

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Tracy Connolly
Inspector	Tina Maddison

Inspection date	13/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued at the full inspection of 28 June 2016 and were judged to have been met at the monitoring visit of 28 July 2016.
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC061232

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Staff fail to safeguard young people living in the home. Young people are witnessing too many distressing incidents of aggression and physical restraint. Young people are physically aggressive towards the staff and each other.
- Staff struggle to manage the behaviour of one young person. In order to keep the young person, the staff and members of the community safe, staff are locking the external doors of the home. This means that the young people are unable to go out of the home unless they ask staff to unlock the doors.
- The staff are shutting one young person in her bedroom by holding the door handle to keep themselves safe. They request police support to help them safely manage the young person's behaviour and violent incidents.
- Leaders and managers do not always ensure that there are a sufficient number of staff on duty. The staff are tired from caring for one young person with complex care needs and are working extra shifts to cover staff absence. This arrangement means that the quality of care provided for young people living in the home is seriously compromised.
- Physical intervention plans for the young people are not updated following concerning incidents of restraint that have resulted in the paramedics being called.
- The independent living skills of young people are not routinely assessed. As a result, staff do not know if the young people have the skills to live alone or what skills they still require to support them.
- One young person is not appropriately placed at the home. Leaders and managers have been slow to address the young person's needs and to find a more suitable placement for her.

The children's home strengths

- The young people comment positively about the manager and staff. Most young people, who have lived at the home for some time, enjoy trusting relationships with the staff
- Staff effectively supported one young person to make a successful transition from the home to a foster care placement.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard The registered person must ensure that staff provide to the children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; and ensure that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed and furnished to meet the needs of each child. In particular, they must ensure that the home does not present an 'institutional' appearance and that the privacy of young people is promoted by ensuring that there are blinds and curtains at each window. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(vii)(c)(i))	14/10/2016
8: The education standard The registered person must ensure that staff help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and prepare them for future care, education and employment. (Regulation 8(2)(ix))	14/10/2016
10: The health and well-being standard The registered person must ensure the health and well-being of the children and that children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being. In particular, they must ensure that health needs are regularly monitored and regularly evaluated for progress and to identify other healthcare services that may be required. Regulation 10(1)(a))	14/10/2016

13: The leadership and management standard* The registered person must ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(d)(e)(h))	30/09/2016
12: The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.* The registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; that staff manage relationships between children to ensure that they do not harm each other; that the premises are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. In particular, they must ensure that protruding large nails are removed from walls and that doors are not locked. They must allow young people to exit the home without asking the staff, and they must ensure that the staff do not hold doors shut to manage a young person's behaviour. They must ensure that young people are prevented from physically attacking each other. (Regulation 12(a)(iii)(iv)((d))	30/09/2016
19: Behaviour management and discipline No measure of control or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable may be used in relation to any child. In particular, the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills and behaviour management strategies to manage any young person placed in the home without police intervention and that all young people have an up-to-date and effective physical intervention plan. (Regulation 19(1))	30/09/2016

14: The care planning standard The registered person must ensure that children receive effectively planned care in the children's home and that arrangements are in place to manage and review the placement of each child in the home. In particular, they must ensure that prompt action is taken in the event that a young person's care needs are unable to be met in the home and that all young people's care plans and independent living skills plans are kept up to date and contain targets, aims and a record of progress. Regulation 14(1)(a)(2)(b)(ii))	30/09/2016
--	-------------------

* These requirements are subject to statutory compliance notices

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/06/2016	Full	Inadequate
25/01/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16/11/2015	Full	Requires improvement
17/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
09/10/2014	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
The group of young people currently living in the home are having an adverse effect on each other. It is not a positive and engaging environment for them to live in. Leaders and managers are not acting swiftly enough to address the situation, which is rapidly deteriorating and negatively impacting on the quality of care the young people are receiving from the staff. Young people are choosing to stay out of the home until one young person has gone to bed, or are staying in their bedrooms and not socialising in the communal areas. The care plans of young people are not up to date. Strategies to give the staff clear guidance about how they should be meeting the care needs of the young people are absent. Two of the young people are preparing to leave care and have pathway plans from the local authority in place. However, no work is being undertaken to assess their independent living skills, such as budgeting and cooking. Healthcare needs of young people are documented appropriately in their healthcare plans. The manager has liaised with other healthcare providers, such as specialist nurses and mental health services. However, the staff do not have a clear picture of the health care needs of one young person. Staff are not monitoring and evaluating their specific healthcare needs and, therefore, are unable to determine and evaluate whether progress is being made or further specialist intervention is needed. Two of the young people are making satisfactory progress at school, and staff support them well to attend school. One young person has left school but is not in education, training or employment. Staff have made efforts to achieve a placement with the Prince's Trust or college but the young person has refused. On the day of the inspection, this young person was still in bed mid-morning. Staff made no attempts to get them up and engaged them in looking for suitable employment. There is no plan for this young person that gives staff guidance on what steps they should now be taking in order for this young person to succeed in gaining employment. The young people live in a home that has an institutional appearance and is damaged in some areas. Large scratches to the paintwork on the stairway and upstairs landing are apparent, and pictures have been damaged and not replaced. Young people's bedrooms have benefited from being decorated and young people were involved in the choice of furnishings. One young person's bedroom ceiling has	

been damaged and has been plastered, but not painted. The ensuite bathrooms in each bedroom contain industrial style soap dispensers and large grey industrial type sanitary bins, which detract from the otherwise homely appearance. Prominent and lit fire exit signs are above doorways. The entrance hall is stark and bare and requires some attention to make it more welcoming. The front door is not of a domestic appearance and has a large keypad on the outside wall. One young person's bedroom contains an empty suitcase by his bed. He has been told that there is nowhere else to store it. One young person said, 'It feels like a house, not a home. It's sad where I live now.'

