

SC053145

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The children's home forms part of a large social care company.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 December 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: 16 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

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

- Staff do not know and understand all young people's needs and risks.
- Risk assessments and plans are not robust enough.

- Young people do not receive consistent support to understand their risk-taking behaviour.
- Clear monitoring arrangements are not in place to ensure that young people do not have access to hazardous items. Consequently, young people have access to items that could cause them harm.
- Staff do not routinely access specialist support for young people. When they do access this, they do not always follow up on agreed actions.
- Behaviour management is not consistent or effective.
- The training available to staff does not always meet young people's needs. There are gaps in staff's knowledge on key safeguarding concerns.
- Inconsistent management oversight results in limited evaluation of the quality of practice.
- Staff do not receive regular and sufficient supervision.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people and staff have good relationships. Staff are committed in supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes.
- Young people engage extremely well in education and their attendance is good.
- Young people benefit from thorough and meaningful key-work sessions.
- Young people respond well to good daily routines.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. (Regulation 10 (1)(b)) In particular, ensure that young people's physical and emotional health needs are met, and that the appropriate services are accessed in a timely way.	18/01/2018
The positive relationship standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour. 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, and understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these. (Regulation 11 (1)(b) and (2)(a)(ix))	18/01/2018
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to	18/01/2018

identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. Also, ensure 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. (Regulation 12 (1) and (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(b)) In particular, ensure that all risks are identified and understood, and that this informs effective risk management.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(b)(c)(e)(h)) In particular, ensure that staff receive training to meet the needs of individual young people; and that the management and monitoring of case recording is robust so that young people's assessments are accurate and they record the progress they are making.	18/01/2018
The registered person must ensure that— at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a reasonable suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	18/01/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff help each child to prepare for any move from the home to live independently. This includes practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care.

Specifically, ensure that this support is revisited at timely intervals and is targeted in line with young people's needs assessments, and ensure that staff have

sufficient knowledge to provide this support. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, recording of information should be timely and accurate and show a clear chronology of events.

Inspection judgements

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

Young people make some positive progress living here. They benefit from individual care and support. This enables them to have clear daily routines, which have a positive impact on their progress.

Young people and staff have good relationships. Staff speak positively of the young people and there is a commitment to support young people to achieve positive outcomes. Staff do not however, have a full understanding of all the young people's needs and risks. This limits the progress that they make. There is an inconsistent approach in accessing specialist help and guidance. This means that young people do not always receive the specialist support that will help them. Furthermore, while staff gather a wealth of information, they do not analyse this information well. As a result, staff miss key opportunities to recognise specific risk factors and intervene accordingly. Consequently, some areas of need and risk drift with limited and in some instances no intervention. This is particularly evident in the assessment and plans associated with young people's health. For example, all young people smoke tobacco, yet there are no plans in place to educate young people about the risks of smoking and support them to stop.

Young people receive the support that they need to understand their identified emotions and risk-taking behaviour. This helps them to make safer decisions. For example, missing from home was a key risk indicator for the young people when they arrived. This has considerably reduced. Young people benefit from regular and thorough key-working sessions. This is a key strength of the home. However, the key-working sessions do not always cover the areas of concern that need exploring. Consequently, one-to-one work with young people does not address all risk-taking behaviours, and these behaviours, such as substance misuse, continue.

When young people first arrive at the home, they are not always engaged in suitable education. Staff take a proactive approach to secure education that meets young people's needs. They work together with the relevant professionals to ensure that young people have access to the correct educational placements, at the earliest opportunity. Young people engage well and attendance is good. Young people say that they like going to school, and talk fondly about making friends at school and having individual aspirations.

Staff support and encourage young people to develop some skills that will assist their transition to adult life. However, staff do not target all independence work to meet young people's individual needs. In one instance, independence work stopped for one young person as it was causing them anxiety. Staff did not explore other ways of assisting the young person to develop the skills that they needed, both practically and emotionally. Consequently, the young person was not adequately prepared to move on to independent living.

Young people have good input in to the running of the home. Young people meet regularly and the discussions are meaningful. Young people are encouraged to talk and explore any issues of concern. Staff facilitate the meetings well. They use the meetings as a forum of support for young people, and enable them to reflect on any concerning behaviours and support them to make better choices. In addition, young people receive consistent praise for their achievements and they are encouraged to reach their individual targets. Young people are aware of how to share their wishes and feelings and they have an understanding of the complaints procedure. When young people make complaints, staff respond swiftly in the first instance. They access advocacy services and, in the main, follow procedures well. However, the conclusion is not always clear and therefore young people are not always clear on the outcome.

The home feels inviting and it is reflective of the young people living there. They are encouraged to personalise their home. Overall, young people have respect for their home. When young people cause damage, staff respond in a timely way and ensure that they remove and fix any breakages.

Young people have contact with their family and friends. Young people are encouraged and supported to develop relationships with positive peers. They speak positively about spending time with their friends. Where there are challenges with this, staff work together with the relevant professionals to seek ways to manage the challenges safely. However, staff are not also aware of where young people are and whom their associates are. This means that contact with friends is not always adequately risk assessed.

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

Young people who live in this home are, in the main, safe. However, staff do not consistently adhere to safeguarding practices and procedures. For example, young people have open access to the internet, as the Wi-Fi code does not work. Furthermore, there are no clear monitoring arrangements to ensure that young people are using the

internet safely. Some young people living here are at risk of exploitation. Not having the internet safeguards in place means that young people have full exposure to the internet and are at risk of harm.

