

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	30/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC047483
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Mulberry House Care Homes Limited
Registered person address	Bank Passage, STAFFORD, ST16 2JS

Responsible individual	Karen Ingle
Registered manager	Elizabeth Nixon
Inspector	Michelle Spruce

Inspection date	30/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC047483

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The house is not well maintained.
- Risk management systems have not taken account of clear hazards to fire and health and safety.
- Security monitoring systems are used without proper consent.
- The statement of purpose has not been revised to demonstrate who works in the home.
- The home fails to hold all statutory records such as placement plans and health records about young people.
- Not all staff are trained in fire safety.

The children's home strengths

- The service provides valuable extended support to families while young people are living at the home.
- Young people experience good relationships with staff.
- Young people's behaviour becomes positive and more socially acceptable.
- Young people are supported well to achieve their desired outcome of returning home to live with their family.

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
12 The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with respect to maintenance and the assessment of risk - (2)(d) the registered person must ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	30/12/2015
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review, and where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revision and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	30/12/2015
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; and so far as reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(a)(b)(c))	30/12/2015
The registered person must make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive suitable training in fire prevention. (Regulation 25(b))	30/12/2015

Recommendations

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

Ensure the registered person challenges any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/02/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
10/02/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
16/05/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Young people self-esteem and confidence improves because of staffs' ability to nurture and understand their individual needs. Young people learn how to build trust overtime. They know staff have their best interest at heart. The progress young people make is variable. Some have struggled to manage their behaviour and their placements have ended. Others have formed bonds with staff and have enjoyed their stay.	

Not all statutory records such as placement plans and health records are held at the home about young people. This delay from the Local Authority means young people individual needs are not fully understood. However, the home does provide internal plans that also include risk assessments, reward charts and activity planners.

A young person said the care they receive is, 'All right'. Staff consult with young people daily. Meetings are held to encourage young people to speak about the home and how they want to improve it. This enables them to speak freely about how to shape their home. As a result, young people feel included and respected.

Young people benefit from contact with family and friends. Staff go the extra mile in maintaining good relationships with extended family members. This good role modelling enables relationships to strengthen between young people and their family. As a result, a successful transition for some returning home has gone well.

Staff encourage access to education and promote attendance, further education and employment. Some young people try hard to improve and understand the importance of achieving a good education. This helps them to focus on their aims and objectives to maintaining better outcomes for their future.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Health and safety monitoring of the home is ineffective. It does not identify areas of risk fully in and out of the building. For example, the air conditioning fan unit on the exterior wall has a climbing plant that has weaved itself in and around it. Gutters are obstructed with debris causing damp on the exterior and interior walls. Window restrictors are not fitted to prevent young people from falling through windows on the first floor. Reporting processes are weak and mean hazards go unreported, undetected and not maintained. This places those who live, work and visit the home at risk of injury or harm. A young person said, 'The bathroom needs looking at'. The manager has improved some areas of the home since the last inspection. For example, some carpets have been replaced and rooms have been painted. Young people who have left the home since the last inspection have required the use of electronic surveillance to keep them safe. Although risk assessments were in place, there was no evidence to demonstrate this was agreed with by the social worker in the placement plans. Behaviour management is good. Some young people improve their behaviour	

because they have good relationships with staff. Staff implement robust behaviour management plans and risk assessments which reduces the need for to use physical intervention. Placements have been terminated where the manager has felt unable to maintain the safety of young people whose behaviour has continually placed them at risk of harm.

Safeguarding concerns are referred to the local safeguarding team when allegations are raised. Notifications of any significant events are made to Ofsted and the placing authorities. Complaints are handled in a fair and efficient manner internally and externally. The recruitment of staff is monitored well to ensure only suitable candidates are employed to work with young people.

Not all staff have undertaken sufficient fire training. This does not guarantee that in the event of a fire staff can evacuate everyone safely.

Young people living in the home feel safe and know staff care for their well-being. The use of drugs and alcohol, for some young people, has reduced since they were placed. This has improved their ability to manage their social behaviour and improved relationships.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
There has been change to the management structure since the last inspection. The registered manager resigned and a new manager was appointed in June, but has not yet registered with Ofsted. The statement of purpose is up-to-date but it combines the staff from a sister home. As a result, it is not clear who works at the home. The systems of quality assurance undertaken by the manager are ineffective. They do not report on the improvements needed in regards to maintaining the home or on missing statutory records. A home development plan is in place. However, some of the maintenance weaknesses have not been identified in the report. This does not guarantee work is planned to enhance the home internally and externally. Staff are supervised and appraised accordingly. Staff feel they are listened to. This support allows staff to progress and strengthen their skills. The team remain focused and dedicated in delivering individualised care. They	

know they are getting results because young people make progress not matter how small during their stay. Other professionals working with the staff confirm relationships and communication are good. Working with parents to transition young people home has become a real strength. A staff member said, 'We have worked with the family for over two years now; we have helped to put routines in place during contact.'

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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