

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	28 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC061232
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Tracy Connolly
Inspector	Linda Bond

Inspection date	28 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued 24 February 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 and that their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
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:

- Medicines are not kept securely. An audit undertaken by staff has recorded that an amount of prescribed medication has gone missing.
- The professional supervision and appraisal arrangements for staff are inadequate. The majority of staff have not received supervision for more than three months.
- Staff sickness and a shortage of casually employed staff have resulted in incidents where young people have not been adequately supervised.
- Young people are routinely reported missing from home. Since placement, one young person has been away from the home for prolonged periods of time, placing themselves at significant risk and danger.
- Staff shortages have resulted in young people not having sufficient opportunities to consistently engage in activities.
- Some young people admitted to the home are doing so without appropriate risk assessments.
- Some staff are not completing mandatory training, for example, in first aid, and around safeguarding and child sexual exploitation.
- Risk assessments for activities, for example, use of a motorbike, are not undertaken.
- Some young people have not had their health needs adequately monitored and assessed.

The children's home's strengths

- Some young people are regularly attending school and a social worker reports that they are making progress.
- Staff work hard to promote young people's independence. Consequently, one young person has been successful in obtaining a part-time job at a local discount store.
- There is an acting manager in post who is highly qualified and experienced in managing and leading a children's home. Staff report that they feel confident in the direction and leadership that is being provided.
- The staff are enthusiastic and motivated: they are keen to work together to improve the outcomes of the young people.
- The staff team are in the main very well qualified and provide a broad range of skills, expertise and knowledge.
- The registered individual has produced a business and improvement plan which demonstrates a collaborative and progressive approach to the development of the home / or to improving outcomes for children??. This para needs to mean something

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard The quality and care purpose standard is that children receive care from staff who— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; and ensure the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6 (1)(2)(b)(vii)(c)(i))	1 September 2016
8: The education standard The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— promote opportunities for each child to learn informally; help a child who is excluded from school, or not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(v)(viii))	28 July 2016
10: The health and well-being standard The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of the 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)(a)(b)(c))	28 July 2016
13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered	28 July 2016

person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to their full potential and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure the staff—have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure the homes workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(d)(e)(h))	
14: The care planning standard The care planning standard is that children have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure the effective induction of each child in to the home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(2)(b)(i))	28 July 2016
23: *Medicines The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular, the registered person must ensure that medicines kept in the home are stored in a secure place so as to prevent any child from having unsupervised access to them. (Regulation 23 (1)(2)(a))	28 July 2016
31: *Staffing of children's homes The registered person must ensure that, at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))	28 July 2016
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees—undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice related supervision from a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (a)(b)(c))	28 July 2016

40: Notification of a serious event The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b))	28 July 2016
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Recommendations

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

- Ensure the children's home seeks as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In particular, this relates to the bare walls, lighting systems and blinds at the windows.. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 3.9, page 15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25 January 2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16 November /2015	Full	Requires improvement
17 August 2015	Full	Inadequate
9 October 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
Young people are supported by staff to attend school. Some young people attend school regularly and communication between school and the home is reported as good. This means that staff and school can collaborate on approaches to support the young person. Unfortunately, some young people are not receiving any more than two hours a day of formal education, and some young people are receiving none at all. Staff work hard to engage young people. However, all attempts have been unsuccessful and, as a result, some young people's educational outcomes are significantly compromised. A requirement is made to ensure that all young people have access to educational and learning programmes in line with requirements. Young people have a range of care plans that are mainly kept up to date and in good order. Staff spoken with demonstrate a good understanding of how the plans inform the care and support that young people require. However, one young person's healthcare plan fails to provide an assessment of their specific healthcare need. Staff have failed to monitor accurately and report this ongoing health need. A social worker reported that she had not been kept up to date with the young person's condition. As a result, for one young person there has been a serious failing to assess her health need and provide an up-to-date and clear action plan to support staff in the care that they offer. A requirement to ensure that all young people's health needs are routinely assessed and plans updated is made. Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain appropriate friendships and relationships, and families and friends are welcomed to the home. During the course of the inspection young people were observed having friends visit the home, plan activities with the staff, and socialising time. Young people spoken with feel able to ask staff for friends to visit and are relaxed in their home. However, for one young person staff have failed to prevent them from forming damaging relationships with young people in the community. As a result, one young person is now persistently placing themselves at risk from drugs and criminal activity, and fails to engage with any positive influences provided by the home. The health, social and educational outcomes for this young person is noticeably compromised. Young people live in a home that requires some refurbishment and updating. The building is purpose-built and is spacious. However, while staff have worked hard to decorate and update furniture, it continues to lack a homely feel. Walls are in the process of being painted, and with consultation with young people, their bedrooms are planned to be re-decorated. Nevertheless, communal areas are sparsely furnished, the walls are mostly bare, office-style blinds are evident on some	

