

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	15/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC051947
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	After Care (N W) Limited
Registered person address	31-33 Hoghton Street, SOUTHPORT, Merseyside, PR9 0NS

Responsible individual	Timothy Blundell
Registered manager	Rosie Ingham
Inspector	Marina Tully and Michelle Edge

Inspection date	15/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people continue to make steady progress in light of their starting points. Education attendance is slowly increasing for one young person with the support of the company's own tutor. Prior to moving to the home, he had not attended school for over two years. However, he is now making some progress in his learning, particularly in maths and information technology. Although young people are accessing education and, for some, attendance is improving, their education plans do not demonstrate how staff intend to support young people to progress further. Furthermore, not all statutory care plans are up-to-date to reflect changes in need and circumstances, such as family contact arrangements. Consequently, young people are not yet benefiting from well-coordinated care and support to ensure that they reach their full potential. Young people's physical and emotional health needs are being adequately addressed. Their emotional health is supported through regular sessions with the in-house therapist as well as support from child and adolescent mental health service (CAHMS). A young person confirmed that he benefits from this support and said, 'I have learnt to go out for a walk when I am angry and this helps me to calm down.' This is a significant achievement and is making the home a more settled and peaceful environment. Although most staff have now undertaken E-safety and safeguarding training, young people have accessed inappropriate material in the home. Several 18 rated computer games and DVD's were found in both the home's communal areas and young people's bedrooms. The young people's risk assessments clearly state that staff should monitor and closely supervise young people when accessing technology, including playing the games with them. Staff had failed to identify the adult rating and follow the home's risks assessments. This does not demonstrate that staff fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities neither are they helping young people to understand how to keep safe. Compatibility risk assessments identify strategies to prevent bullying, including	

increasing staffing to 1:1 at all times. However, staff rota's did not demonstrate that this was consistently happening, the manager attributed this to errors in the rotas as oppose to insufficient staffing levels. On one occasion, staff took both young people to a parent's home and left them both there without any staff supervision. The parent called staff and reported that the young person, who wasn't her child, had been drinking alcohol and arranged for staff to collect him. While the Registered Manager identified this as poor safeguarding practice, she did not follow the company's safeguarding policy and instigate safeguarding procedures. Once this was brought to the manager's attention she acknowledged that she needed to take further action and escalated this to a senior manager.

Staff are not undertaking the daily duties assigned to them by the Registered Manager, for example, daily room checks are not being routinely completed. Consequently, young people's bedrooms had hazardous items in them, such as, a broken lamp, an electric fan without a protective guard and evidence of smoking, including ash and burn marks on window ledges and tables. Some young people's beds did not have sheets or pillow cases on them and the stairs carpet was worn. Not only does this undermine health and safety within the home, it detracts from a welcoming and homely environment where young people feel valued and well-cared for.

The manager is now registered with Ofsted and is completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. She demonstrates enthusiasm for driving the service forward and has already made some improvements, particularly around staff's professional supervision and promoting young people's culture. This was reflected in a young person's comments, 'I like to cook Slovakian food and staff try my homemade soup and stew.'

Internal and external monitoring of the service is not yet fully effective. The independent visitor reports do not provide a thorough evaluation of the care and protection provided within the home. Additionally, the manager's monitoring is not ensuring service improvement in all areas, particularly in the home's safeguarding practice. The manager is still not notifying Ofsted of serious safeguarding concerns; she did not provide an update on the outcome of a CSE police investigation. This further hinders independent scrutiny of the home's safeguarding practice.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care and accommodation for up-to two young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
12/03/2015	Interim	sustained effectiveness
07/07/2014	Full	Adequate
13/01/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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 12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm; (d) 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.	15/03/2016
13: The leadership and management standard 13 (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must - (c) ensure staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;	15/03/2016

(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
14: The care planning standard 14 (a) In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.	15/03/2016
Ensure to maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. With particular reference to the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Regulation 37 (2)(a) Schedule 4 (3))	15/03/2016
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation. (Regulation 40 (4)(a))	15/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of the children in the home's care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, paragraph 15.5, page 65)

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 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 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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