

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC047483
Inspector	Phillip Morris
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Mulberry House Care Homes Limited
Registered person address	Tollgate Business Centre Tollgate Drive Stafford Staffordshire ST16 3HS
Responsible individual	Karen Elizabeth Ingley
Registered manager	Elizabeth Diane Nixon
Date of last inspection	18/09/2014

Inspection date	04/02/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

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

Since the last full inspection one young person has left this home. This was well planned with good collaborative working and communication sharing between agencies. This ensured appropriate support was in place to meet the young person's needs. A new young person has also been admitted to the home. This was planned but the home did not seek sufficient information to fully ascertain its capacity to meet the young person's needs or to inform the assessment of the impact on other residents.

Young people are supported by plans overseen by the Registered Manager. These plans are developed through ongoing evaluation and information received from other agencies.

The fabric of the home fails to provide a comfortable environment. For example, kitchen drawers are missing and the stair carpet is worn in places. This does not present as a house that is homely.

The Registered Manager and staff team effectively monitor the quality of care and the welfare of young people. Improved recording systems help staff to have access to key information. They use this information effectively to improve the quality of care for young people.

Young people have benefitted from improved attendance at school and training. This is helping to improve their overall educational outcomes.

The Registered Manager has implemented improved development planning and as a result there have been improvements in staff recording and communication. Young people benefit through more consistent care being provided by the staff group in terms of meeting their daily needs and care planning. This in turn is helping them to

thrive physically, emotionally and educationally.

Recruitment of staff has improved; previously there has been a reliance on agency staff to ensure sufficiency of staff cover. The home also lacked a deputy manager. The recruitment of permanent staff and a deputy manager has given young people greater consistency of care.

Established staff members receive regular supervision and appraisals from the Registered Manager. Newly appointed staff do not always receive supervision at the required level. This hinders their early development in their new role.

Young people are kept safe. The home works in accordance with the local safeguarding children's board policies and procedures. The home has addressed problems of drug misuse effectively and reduced the occurrence of young people going missing. Young people's whereabouts are known at all times and the home implements effective strategies to divert young people away from risk taking behaviour. The home promotes and encourages the young people's interests and channels young people into positive activities.

Young people's views are valued and they contribute to decisions about how the home is run. This helps them influence matters that affect them. The attitudes of young people are explored in individual sessions with negative attitudes being challenged in an appropriate manner. This develops the young people's ability to reflect on their perceptions and to understand difference.

Since the full inspection Ofsted has received three notifications in relation to two incidents. Both incidents required police involvement, the home acted appropriately and in line with procedures. The home has had no restraints or complaints since the full inspection.

Strength of the home is effective behaviour management. This means they are actively using strategies to identify problems early and are taking steps to prevent the escalation of incidents. This is developing a positive and nurturing culture from which young people benefit.

Relationships between young people and their families are valued by the Registered Manager and staff group. Young people continue to have regular contact with their families in line with their care plan. Contact is supported and promoted in a positive manner. Young people develop a clear understanding of their backgrounds and the reasons why they are in care. This enables young people to develop their identity in the knowledge of their family history and relationships.

Partnership working with the local authorities, health and education is good. The Registered Manager and staff attend relevant meetings and ensure regular communication takes place with agencies for the benefit of young people.

At the full inspection two requirements were made, firstly to ensure sufficiency of staffing having regard to the home's Statement of Purpose, and secondly ensuring the views of young people and stakeholders are taken into account. These have been addressed. As a result, staffing levels have improved and the views of young people and key stakeholders are taken into account.

There remains one outstanding recommendation from the last inspection. This results in the absence of having risk assessments in respect of lone working. This leaves gaps in identifying any areas of risk to young people staff or the public.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/09/2014	Full	adequate
10/02/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
13/09/2012	Interim	inadequate progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet (NMS 11.12)
- ensure where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public (NMS 17.9)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

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.