and indicators of exploitation. Therefore staff are not provided with guidance to identify when a child is at risk.
- The home is not well maintained. Many windows are screwed shut. The home requires a deep clean in many areas, especially the bathrooms. Curtains are damaged or ill fitting; carpets are frayed and young people's bedrooms are dirty.

The children's home strengths

- The recently appointed Registered Manager is providing increased stability to the home and supporting staff to implement rules and boundaries.
- Some staff use excellent techniques to encourage young people to try new experiences such as new and healthier foods.
- The daily routines within the home are increasingly encouraging young people to be ready for learning. Staff have a clearer focus of expectations for school days and engage those who are out of education, or declining to attend with appropriate activities and tasks.

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: ensure that the Statement of Purpose is reflective of the service provided and that staff fully understand it and apply it in practice. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(i))	13 Jul 2015
6: The quality and purpose of care standard: ensure that staff provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, and this is recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background including cultural needs beyond ethnicity and/or religion. Additionally, help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(iv)(v))	13 Jul 2015
6: The quality and purpose of care standard: provide children living in the home with the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably and ensure that the premises are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child; including soft furnishings and robust furniture. (Regulation 6 (2)(b)(vii) and 6 (2)(c))	13 Jul 2015
10: The health and well-being standard: ensure that the health and well-being needs of children are met, including children receiving advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. Additionally, identify any medical concerns, including emotional well-being issues in individual's plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(i))	13 Jul 2015
11: The positive relationships standard: provide staff with the skills and support to meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs and help each child to develop socially aware behaviour. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(i)(ii))	13 Jul 2015
11: The positive relationships standard: help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be	13 Jul 2015

supportive or harmful. Additionally, help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(vi)(vii))	
11: The positive relationships standard: provide staff with the skills and training to understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(ix))	13 Jul 2015
11: The positive relationships standard: ensure all staff understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable and that they have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with it. This includes supporting individuals to report bullying without fear of reprisals. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(xii)(xiii))	13 Jul 2015
12: The protection of children standard: ensure the registered person provides staff with regular training in safeguarding, which also includes the skills and knowledge to 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. This is with specific regard to all forms of exploitation. Additionally, help each child to understand how to keep safe and manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other and in particular identify risks and protective factors for those who may self-harm or who have sexually harmful behaviour. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(iv))	13 Jul 2015
12: The protection of children standard: review and fully complete the current assessment which determines if the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 12 (2)(c))	13 Jul 2015
12: The protection of children standard: * ensure the premises used for the purposes of the home are maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. In particular ensure that all windows are safe, carpets are clean and the cleanliness of the building is maintained to a satisfactory level. (Regulation 12 2(d))	13 Jul 2015
13: The leadership and management standard: ensure the registered person leads and manages the home in a way that is consistent with its approach and ethos, and delivers	13 Jul 2015

the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 13 (2)(a))	
13: The leadership and management standard: demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on the feedback of the experiences of children, including complaints received. This also includes supporting children to make complaints when appropriate. (Regulation 13 (2)(g)(ii))	13 Jul 2015
14: The care planning standard:.* ensure that pre-admission impact assessments are conducted and recorded, which consider individual behaviours and needs and those of the group, and if and how current staff can meet those needs. Act on these findings in deciding whether an admission should go ahead. (Regulation 14 (2)(a))	13 Jul 2015
19: Behaviour management and discipline: ensure that no measure involving punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child is implemented. (Regulation 19 (2)(j))	13 Jul 2015
34: Policies for the protection of children: ensure that where the registered person prepares and implements a child protection, safeguarding or missing policy it includes reference to signs of exploitation. (Regulation 34 (1))	13 Jul 2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 6 children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and run by a small private organisation who have two children's homes a registered school.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/01/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
12/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
17/12/2013	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	inadequate
Young people have experienced many changes within the home recently. A new Registered Manager is in post and there have been some changes to staff, including staff working between both homes in the organisation. The group living together has also changed, with four young people moving into the home and five young people moving on since the last inspection. Initially this movement was in response to the interim inspection in January 2015 to ensure groups of young people living together were not having a detrimental impact on each other. Police commented that previously the combination of young people living in the home was also a concern to them. Subsequent placements of individuals have not been thoroughly assessed to determine the impact presenting needs and behaviours may have on others within the group. Additionally, needs are not assessed in line with the current staff teams skills, knowledge and training. As a result, this has had a negative impact on some young people's progress. Young people enjoy some very positive relationships with staff. Observations showed elements of thoughtful care, with some staff recognising anxiety and distress in young people and diverting them from situations, for example by going for a chat over a milkshake. Staff were seen to be actively encouraging young people to try new experiences, such as foods they have not experienced or thought they did not like. Key staff demonstrate a good understanding of individual needs and consideration of their past experiences. Young people talked positively of their relationships with individual staff members and were seen to approach them with questions, queries or concerns. Individual in house care plans lack depth of knowledge and guidance in how to meet young people's cultural needs beyond their ethnicity and religion. Additionally, they do not effectively detail how to support young people to manage their past and the emotional and behavioural impact this presents. As a result, young people do not know how to conduct themselves in socially acceptable ways, including their choice of language in casual conversation. Staff now structure the day in order for young people to be prepared for learning. Attendance at school has increased. A young person who is not in education is currently awaiting allocation of a tutor. In the intervening period staff complete educational activities and life skills with him. Those who are excluded or decline to attend education engage in activities with staff such as producing music recordings and poems.	

