

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061795
Inspector	Kevin Whatley
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd
Registered person address	Room 8, Worth Corner Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill CRAWLEY West Sussex RH10 7SL
Responsible individual	Sharon Denise Jenner
Registered manager	Sarah Jane Elizabeth Chaston
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	05/08/2014
Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

The home has declined in effectiveness since the last inspection of March 2014. Three requirements and two recommendations were made on that occasion; these have been addressed. Three requirements are made as a result of this inspection; these relate to the need to review approaches to countering bullying, address the levels of negative/criminal behaviours exhibited in the home and ensuring that staff respond effectively to incidents within the home.

The homes statement of purpose has been amended to make clear the process for the admission of young people. This includes how assessments are completed on the current group dynamics and the impact a new young person may have on this. The home continue to use CCTV to monitor young people in communal areas, with placing authorities and young people themselves being informed of this prior to any referral being accepted. The management team review the effectiveness and justification for this on a weekly basis to ensure it is necessary according to their prescribed criteria. The home now ensures that where the risks or vulnerabilities of young people have increased, requests are made to their placing authority for care reviews to take place. These consider strategies which may reduce risk and look at the overall suitability of the placement. When young people leave the home without permission, particularly at night, staff follow agreed protocols in taking necessary steps to keep them safe. This includes walking after them and encouraging their return, in some instances staff have put themselves at some risk in protecting young people when they have walked into roads while in a distressed state. The management team have considered the need for staff to receive specific medical training when certain young people are admitted, such as those with epilepsy or diabetes. Protocols have been put in place that would see such training provided should it be required to meet individual needs. There are no young people currently living at the home with any particular medical issues.

Since the last inspection the manager has been successful in her application to Ofsted to be registered as manager for the home. The Registered Manager is suitably experienced, notably in working with young people within the residential environment; she is currently completing the required management qualification.

Placing social workers generally speak positively of the efforts made by staff to support and encourage young people to make progress. Comments included staff, 'could not offer more...very supportive staff', although it was acknowledged that some young people are reluctant to accept the support available to them. Some comments raised concerns that some young people felt staff did not always intervene swiftly during incidents within the home. Social workers noted the professional manner in which the home is run and the good level of communication which keeps them up to date and well informed.

In recent months the home have experienced a particularly unsettled period with a number of young people engaged in negative and challenging behaviours toward staff in the home and towards each other. This has included verbal threats, physical violence, damage to property and bullying. As a result a some young people have been charged with offences in the home and the local community. Young people state that when incidents occur in the home staff are not always around to assist or intervene. The Registered Manager acknowledged that on one recent occasion an agency member of staff did not follow procedures and assist a full time member of staff in breaking up a fight; this was reported to the agency and the worker is no longer working at the home. The use of agency staff is low. Where staff are hesitant, inconsistent or fail to follow working protocols in their approach to managing challenging behaviours, notably the use of violence, a risk of harm must be considered to exist.

Good liaison with the local police has resulted in a number of incidents being dealt with by way of community resolutions. This has meant young people writing letters of apology or completing additional chores around the home. Staff are mindful not to criminalise young people unnecessarily, however the severity of certain behaviours has left them, or the police, with little option but to pursue criminal prosecutions. Despite staff regularly engaging young people in addressing their problematic behaviours and encouraging them to consider the consequences of their actions, further incidents have occurred. As a result a number of young people have had notice serviced on their placements.

As noted some recent behaviours have included young people bullying each other. Staff are aware of the difficult dynamics which currently exist and challenge those that intend to intimidate or threaten. On occasion actual physical violence has been used that has resulted in charges being brought against the perpetrators. Young people on the receiving end of such behaviour say it is unpleasant but that they, 'still feel ok and safe' living in the home. However the same young people also noted that during prolonged episodes staff are not always able to stop the behaviours taking place, for instance to stop entry into their bedrooms and causing damage. These

shortfalls show that the safety and well-being of young people is not wholly protected. The management team display a determination to erase bullying from the home with relevant young people agreeing and signing contracts of behaviour which makes it explicit that any reoccurrence will be dealt with swiftly and firmly, including the risk of losing their placement/s with immediate effect.

Young people say they generally get on well with staff with most relationships appearing relaxed and meaningful. Aside from the difficult group dynamics which currently exist a number of young people have made good progress, in particular those that have lived at the home for sometime. One young person noted, 'this place has really helped me...I was not nice when I first arrived but I have learned a lot and am ready to move on into semi-independence'. A number of young people have also made successful transitions into independent living since the last inspection. A majority of these still utilise the positive relationships they share with staff to call or visit for advice, guidance or just keeping in touch.

Information about this children's home

The setting is one of two homes operated by the same private organisation. It accommodates six young people on a planned or emergency basis. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
24/06/2013	Full	good
06/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
12/07/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children living there; in particular take robust actions to address and reduce challenging behaviours, notably those that are of a criminal nature (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	30/09/2014
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to make proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate, treatment, of children accommodated there; in particular that robust actions are taken to address, reduce and minimise the prevalence of bullying in the home (Regulation 11 (1) (b))	30/09/2014
11	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to	30/09/2014

(2001)	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of children living there; in particular that actions taken by staff when incidents occur are swift and effective. (Regulation 11 (1) (a))	
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What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.