windows and lighting remains bright and of an industrial style. Walls lack any personal pictures or photographs. Consequently, there is little or no means of determining the identity of the young people who live in the home. The young people benefit from having an enclosed garden area to play in. However, little attention has been paid to this area and, as a result young people have no facilities or furniture to enjoy their outside environment. A requirement is therefore made to ensure that the home is improved.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Staff sickness, annual leave and availability of casual staff have resulted on a number of occasions in the home having only two staff on duty. Risk assessments of young people indicate high-risk behaviours, for example physical violence, going missing, drug taking and carrying knives. Staff report that they are aware of these risks and yet have continued to work alone on some occasions. In doing so, senior leaders and managers have knowingly placed staff and the young people at risk. Managers report they have not always been aware of the occasions when staff have worked alone. However, on some instances, staff have been authorised to finish their shift early, thereby compromising the safety of both staff and young people. A placing social worker reported being aware of at least one occasion when a young person was returned by the police to the home and there was only one member of staff present. The seriousness of this results in a compliance notice being made to ensure that appropriate levels of staff are maintained at all times. Young people who require medication have it stored securely in the main office. However, during the course of the inspection, the inspector learned of controlled medication being unaccounted for. An internal investigation has been initiated and processes have been put in place by the acting manager to further safeguard the auditing and administration of medication. The significance of this matter results in a compliance notice being issued. Staff support young people with behaviour management plans. They are trained and experienced in working with young people with challenging behaviour. They have an understanding of how to manage physical intervention with de-escalation techniques and have begun to develop the young people's understanding of their risk-taking behaviours and self-management strategies to address these. Young people mainly arrive at the home in a planned manner and with all necessary documentation. However, for some young people, their admission has been an emergency, and on these occasions no risk assessments have been provided. Staff spoken with report this as being 'unacceptable' as don't have clear	

plans and don't know what risks the young person may pose. For example, on one occasion staff were not informed that a young person presented as a risk of carrying knives and going missing. Subsequently, the young person was reported missing from the home within 30 minutes of arriving. In respect of this young person, they have continued to place themselves at risk by going missing for long periods of time. The failure of staff to safeguard this young person has resulted in him being moved to another children's home out of the area, with the associated impact of increased placement moves.

Staff fail to recognise the importance of undertaking risk assessments for all activities. As a result, one young person is transported as a passenger on a member of staff's motorbike without the risks being assessed, thereby placing him at risk of injury and harm.

Sanctions are rarely used, as staff understand that these have little meaning for some young people and would not be effective. Young people have positive handling plans which staff attempt to work with. Staff spoken to, and policies read, suggest incentive measures are used to support young people to address challenging behaviours. One young person works well and is making progress by using an incentive chart. Unfortunately, staff fail to engage other young people with this approach. Subsequently, some young people's risky behaviours, aggressive outbursts and disengagement from education and activities have not improved. A requirement to improve this practice is made.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The home has recently undergone an unplanned change in management. The acting manager is highly qualified and demonstrates a good level of skill, experience and knowledge. However, there has been a period of inadequate management and leadership resulting in staff reporting a 'lack of direction' and 'not knowing what to do'. The significance and impact is such that a number of significant shortfalls and breaches of requirements have been identified. Staff have failed to receive adequate levels of supervision and appraisals. Those that have taken place are recorded, but with minimum detail. Staff report that the lack of supervision and management has led to low staff morale, an 'unfairness' in the rota system and diminished trust in management. As a result of the new management structure, staff report that they are much more positive in their outlook. They share a confidence in the newly appointed acting manager and registered individual, and present with an enthusiasm and commitment to	

improving the children's home.

Staff are qualified and experienced to support and care for young people with challenging behaviours. A good range of training and learning programmes are available for all staff. Scrutiny of the training records indicates that some staff fail to attend some mandatory training refresher courses. As a result, some staff are not proficient in first aid, or in knowing the issues surrounding child sexual exploitation and safeguarding and are required therefore to complete training to ensure that they are sufficiently accredited and can support young people with confidence.

Team meetings take place but are not regular. There is evidence that these meetings include an element of reflective practice discussions but this could be improved to develop staff practice.

Professionals who work with the staff team report communication is mainly good. They are provided with reports and updates of the young people. However, two social workers spoken to during the course of the inspection confirmed that they had not had important safeguarding and health-related information shared with them. The acting manager has been swift to address this and the inspector has been assured that all relevant information has now been shared.

The members of the staff team feel they have worked hard since the previous inspection. There have been, and continue to be, staff vacancies due to sickness. This has had an impact on members of the staff team, who report feeling 'tired' and not having enough time to work directly with the young people. The management team are aware of this and are working to address the stress levels that are evident in the team and which result in increased sickness levels.

The manager has appropriate systems in place to monitor the home. Some actions to address the shortfalls and breaches in requirements are identified and included in an overarching business and improvement plan. Independent visits are taking place and these are being used by the acting manager to inform the monitoring. It is noted that reportable events are mainly being notified accordingly. However, during the course of the inspection it was identified that on some occasions when young people have been reported missing, Ofsted have not been informed. A requirement is therefore made to ensure prompt notifying of these events.

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 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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