

SC045408

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to two children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 21 to 22 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 13 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- The assessment and management of risk do not adequately minimise the potential for the young people to come to harm.
- There is no behaviour management policy in place in the home. This has

resulted in staff members having an inconsistent understanding of appropriate boundaries.

- Care plans and risk assessments for new young people are not produced or agreed in a timely manner.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of care are not comprehensive, as they neglect some areas such as supervision.
- There have been gaps in training, resulting in staff not having the skills and knowledge required to deliver the specialist care that the young people need.
- Young people are being placed in the home without having an arranged education provision. This is impacting on their progress.
- Gaps in staffing have impacted on the ability of the team to deliver consistent care.

The children's home's strengths

- The young people have made progress in their individual ways.
- The staff have built trusting relationships with the young people and offer them thoughtful support.
- The staff have high aspirations for the young people. Staff encourage them to work hard to achieve their goals.
- The staff team has pulled together to work through the challenges presented by the gaps in staffing.
- The registered manager and her team are keen to develop their skills.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2017	Full	Good
06/06/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/11/2015	Full	Good
02/09/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (1)(a)(iv) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; (2)(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background	22/1/2018
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(ix)(x)	22/1/2018

12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure: (2)(a)(i) that staff— 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; (2)(a)(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare. This is with specific reference to the assessment and management of risk, and understanding of risk and acceptable behaviour between the staff and the young people.	22/1/2018
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. This is with specific reference to ensuring staff on duty have the skills and experience required to keep the young people safe.	22/1/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, ensure that all staff complete safeguarding training and managers complete managing allegations training.	02/03/2018
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out— how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home. (Regulation 35(1)(a))	22/1/2018

Recommendations

- The children’s guide should help children to understand: The statement of purpose if the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there). (‘Guide to the children’s home regulations including the quality standards’, page 24, paragraph 4.22)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The day-to-day support for the young people is assisting them to make progress. However, the shortfalls identified in leadership and management, and help and protect, are adversely affecting the care offered. For example, staff have not comprehensively assessed risks for one young person, and risk assessments in place do not refer to some known behaviours that could lead to serious safeguarding concerns. As a result of this, the staff are not reliably informed of the risks, and do not have strategies to guide them should the risks occur.

The young people at the home have built positive and trusting relationships with the staff. The staff have the skills to communicate with the young people, including those who arrive at the home presenting complex and challenging behaviours. A new young person is beginning to develop trust with the staff and she commented, 'They really do care about me, and no matter what I've done they are there for me.'

Young people are welcomed to the home. Leaders and managers have undertaken visits to assess their compatibility. However, the staffing levels when young people arrive at the home have not always been sufficient to maintain firm boundaries, and significant damage has been caused. An example of such damage includes one young person flooding the home on several occasions.

Some young people have been placed at the home with no education provision identified. The staff do their best to encourage learning, however the home does not have a working computer. Subsequently, the young people cannot engage in online learning. This has resulted in one young person experiencing further disruption to their education. For the young people who do attend education, communication between the staff and school is frequent, which helps to implement consistent support between the home and school.

The staff encourage the young people to pursue healthy lifestyle. One young person recently joined a gym and attends this regularly. A range of additional services are available to support the young people in their mental health and psychological well-being. Some of the staff have received specialist training to give them further skills in managing some complex behaviours. Frequent communication within the young people's network is a strength of the organisation and assists the staff to manage the complex and challenging needs of the young people.

In response to a requirement at the last inspection, controlled medication is now recorded in a book specifically for this purpose. The staff record medication, stock entry and the administering of medication. They detail any variations, such as when one young person recently flushed her medication down the lavatory. As a result of this, medication is now recorded effectively.

The staff work with the young people to find creative ways to increase their independence, as high levels of support are required as part of the risk assessment. The young people are encouraged to participate in the running of the home, preparing and

cooking meals and undertaking household tasks. A high level of damage has recently occurred. As a response to this, the staff have used a restorative approach which is beginning to have a positive impact. One young person has begun to take ownership of the home by putting right some of the damage and investing in her surroundings by helping the staff to decorate.

how well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Safeguarding practice in relation to the young people is variable. The staff have failed to safely assess the risk of activities that they engaged in with the young people. An example of this is playing hide and seek in and around the home after dark. Furthermore, a young person has been able to access the home's vehicle, hiding in the boot on more than one occasion. In addition to this, there is a lack of understanding of boundaries in the home. Currently, neither the staff nor the young people have established safe personal space boundaries. This in itself presents safeguarding risks.

