

SC063895

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 April 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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.

Date of last inspection: 3 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because

- Managers have failed to ensure that robust processes are followed when considering new young people moving into the home. This has recently resulted

in an unsuitable placement being made for a young person, which was disrupted and ended within a very short time frame.

- Staff have not benefited from regular supervision or training and development opportunities. This impacts on their ability to provide a good quality of care and support to young people.
- Due to a number of staff leaving the home, there has been a dependence on agency staff and staff from other children's homes within the organisation. This does not provide consistency or continuity of care for young people and undermines their ability to form positive and lasting relationships with staff.
- Some records relating to the care and support provided to young people require updating and do not contain all required information. This undermines the ability of staff to understand and respond to the current needs of young people living in this home.
- When young people have reported concerns in relation to bullying, these have not been responded to by staff in a clear manner. Records do not reflect what actions staff have taken to eradicate such behaviours.
- Records relating to the use of physical intervention and sanctions do not provide a clear reflection of the incident or actions taken by staff. There is also insufficient management oversight of such records.
- Managers have failed to use the information provided from the independent person's monthly report and Ofsted inspections to effect positive change and improvements consistently in the home. A requirement was made at the last inspection in relation to this, which has been re-set as a result of this inspection.
- The statement of purpose for the home has not been updated or sent to Ofsted in a timely manner.
- Staff have failed to follow the home's policies and procedures in relation to reporting safeguarding concerns to managers on two occasions since the last inspection. Managers took prompt action when alerted to the concerns, but this reflects the need for consistency of staff training and regular supervision.
- As a result of this inspection, 12 requirements have been set. These relate to the key findings as stated above and include one requirement set at the last inspection, which had not been met.

The children's home's strengths

- From their starting points, young people now engage well in education and have made real and positive progress. Their attendance has improved, and staff fully support them to achieve.
- The health needs of young people are well met. They attend routine and specialist health-related appointments. Staff work hard to ensure that young people attend dental appointments and understand the importance of considering and meeting their physical and emotional health needs.

- Young people have opportunities to spend time with family members and other significant people in their lives. Family members visit the home, and placing authorities report satisfaction in how well staff support young people in this area.
- Despite the recent unsettled period in the home, staff remain committed to the young people and present as genuinely caring about their welfare. Involved professionals report that they have a good understanding of the complex needs of the young people living in the home.
- Following the last inspection, managers have improved the recording and response to complaints. Records now more clearly reflect the actions taken and outcomes.
- Recording and responses to any allegations involving staff members are now much clearer and detailed. Records reflect the actions taken by managers and the outcomes of investigations. They also now better reflect the support provided to relevant staff members.
- Young people feel able to express their wishes, views and feelings with staff. Records now better reflect the responses from staff to young people and the involvement of young people.
- Following the most recent independent person visit to the home, managers have taken prompt action to begin to address the areas in need of improvement. A detailed action plan has been put in place and support from the company's quality assurance team is now in place. This reflects a positive intention of the registered manager and responsible individual to fully consider and address the concerns.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
13/10/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
01/06/2016	Full	Good
27/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
14. The care planning standard (2) In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered must: (a) ensure that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	05/05/2017
14. The care planning standard (2) In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must: (b)(i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home	05/05/2017
13. The leadership and management standard (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	05/05/2017
13. The leadership and management standard (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child	05/05/2017
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it and notify Ofsted of any revisions and send a copy to Ofsted of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	05/05/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate	05/05/2017

experience. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b))	
12. The protection of children standard (2) In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must: (a)(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.	05/05/2017
12. The protection of children standard (2) In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must: (a)(vi)(vii) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare and ensure that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies.	05/05/2017
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child. (Regulation 36(1)(a))	05/05/2017
13. The leadership and management standard (2) In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	05/05/2017
11. The positive relationship standard (2) In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must: (xiii) ensure that staff have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them.	05/05/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes all required information. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(b))	05/05/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

A number of staff have left since the last inspection. This has affected young people's ability to form and maintain positive and trusting relationships with staff. There has been an increased dependence on the use of agency staff and staff from other children's homes operated by the company.

