

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	13/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC047483
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Mulberry House Care Homes Limited
Registered provider address	Tollgate Business Centre, Tollgate Drive, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 3HS

Responsible individual	Karen Ingley
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Michelle Spruce

Inspection date	13/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judged that it has declined in effectiveness. The home was last inspected in July 2016. As a result of this inspection, the home is judged declined in effectiveness. Four requirements have been raised. The one requirement and three recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. New staff are now provided with sufficient training within reasonable timescales that helps them to undertake their roles. Adequate physical intervention training has been provided to managers and the senior team. This means that there are enough trained staff to support each other if physical intervention is required. Young people have each been provided with a tablet to access the internet for the purpose of education. Staff try hard to engage young people who are not in education by encouraging them to participate with their home tutor. Although this has been extremely difficult, the young person is now beginning to engage more. A tutor for the young person said, 'He has been out of education since he has been here. I come twice a week for two hours. Work is slow. Some progress as he says he does not want the home tutoring but is interested in cars.' As a result, he has applied for jobs and independently approached businesses for work. One young person has left the service since the last full inspection. The manager ended the placement following a number of incidents that directly impacted on the other young person living in the home. During one incident, the staff removed a young person from the home into emergency accommodation, as her safety was compromised. However, the risk assessment did not identify the sleeping arrangements sufficiently, as she had to share the room with a staff member. This compromised the privacy of the young person and did not safeguard the staff against allegations. Two young people have been placed in the home since July 2016. Relationships with staff have been difficult, and the young people have taken time to form bonds. The impact of the home using agency staff directly affected the relationships between the staff and the young person. As a result, agency staff have been reduced and the young people now know who is caring for them on a daily basis. Some repairs to the young person's en suite bathroom remain outstanding. For	

example, some large tiles in the shower cubicle have fallen off. There is no blind at the bathroom window or at a bedroom window. This does not protect the young person's privacy and dignity.

The registered manager left the service in August 2016. The deputy manager supported the management of the home before a registered manager from a sister home took over the arrangements. The arrangements have again changed back to the deputy manager overseeing the running of the home, with a view to register. However, no written confirmation of the arrangements has been sent to Ofsted.

During a period of time, following the departure of the registered manager, the oversight of the home's records and the monitoring of them were poor. Since the deputy manager has taken the manager position, she has identified areas of shortfall and has a structured plan to address them.

Young people go missing from the home. Incidents are reducing. Staff have not always acted in line with the home's policy and procedures when young people go missing. As a result, the manager took appropriate action to investigate the incident to ensure that the safety of young people when missing from care is not compromised.

The team works closely with social workers, education staff and health professionals to ensure that the needs of the children are effectively met. A social worker commented, 'This placement has been like magic. She was not in education before, but now attends. She has a good relationship with the deputy manager. The deputy is fantastic.' The local police community support officers visit the home on a regular basis. They are familiar with the young people and are aware of the anti-social behaviours that have presented since July 2016. The officers commented that since the young people were no longer associating with negative influences, the calls to them have reduced. As a result, local community relationships are slowly improving.

Information about this children's home

The home is one of four operated by a private company. It offers long-term care and accommodation for two young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
04/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	Full	Adequate

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) meet(s) the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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
12. The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to assessing risk and maintenance: (2)(a)(i) The registered person to ensure 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)(c) The registered person to ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	28/02/2017
The registered person must ensure that the privacy of children is appropriately protected. (Regulation 12(a))	10/02/2017
The registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of the name of the person so appointed and the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27(2)(a)(b))	03/02/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the registered person has a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be taken if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

Inspectors 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 that 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 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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