

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC042147
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Child First Limited
Registered person address	Child First Ltd PO Box 2050 Steyning West Sussex BN44 3XQ
Responsible individual	Terry Goble
Registered manager	Laura Louise Hillier
Date of last inspection	12/08/2014

Inspection date	27/01/2015
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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 **declined in effectiveness**.

The home was last inspected in August 2014, where it was judged as good overall and adequate in safeguarding young people. The home has declined in effectiveness since the last inspection. The current group of young people have not been effectively assessed as to the impact they have on each other. The group dynamic has a detrimental impact on all young people living in the home. There is an increase in negative behaviour since the last inspection, including substance misuse and offending. The physical environment is no longer homely due to holes in plaster and walls and damage to furniture. As a result, outcomes for young people are poor.

Staff are working hard to provide a positive experience for young people. However the high level of challenging behaviour within the group has taken its toll on enthusiasm and morale. Most young people are not in education or training, and there is little structure to their day while appropriate placements are sought. The lack of organised educational activities results in individuals leaving the home unchallenged during the day. Observations showed young people returning several hours later substance affected. Young people decline to engage in individual sessions with external drug and alcohol teams, although some support is available via the youth offending service.

There have been four placements made since the last inspection. Planning prior to young people moving into the home lacks rigour. Full chronologies have not always been made available to the home. However, the information available has not effectively been used to determine impact on those currently in placement and how the group will influence each other. A social worker raised their concern regarding changes to the group and the detrimental effect this has on individual's behaviour. Ongoing assessment of the group dynamic is made but has not been sufficiently acted upon. The Registered Manager is aware of the influence individuals have, yet placements continue. In house care plans are clear in how young people's needs will

be met; however there remains a lack of detail regarding individual identity and places, celebrations and practices that are significant to them. Records are clear in evaluating young people's progress, or lack of progress. Of the three young people who have moved on, one has been placed in a service better able to meet their specific needs; and two have moved unplanned, to semi-independence or to live with family members.

Staff are working hard to create an environment where young people feel safe. However bullying has been a concern and remains an ongoing issue in respect of individuals encouraging others into negative behaviour. Offending and drug use has increased, with an escalation in the seriousness of offences committed. Close working with the youth offending service and local police ensures individuals recognise the seriousness of the offences; but court imposed sanctions are having little impact. Within the home there is a mostly consistent approach to behaviour management, however group dynamics and the exhaustion of staff often leads to this being ineffective. There is a limited use of restraint, with recorded interventions focusing on de-escalation and redirection. Sanctions are fair and proportionate with a reduced focus on financial reparation. The Registered Manager guides the staff team towards the greater use of restorative approaches. This is more effective with some young people than others.

The suitably qualified and experienced manager was registered in October 2014. She, along with the deputy managers, is working hard to motivate the team to continue their previously good standard of care. While staff are currently feeling under pressure, they remain confident in their roles and key workers are well informed on the needs and progress of their key child. Partnership working is entrenched in daily practice, including regular group meetings involving several partner agencies and former carers. Communication between family and key professionals is consistent and records are clear and non-stigmatising. External monitoring in line with Regulation 33 has not been forwarded to Ofsted since July 2014. As a result, inspectors have been unable to monitor the effectiveness of the home between inspections. Regular managers monitoring is clear and highlights areas for improvement and any significant trends and patterns. The homes' development plan reflects internal monitoring. Plans are clear and time limited reflecting improvements for both the fabric of the building and care experience for young people. Complaints are responded to swiftly and resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. Most of the recommendations set at the last inspection have been met. Notifications are timely in their arrival.

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to accommodate up to six young people of either gender who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home aims to support young people to return to family, move to foster carers or to move on to independent accommodation. The organisation has its own school which is registered with the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/08/2014	Full	good
17/12/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/06/2013	Full	good
16/10/2012	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
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there by ensuring impact risk assessments are thoroughly completed prior to admitting a child and regularly reviewed during their placement (Regulation 11(1)(a))	27/02/2015
18 (2001)	ensure that the routine of the home is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age, regular attendance at college where applicable (Regulation 18(1)(b))	27/02/2015

31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally and kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(2)(d)(e))	27/02/2015
33 (2001)	ensure that where independent person produces a written report about a visit, they provide a copy of the report to HMCI. (Ofsted) (Regulation 33(9)(a))	27/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure care plans fully reflect all aspects of young people's individual identity (NMS 2.1)
- ensure staff in the home are trained to recognise and deal with any indications or incidents of bullying, to act proactively and intervene positively, engaging with those who bully as well as those who are bullied. (NMS 3.12)

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.