Most of the young people enjoy positive relationships with the core members of the staff team. One young person referred to the staff as the nearest thing they had to parents and displayed a high level of distress when witnessing another young person attacking a staff member.

One young person has recently left the home, and staff have successfully supported them to transition from the home to a foster care placement.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The high-risk behaviour of one young person living in the home escalated over the school summer holidays. The staff struggle to meet the young person's care needs, or safely manage their behaviour and have been repeatedly attacked as a result. The young person has repeatedly run off into the local community and put themselves at risk through their aggressive and unsocial behaviour. This behaviour has led to members of the community coming to the home to complain and confront the young person. Police are being called to the home to manage the behaviour of the young person, when staff are unable to do so safely. The other young people in the home have witnessed distressing incidents of aggression, violence and physical restraint between the young person and the staff and the police, leading to one young person feeling that they need to physically attack the young person in order to defend the staff. One young person said, 'Staff are like my parents. I must defend them. If I see [the young person] hitting them I will hit [the young person] back. The young people could name a staff member they could speak to if they had concerns but said that they did not always feel safe in the home due to the behaviour of one young person.'	

The manager and staff have not updated one young person's physical intervention plan. This means that staff do not have guidance or strategies in place to follow to safely physically intervene with the young person. This is a serious safeguarding shortfall, as the staff have had to call paramedics, following two physical restraints, during which this young person became ill and unresponsive.

One young person has damaged the home. On the upstairs hallway wall and on one young person's bedroom wall, large protruding nails, which were previously used for hanging pictures and are situated at head height, were observed during the inspection. The staff failed to remove the nails and make the wall safe following the damage. The upstairs landing window and the bedroom window of one young person do not have blinds or curtains. These windows are overlooked by a housing estate, which compromises young people's right to privacy. Leaders and managers have made the decision, following an assessment of risk, to lock all the external doors of the home. This is to prevent one young person leaving the home and going into the community without two staff members with them at all times. This means that the other young people are unable to leave the home without asking the staff to let them out. The young people resent this. One young person said, 'I have to ask to be let out now, because the doors are locked.'

Staff succeed in effectively safeguarding one young person who was at risk of sexual exploitation. This work has involved closely liaising with the police and other agencies to develop a safeguarding plan and has led to the young person making a complaint to the police about a member of the public. Staff are confident that they know how to follow safeguarding procedures and what to do if a young person goes missing. However, their ability to appropriately safeguard the young people living in the home is seriously compromised as a result of the current situation.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
This inspection is a re-inspection following the inadequate judgement given at the full inspection undertaken on 28 June 2016. At this inspection, two compliance notices were issued, which were found to be met at the subsequent monitoring visit. This re-inspection found that four requirements made at the full inspection have not yet been met. The registered manager has not yet returned to the home, following a period of absence, and the home is being managed by an interim manager. The manager and the staff find the behaviour of one young person extremely hard	

to manage. This has resulted in all of the focus and energy of the manager and staff being used to try to keep the young person safe. This has prevented them from focusing on the improvement and development of the home and ensuring that all young people in the home are making good progress. The manager has identified that this is not the appropriate placement for this young person, but the local authority has not yet found an alternative placement, despite this issue being raised at the full inspection in June 2016.

Staff sickness and consequent gaps on the staff rota continue to be an issue in the home. Six members of the core staff team are off sick or are undertaking a phased return to work. The manager has to work as a residential worker on some shifts to cover for staff absences, which results in her being taken away from management tasks. Other gaps are being filled with bank staff, or core staff working extra hours, which is very tiring for staff, given the complex and demanding care needs of one young person. One member of staff said, 'We are a good staff team who are being worn down by [the young person]'s behaviour and covering shifts.'

One young person is staffed at 2:1. On some occasions, there have only been two members of staff on shift, meaning that the other young people have no dedicated staff working with them. One young person said, 'Staff do change quite a lot. We get random casuals in and they don't know what to do with [one young person]. They used to be able to enjoy and go out with us kids. Now [the young person] is here, their focus is on them. The acting manager has the confidence and the respect of the staff and has clear ideas about how the home can be improved, but due to the extensive care needs of one young person these ideas have yet to be implemented.'

The development plan details work that is necessary in the home to ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment. This has not yet been completed. Significant and serious events in the home are now being reported to Ofsted. An independent visitor undertakes comprehensive reports on a monthly basis. He is concerned about the current quality of care in the home and has noted a large number of actions on his most recent report.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 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 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.

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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016