

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	02/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC063318
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Good Foundations Limited
Registered person address	6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 1BP

Responsible individual	Andrew Mannix
Registered manager	Helen Beaumont
Inspector	Elaine Allison

Inspection date	02/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
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

SC063318

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Young people's health needs are not routinely addressed. This may lead to a detrimental effect on their health.
- Young people are not in full time education and staff do not engage them in purposeful learning activities within the home. This is not conducive to effective learning.
- Staff are unaware of the whereabouts of young people when they are not in education. This potentially could place young people at serious risk.
- Placement plans consist of a day to day chronology of events and do not direct staff on how to meet the needs of the young person.
- Young people do not receive care and support from a staff team who are fully inducted into their roles or formally supervised on a regular basis.
- The home does not have a robust impact assessment that considers the needs of any potential new resident against the individual complex needs of those young people already in placement.
- The monitoring of the home and its quality of care is not strong. The manager's monitoring has not been thorough enough to identify the shortfalls found at this inspection.

The children's home strengths

- Young people benefit from having regular and positive contact with family members and those significant in their lives. They reported feeling happy at levels of contact. Also, parents report high levels of satisfaction at the support staff provide to their children and how well contact is supported.
- Very good multi-agency working has led to a reduction in concerning behaviours, for example being away from the home for long periods and criminal activity.
- A stable staff team has helped the young people manage their feelings and emotions. This has led to a significant reduction in incidents.
- Young people feel safe living at the home and say that their views are taken into account when decisions are made.
- The Registered Manager acknowledges the shortfalls found during this inspection and is committed to making improvements.
- A major refurbishment of the home has created a very comfortable spacious environment for young people.

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure— (1) that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; (x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; In particular ensuring that staff have an agreed plan which is followed when young people are not in education or have been excluded.	04/01/2016
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and wellbeing standard the registered person must ensure— (1) The health and well-being standard is that— (a) the health and well-being needs of children are met; (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff help each child to—	04/01/2016

(i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans; In particular, ensure young people's health appointments are kept.	
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure - 2.—(1) that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that staff— (i) 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (b) 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; In particular, ensure that staff are aware of the young people's whereabouts when not in education	04/01/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure – the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;	04/01/2016

(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; In particular, the manager has suitable oversight of the day-to-day care provided for young people; ensure that all staff are duly inducted into their role, specifically relief staff.	
14: The care planning standard (1) The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home In particular, ensure staff are provided with robust individual care planning documents for each child	04/01/2016
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision (Regulation 33 (4) (b)) In particular, ensuring that relief staff working within the home receive supervision.	04/01/2016

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's guide is accurate, reviewed and updated (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 24 paragraph 4.23)
- ensure that the registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, Page 56 paragraph 11.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
24/06/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
18/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Staff knowledge of young people's vulnerabilities and needs is generally sufficient. The staff work hard to build relationships that are positive and young people spoken to could identify staff that feel they can talk to if they had a concern. A young person said 'I can talk to any of them they are always there to listen'. Young people do not go missing from this home. This has been a significant change for the young people living there. One of the young people had been missing from previous homes for up to a month at a time. A parent said 'my son is so much safer living here, I know where he is and he does not go missing or get involved in crime, I am very happy that he is safe.' A social worker commented 'the missing from care was a serious worry with very long periods where we didn't know where he was; he has not been missing at all since living here.' Young people struggle to commit to education or training. Some young people who were attending education have recently been excluded. While the home has taken some action through speaking with the head of the virtual school and arranging meetings to address the concerns, the daily routine of the home is disorganised and does not actively encourage educational attendance. Therefore, young people are not achieving educationally to the best of their abilities. Some staff are proactive in engaging with young people during the day but some young people stay in bed until late in the morning and staff do not robustly encourage them to engage in their education or activities; this is not conducive to effective learning. The staff do not provide young people with sufficient boundaries and structures. This is because there is a lack of a clear daily routine to provide a consistent message to young people. Some staff allow the young person to leave the home during school hours to visit friends and family. This was evident during the inspection when a young person was excluded from school and despite staff picking him up from school he did not return to the home with staff, deciding instead to visit family. This was further compounded by the fact that staff did not liaise with the school to ascertain the reasons or circumstances of the exclusion. Staff did not attempt to contact the young person to establish his emotional or	

physical wellbeing.

Young people's progress in relation to their health is inconsistent. Some have engaged with health professionals and other chose not to, even when this has a detrimental effect on their health. For example, the home has failed to meet one young person's dental needs. The young person has refused appointments with the dentist and has outstanding treatment required. The staff have made minimal efforts to address this.

Young people are able to enjoy a much improved home environment, due to a major refurbishment of the home. Staff have encouraged and supported young people's involvement in ideas for the redecoration and choice of soft furnishings; this has resulted in a stylish, homely living environment for all. This has given young people a sense of pride and a commitment to living in this home.