Young people are supported to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means to them. They are encouraged to undertake exercise and try new and varied homemade foods. Most struggle with attending regular medical appointments and staff explain the need for regular check-ups. Not all young people have an up-to-date Looked After Child medical report on file. Emotional well-being is not always effectively supported. Specialist services are not available for those who display concerning behaviours. All young people's medication is supervised by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but health plans are not available and care plans do not provide enough detail on how to support young people's physical and emotional well-being.

Care plans and risk assessments are not sufficiently detailed for young people who display behaviours that place them or others at risk. Plans do not identify how young people are vulnerable to exploitation in the community. Managers have not provided staff with sufficient direction to support young people to understand positive social and sexual relationships or to recognise when they are being exploited. Consequently they have been unable to prevent young people trusting unknown adults in the community with their money and belongings or selling drugs for others.

Staff support young people to maintain contact with family and appropriate friends, often travelling long distances to facilitate this.

Young people's views and wishes in the day-to-day running of the home are gathered via group meetings, key work sessions and ad hoc sessions. There have been no recorded complaints from young people, but records of incidents identify that young people have expressed a desire to make formal complaints. They have not been supported to complete the relevant form and therefore have not had their views represented. In the main, young people are listened to and when possible their wishes are acted upon although this does not always happen swiftly. For example, a young person requested a double bed in January and it arrived during the inspection. Furniture, in bedrooms in particular, is not sturdy enough for the young people's behaviour and needs. There is also a lack of personalised soft furnishings in bedrooms.

Young people learn age-appropriate life skills through day-to-day involvement in tasks around the home. However, due to the brevity of placements, progress in this area is not easily measurable, although one young person is now showering more frequently since his placement began. As recent placements have ended in an unplanned manner it has been difficult to ensure individuals are prepared for their next step. The organisation's management does ensure placing authorities are informed of what the perceived needs are for the young person to enable a more appropriate placement to be found.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
Young people comment that they usually feel safe in the home. However, a young person said they had been shocked by another resident's behaviour and it had made him feel unsafe. Another is struggling with relationships with other young people in the local community. Staff recognise this concern and are proactive in asking members of the community to leave the grounds of the home and liaising with the local police as appropriate to ensure young people feel safe in their home. Bullying is an issue within the home. Young people have produced a bullying awareness poster, which was put on display during the inspection. While staff are increasingly aware of signs of bullying, young people do not always follow through with complaints through fear of reprisals, including a case where a young person was assaulted by another in the home. The staff skill level is not yet sufficient to ensure that they can protect young people and help them to protect themselves from any possible recriminations when reporting bullying to staff or police. Staff have some strong skills in identifying behaviours that may place young people at risk. However, guidance from senior managers is at times failing. While they have undertaken training in safeguarding issues relevant to the current group of young people, this is yet to be disseminated to staff. Plans are in place for this to happen, but in the intervening period staff are caring for young people who exhibit risky behaviours which place both themselves and others at risk. Young people's risk assessments with regards to specific behaviours such as self-harm and sexually harmful or inappropriate behaviour vary greatly in quality and depth of detail. As a result, staff are not provided with sufficient guidance in how to manage incidents or how to respond effectively to them when they occur. This places young people at risk of harm. The home's child protection and missing from care policies do not identify the risk of child sexual exploitation, including signs for staff to be aware of. Training records indicate that some staff, including senior staff, have not benefitted from safeguarding training for up to four years. Staff do not have the required skills to identify signs of exploitation and individual risk and vulnerabilities in the community. Young people are on occasion absent from the home without the authority of staff. When this occurs, staff respond appropriately including searching known locations where the young person may be and attempting to make contact with them via their mobile phone. The close working relationship with the local police Community Safety Officer (PCSO) also supports the search for young people. When individuals return, staff endeavour to support them with ways to prevent them from being	

