

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Tina Maddison

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	One compliance notice was issued at the inspection on 16 September 2016. This notice was judged to be met at the monitoring visit of 9 November 2016.
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

SC061232

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- There are currently no children or young people living at the home. The home was closed on 7 October 2016 after the final young person left the home to move on to another placement. This action was taken in order for leaders and managers to implement the proposed improvements and re-organisation, following two inadequate inspection judgements. This work has largely been completed.
- In the short term, the home's statement of purpose has been amended to document how the manager and staff will meet the needs of unaccompanied child refugees from the Calais camp. It is not known whether or when these children will arrive at the home, but the home is on standby to accept them at short notice if necessary.
- It is not possible to test the improvements that have been made to the staffing structure in the home or the quality of care, as the home has not accommodated young people since 7 October 2016.

The children's home strengths

- The senior management team from the local authority, the manager of the home and staff have worked very hard to implement the local authority improvement plan for the home. The home has been comprehensively redecorated and refurbished.
- Recording systems have been scrutinised and improved. The office has been moved, and filing systems have been improved and re-organised.
- The statement of purpose has been re-written to clearly state the aims of the home and how it will meet the care needs of young people.
- The previous staff team has been dispersed among the other local authority homes, and a new staff team has been formed, consisting of experienced staff and newly appointed staff.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home seeks as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression and that the planned work to further improve the appearance of the home is completed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

There are currently no children living at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2016	Full	Inadequate
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	Requires improvement
There are currently no young people accommodated at the home. This inspection took place to assess the action taken by leaders and managers to address the inadequacies identified at the second full inspection on 13 September 2016. Following that inspection, the local authority senior managers decided to close the home, so that extensive improvements regarding re-organisation and refurbishment could take place. The three young people who were living at the home at the time it temporarily closed were moved shortly after the inspection, and the final young person moved out on 7 October 2016. One young person successfully moved into a foster-care placement, where she is making progress. The other two young people were moved to other homes operated by the local authority. Transitions were well managed and undertaken sensitively, as the young people had lived at the home for some time. Both these young people have settled well in their new homes and are making progress. The home has undergone extensive refurbishment and redecoration. It now offers a homely environment. All bedrooms have been redecorated, and mattresses have been replaced. The ensuite bathrooms have had the institutional-style soap dispensers and sanitary bins replaced with domestic items. Carpets have been replaced, new pictures have been purchased and, on the day of the inspection, a new dining table and chairs were delivered. The excessive fire signage has been reduced to a minimum. The lounge is in the process of being separated from the entrance hall area by a new stud wall. The stark appearance of the entrance hall is being improved and furnished with curtains and a dresser. These actions will improve privacy for young people and promote a homely appearance. Staff are yet to complete the decoration of the kitchen, separate the lounge and undertake some minor repairs in the bedrooms. This work is scheduled to be completed by the staff team by the end of January, depending on whether unaccompanied child refugees are admitted to the home.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Leaders and managers have reviewed and updated all safeguarding policies and procedures, and these are now in place. All staff employed in the home will be up to date with safeguarding training, physical intervention training and first aid. Behaviour management policies and procedures have been reviewed and amended. The manager is clear about how staff will manage the behaviour of young people and what theories will inform the staff team's practice. The manager and staff are aware of the possible trauma and distress that any refugee children may bring with them and have consulted appropriate agencies to inform them about how best to help these children and keep them safe, should they arrive at the home.	

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The previous registered manager has now left the home. The acting manager has led the improvements to the home and been actively involved in the recruitment of new staff and the re-organisation of the home. Lessons have been learned, following the shortfalls identified at the previous inspections, and a plan to address them has been implemented. The home's statement of purpose has been re-written to reflect that, in the short term, the home is closed to admissions but is available to provide accommodation to unaccompanied refugee children from Calais. The home will remain available for this purpose until the end of January, when the situation will be re-assessed. If no children have arrived, the home will revert to offering care and accommodation to young people aged from 14 years, who are looking to develop their independent living skills. The manager has organised a staff team that can respond quickly, should children be placed at the home at short notice. This team has received training in how to care for the refugee children. In the longer term, staff recruitment is ongoing, so that the dependence on bank staff will be minimal in the future. This staff recruitment approach will ensure that there is a core staff team established at the	

home.

The staff have devised a children's guide in a range of languages, including Thai, Urdu, Persian, Albanian, Arabic and French. They have also made labels for items, including the fridge and television, in different languages and English, so that the children can learn English.

Referrals of admission to the home, when it reverts to its original purpose of offering care and accommodation to young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, will continue to be scrutinised by senior managers, to ensure that young people are appropriately placed and matched.

The aim of the refurbishment is to ensure that the home offers a domestic environment to young people. To this end, the office has been moved to a much smaller room, which is more accessible to young people. Files and notices on the wall are now at a minimum. Medication will be safely stored in appropriate secure storage in the staff sleeping-in room.

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'.

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