Staff assessment and management of risk lack the required detail. Potential serious hazards, such as a young person who is known to set fires, have not been considered. A lack of risk assessment for the young person who recently arrived at the home has meant that the staff do not have clear direction regarding the risks or strategies to reduce them.

A requirement regarding the protection of children from the inspection in March 2017 has not been met. Staff do not fully understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. An example of this is a young person reporting concerns about an adult. These concerns were not adequately followed up by the staff. Not all staff have received updated safeguarding training.

The registered manager has not updated the home's behaviour management policy. The staff have engaged in play-fighting type behaviours with the young people and are not demonstrating appropriate professional conduct in the workplace. This lack of appropriate role modelling and the blurred boundaries regarding personal space mean that the young people are unclear of acceptable behaviour in the home.

Some areas of behaviour management are stronger. The staff are skilled in supporting young people with self-injurious behaviour. They worked hard to establish trust with one young person and have created a fine line between trust and intervention when risky behaviour occurs. The trust between the young person and staff enables the young person to confide in them at times of crisis, and hand in sharps. Room searches have taken place; however, these are rare and the usual practice is to engage the young people to hand in objects themselves.

There have been occasions when the young people have been missing from the home. Staff follow agreed protocols and contact the relevant agencies in a timely manner. On one occasion, a young person left the home during the night without staff's knowledge. This resulted in a change of practice, with alarms now placed on internal doors during the night to ensure that staff know if young people are up.

Despite an increase in damages of late, the premises are well maintained. Any damage

is quickly reported. However, repair for some issues, such as a toilet cistern being replaced, has been slow. Development plans include new flooring throughout the home. In response to a previous requirement, the fire risk assessment has been updated. Regular checks of safety equipment ensure that it is in good working order. This helps staff to ensure that the young people live in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home's registered manager has been in post since November 2016. She has only recently registered with Ofsted. The home is currently challenged by the high volume of vacant posts and staff illness. As a result of this, the staff team is largely new in post. The assistant manager is 'acting' in her role, as are the three senior staff. They have tried their best to support the registered manager. However, the shortfalls revealed in this report are attributed, in part, to the lack of experience in the team. The service manager acknowledged that the registered manager needs additional support to develop her own skills and that of the team.

The admission of one young person, which took place as the registered manager was about to go on annual leave, had a negative impact on the other young person living at the home. The staff did their best to work through the disruption and the damages that occurred during this time. However, the care plans and risk assessments were not prioritised, resulting in staff working reactively.

Staff injuries have occurred, which have resulted in further staff absences. However, staff returning to work felt well supported by the acting seniors, with one staff member describing the team as 'rallying around' her. The staff have agreed on some strategies to reduce the risks for one young person; however, these were not recorded in the young person's care plan or risk assessment.

Although the registered manager undertook an audit of supervision in July, she has not implemented an effective method of regularly monitoring supervision. Supervision is taking place; however, a previous requirement to ensure that the records are given to staff in a timely manner has not been met. Consequently, staff do not have a written record to refer to and reflect on the decisions and guidance from managers. This is of particular concern due to the amount of staff 'acting' in roles and new staff.

Training for staff has not met the requirement from the last inspection. Not all staff have up-to-date safeguarding training. Some training has been cancelled, with no new dates arranged. A further barrier for staff is that some online training cannot be accessed through the office computers. As a result of this, the staff have not had the training to give them the knowledge and skills they need to care for the young people.

Communication between the staff and the young people's network is good. Social workers spoken to view this as a strength of the home. One parent commented, 'Overall we are happy with the home, and feel that we trust the staff to look after our child. They give us regular updates so we know what is going on.'

The home's statement of purpose informs the reader of the services available at the home. The young person's guide, however, does not inform young people of the audible door alarms which may be used during the night. As a result of this, young people are

not reliably informed of what to expect.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC045408

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Ian Forbes

Registered manager: Emma Scarr

Inspector

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector

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