A real strength of the home is how family is valued and how staff positively engage young people in family contact. Family contact is significantly important to the young people placed and the staff proactively support and facilitate this. Parents and family members report a good, close working relationship with the home. Staff help the young people to positively build on their family relationships ensuring the strengthening of family ties and identity. A parent commented 'I get on well with all the staff because of them I know that this is the best home he has been in. they involve me in things that are important'.

Young people learn and grow in maturity and are supported to prepare for independent living; they receive practical guidance about budgeting, cooking and coping in the community. They are supported to explore how to manage the challenges of growing up. This prepares them to mature into valuable young adults in society.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Young people say they feel safe. They say they can talk to adults about their worries. Young people commented 'the staff in here are dead easy to talk to they are there if you need them', 'I wasn't safe before I came here but I'm safe now'.	

A compatibility assessment is not in place for the newest young person who has come to live at the home. Therefore, there is no evidence to consider how this young person's presenting behaviours may impact on and affect the young people already in placement. This has the potential for poor matching, where young people may not feel safe and feel or be at risk of harm.

Individual behaviour management plans are in place; these identify actual or potential presenting risks and challenges for the young person. However at the time of the inspection the plan was not in the young person's file and was later printed off the computer by the key worker. This was significant as a relief worker who was on shift had not had sight of the plan and was instructed to collect a young person from school, who had been excluded for behaviour problems.

The staff monitor young people's use of the internet. The home's computer, which is used by young people, has safeguards that prevent them accessing inappropriate sites. Additionally the computer is situated in the dining room area to enable on going monitoring. The risks of young people becoming involved in child sexual exploitation is understood by the manager and staff. There is active use of good quality screening assessments. This supports pro-active planning processes to prevent exploitation and keeping young people safe.

Fellow professionals report excellent levels of communication between themselves and the home. This collaborative approach means staff are working together to ensure young people are kept safe. A social worker said 'I get regular updates from the home and they are very proactive in providing very good information for reviews and other meetings related to young people'.

The staff have strong communication and interpersonal skills that enable them to build positive relationships with young people. The interactions with young people are warm, calm, respectful and productive, even when young people are grappling with difficult feelings. The staff are responsive to young people's feelings. They acknowledge and accept that young people may be struggling and may not want to talk, but they are good at recognising when young people are ready to talk and make sure they are there to listen. A young person said 'they don't push you to talk about everything I know that if I need them they are there'. Another young person said 'I used to go missing and get drunk and that but I don't now cos I like coming home'.

Staff use sanctions and rewards constructively. For instance, young people record their view about any sanctions and confirm if they think that the sanction is fair. Where sanctions are used, they are fair and proportionate. It was pleasing to see that the amount of rewards for good behaviour significantly outnumbered the

sanctions. This ensures that young people are encouraged to display and maintain socially acceptable behaviour.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake her responsibilities. Her qualifications include; an NVQ level 5 qualification in management. Staff describe her as 'firm but fair', 'very approachable', and 'very supportive'. Young people describe her as 'good manager who spends time with us', 'nice and friendly'. The home's Statement of Purpose has been updated to reflect the new legislation however; the children's guide has not been updated to reflect these changes and was not available within the home for the young people. Records in the home do not clearly reflect the experience or views of young people. In their current form, they are not helpful in aiding young people's understanding of their time in this home. For example, young people do not have comprehensive placement plans that clearly show how their assessed needs should be met. The plans consist of a day-to-day chronology of events but do not direct staff on how to best to understand young people's needs and help to meet them. There has been a lack of management oversight to ensure that these plans are good enough to help to make a positive difference to young people's lives. Internal and external monitoring of the home takes place regularly and is generally of a good standard. The monitoring of the home's practice relating to the quality of young people's care has secured improvements in young people's safety. This feeds into the development plan and demonstrates the manager's commitment to continue and sustain improvements in the home's function. However, this process does not currently take account of the views of young people, placing authorities and families. A sufficient number of staff care for the young people. Core staff receive regular supervision and, for those staff who have been working at the home for over a year, appraisals. Staff describe their supervision as 'reflective' and 'very good time to check out practice'. However relief staff working within the home have not received any supervision. Similarly relief staff are not afforded time to acquaint	

themselves with young people's records prior to the commencement of a shift. This means that they lack sufficient knowledge and experience of the young peoples to confidently meet the young people's needs.

The management of the home has worked hard and made significant efforts to improve the quality of care provided to the young people since the last inspection. However, they were not fully aware of the shortfalls identified within this report and the potential impact of these on young people. The organisation is committed to making the improvements required to ensure the home is managed well and services are provided to young people in line with the home's statement of purpose.

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 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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