absent in the future, while reiterating the risk they could be at when their presence is unknown.

Since the new Registered Manager has been in place staff say they are increasingly supported to manage young people's inappropriate and unwanted behaviour. Staff are increasingly confident in this area, although practice is not yet consistent. All staff do not have the skills and knowledge to understand how previous experiences and abuse for young people people can impact on their current behaviour. Therefore, they have a diminished ability to interpret behaviour and support young people to modify their responses. Restraints, when used, are mostly clearly recorded and practice is in line with individual behaviour management plans. However, records are not always clear as to why a staged approach to restraint has not been feasible. Young people understand the homes target and reward system, and this works with reasonable effect with the current group of young people. Sanctions are mostly fair and proportionate, although there was one example of two young people receiving a sanction because staff were unsure which one merited it. Additionally records are not clear enough when the Registered Manager has overturned an inappropriate sanction, in some cases it was not evident if a sanction had or had not been carried out.

The home has a location assessment in place which identifies some of the concerns the local community can pose to young people. However, there is little evaluation of risk in the document and no indication of how risk can be managed or minimised. The assessment has not been completed.

The organisations recruitment procedures are robust with appropriate pre-employment checks undertaken prior to the appointment of new staff. Young people are protected from fire through regular checks of systems and visits from the local fire service. Other avoidable hazards in the home are a risk to young people due to lack of maintenance. Examples include windows that are screwed shut; frayed carpets; an electrical socket that had come loose; and the cleanliness of the floor in the downstairs toilet.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
The Registered Manager has been in post in this home since March 2015. She holds relevant child care qualifications and is currently working towards her Level 5 qualification in management of childcare services. She has several years' experience and was formally the Registered Manager in the other children's home	

operated by this organisation. The Registered Manager is keen to improve the service provided for young people. She does not have a development plan in place, but is aware of many of the weaknesses within the home. This includes staff not having the training they require to support the current group of young people's specific behavioural and emotional needs. Two requirements set at the interim in January 2015 have not been acted upon. One was in relation to the maintenance, cleanliness and homeliness of the building. The other related to utilising pre-placement impact assessments to ensure individuals behaviours did not impact on others already living in the home and to determine if the current staff team have the skills to support the individual's social and emotional needs. -

The Statement of Purpose does not reflect the current service provided. The organisations management team does not provide staff with the training in specialist approaches detailed, such as an understanding of attachment disorder. Therefore, staff are unable to fully apply this approach to caring for young people as outlined in the document.

Staff say that since coming into post, the current Registered Manager has supported them to work increasingly as a team and has provided consistency in approach for young people. This is still not fully embedded in practice and remains a work in progress. Staff feel positive about the change and say they are supported by the current manager. Staff benefit from varying degrees of supervision, and while formal supervision is not always regular, staff say they can approach the management team at any time for guidance and support. New staff said they have received regular supervision and are due to attend upcoming induction workshops and training. Agency staff said they were given the time to read policies and young people's files on their first shift. They also reported that permanent staff support them.

Staff suggest the current group of young people are more willing to engage than other young people who have been in placement recently. This has increased their confidence in working with them and is leading to young people making some progress while living in the home. However, current plans do not make it clear how much progress young people have made. The information is available in various documents but is not collated and evaluated effectively.

The home fosters positive links with young people's parents and carers to ensure consistent messages are maintained. There is evidence of good multi-agency working with social workers, youth offending teams, police and education professionals. The Registered Manager is proactive in requesting professionals meetings to identify specific support for young people. Social workers comment positively about the home and staff, but also recognise the building is not in a good state of decorative or physical repair.

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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