Staff do not understand key risk indicators. One example of this is where a young person displays violent and obsessive behaviours, yet staff have not assessed if there is a need to be concerned about these behaviours. Subsequently, risk assessments are not robust enough. They are often ambiguous and do not address current risk factors. Instead, they read as a chronology of behaviours and events with little analysis. Furthermore, strategies to manage presenting risk and safeguarding concerns are not always clear. Therefore, not all young people receive consistent support to understand the risks that they are taking. Subsequently they participate in risk-taking behaviour that can be harmful to themselves and others. Staff identify that this is an area of improvement and they are currently reviewing this area of practice.

When staff do have an understanding of young people's needs and associated risks, young people do receive good, consistent care. They receive the support that they need to understand why they have these needs and how things can improve for them.

No clear monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that young people do not have access to hazardous items. Consequently, young people have access to items that could cause them harm. For example, young people who are at risk of self-harm have access to sharp items that could cause them significant harm. Furthermore, young people have access to films that are categorised with an adult rating. This could have an impact on their emotional well-being.

Staff fail to follow individual missing from home risk assessments and procedures. They do not always adhere to the timeframes for reporting young people who go missing. Furthermore, records do not reflect which young people have gone missing from home and return home interviews are not undertaken. This means that staff are unable to review records and take into account the information provided by such interviews when assessing risks. Thus, they cannot effectively review the strategies in place to protect a young person from this risk-taking behaviour.

The management of young people's behaviour requires improvement. This area of practice would benefit from some up-to-date staff training. Young people are not consistently clear about the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Young people regularly use inappropriate language towards their peers and staff. Staff rarely challenge this behaviour and thus young people view this as acceptable behaviour. In addition to this, some young people display aggressive and violent behaviour towards staff. On occasion, young people display this behaviour towards one another. The strategies to identify the early onset for such behaviours are not clear. Furthermore, the de-escalation techniques are not robust enough. As a result, behaviours escalate quickly and young people display aggressive and violent behaviours. Staff will often call the police as a way to manage these behaviours. In some instances, the outcome is that some young people receive criminal convictions. This does not have the desired impact and young people continue to display aggressive and violent behaviours.

The recruitment and selection of staff is good. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors' identity to protect young people. Health and safety checks are completed, and this ensures a safe living environment. However, not all staff have the required first aid training. This means that not all shifts have a qualified first aider who could assist in the event of an emergency.

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

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted, but her application to register has been submitted. The manager has been working at the home for a considerable amount of time in the capacity of a deputy manager. The recently appointed deputy manager also has experience of working at the home. There has been a recent change in the team, with a number of people leaving and new staff starting. The staff in place are suitably qualified or working towards this. There is a mixture of experienced and non-experienced staff. The home operates in line with the aims and ethos of the statement of purpose.

Staff report that they enjoy working at the home. Staff are not yet working as a formed team and thus practice is sometimes inconsistent. Managers recognise this as an area for further development. Some approaches to practice have changed, for example changes to the rota. This is having a positive effect.

Managers communicate regularly with other agencies. Staff share significant incidents in a timely way. It is clear that communication between agencies takes place and that the manager and staff advocate on behalf of the young people. What is less positive is that progress reports are not in place. This means that young people, their families and relevant agencies do not receive information that captures the progress that young people make. This is a missed opportunity to celebrate young people's achievements.

Managers and staff have some understanding of the young people's needs and the progress that they have made so far. However, they do not have a full understanding of some of the behaviours that young people are currently displaying, which could lead some young people to be at risk of exploitation. This has an impact on the level of awareness that staff have. Consequently, young people do not receive all the support, help and guidance that they need to keep themselves and others safe.

Inconsistent management oversight results in limited evaluation of the quality of practice. This has an impact on the management of young people's needs, risks and their behaviours. Recording standards vary and, in some instances, important recording requirements are missing, for example the outcome of safeguarding investigations. Communication and information sharing between staff is not consistent. Consequently, staff do not always know key pieces of information, such as the outcome of young people's recent court appearances.

Staff receive individual supervision, but this is not as regular as it should be. Furthermore, the supervision that they receive does not support staff to reflect and develop their practice. Staff have access to additional clinical support. However, staff

have not accessed this. This means that staff have overlooked specialist support available to them and young people. Consequently, young people are not benefiting from this level of specialised intervention and, as a result, risk-taking behaviour continues.

Staff training is available, but the training provided is not fully reflective of the young people's needs. As a result, staff do not have all the required knowledge that they need to understand young people's needs and presenting risks. This is particularly in relation to behaviour management, emotional and mental health, and substance misuse. When staff do undertake training, they do not always use this information to inform their practice. Consequently, risk-taking behaviour goes unnoticed and patterns of behaviour continue. This is particularly in relation to the risk of radicalisation and exploitation.

The development plan is young-person focused. Furthermore, it is clear and has achievable aims and objectives. The external monitoring of the home is completed well. The manager uses this information to support the continuous development of the home. Managers understand the strengths of the home and the areas that require improvement.

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: SC053145

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Partners in Care Limited

Registered provider address: Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS5 3BT

Responsible individual: Tereasa Denby

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Lisa Gregoire-Parker, social care inspector

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