A recent young person who moved into the home presented significant concerns and issues for staff and those young people already living in the home. The lack of robust matching and management oversight led to a very unsettled period in the home. Involved professionals spoken with during this inspection consistently expressed their concern about the most recent admission. Managers failed to consider the known information or to consult with relevant agencies prior to agreeing the new placement. The placement was not well planned and did not enable the young person placed to make visits prior to moving in to this home or to their next placement. Since the decision was made to end that placement, the situation has improved for staff and young people, but further work needs to be done to ensure that the welfare and well-being of young people living in the home, or those being considered to move in, remain paramount.

Young people know how to complain and use the formal complaints procedures. Since the last inspection, managers have responded to complaints more effectively. Recording has improved, but there is still a need for managers to ensure that all agreed actions following a complaint are followed through. When a record of a complaint states that managers will take specific action, there is a need for this to be evidenced and the final outcome to be recorded. There is a need for management oversight and reviewing systems to be further improved.

Staff prepare reports for young people's children looked after reviews and attend to support young people. An independent reviewing officer stated that the reports provided are detailed and reflect a positive understanding by staff of young people's needs. There was no evidence seen on case records of staff taking notes at review meetings and placing them on the files. This would assist the staff team and managers to understand what recommendations were made and the action that they need to take, pending receipt of the minutes from the independent reviewing officer.

Young people attend routine health appointments and understand the need to consider their physical and emotional healthcare needs. Records relating to health matters are not consistently clear or sufficiently detailed. Records for one young person indicated that they were due a sight test, but the records did not state whether this had taken place. Case records do not present as clear or containing all required information. This makes it difficult to elicit whether young people's health needs are consistently being met. Staff spoken with during this inspection stated that due to the recent unsettled period in the home, ensuring that records are kept up to date and have all necessary information recorded on them has been a challenge. There is a need for robust management

oversight and scrutiny of the records, as no file audits were evident to suggest that regular monitoring is taking place.

Prior to moving to live at this home, some young people did not engage in education on a regular basis. There is positive evidence of their now engaging and attending their education provisions. When young people have recently moved to this home, home tuition has been sourced. There is positive evidence of close and proactive partnership working with education colleagues and staff from the home. Further improvements could be made in relation to ensuring that a detailed record is held of the daily attendance of each young person in their education provision.

Young people see and spend time with their families and significant others on a regular basis. Staff fully support and facilitate this, including inviting some family members to visit the home on a regular basis. This promotes a sense of belonging for young people and enables staff to form positive working relationships with wider family members.

Staff include young people in making decisions about the food they eat and the social activities they take part in. They listen to what young people say and try their best to accommodate their wishes and feelings.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Risk assessments relating to young people do not consistently reflect their current needs and risks. Some considered during this inspection had not been reviewed and updated within the timescale specified by the company. Handwritten notes were evident on some risk assessments, to reflect relevant incidents and actions that staff should take. Regular and formal monitoring, reviewing and updating of risk assessments are needed, to ensure that all staff follow the most recent assessments and plans.

Responses by staff to any reported or identified bullying issues between young people have not received a clear or detailed response. An incident of verbal bullying of one young person was not responded to by staff or managers, according to records considered during this inspection. There has been a failure of staff and managers to follow internal policies and procedures in relation to any concerns identified or reported in relation to bullying on that occasion. Key work sessions have not been used to discuss and consider the impact of bullying with either the victim or the alleged perpetrators of the concerning behaviour.

Staff use de-escalation techniques and strategies to support young people when they display challenging or potentially risky behaviours. Physical restraint is used only when such techniques have not been successful. Records of measures of control, restraint and discipline are not consistently clear or detailed. There is a lack of management oversight or evidence of their reviewing and considering the effectiveness of measures used.

When restorative approaches to any concerning behaviours are used, records are not consistently clear or transparent. It is not always apparent whether an agreed sanction

has been completed by the young person, and there is a lack of management oversight and monitoring. One young person's incentive chart considered during this inspection was also not clear or specific. There is a need for specific, measurable and realistic goals to be set for young people, which they understand and can work towards achieving.

Staff require further training and support in relation to their understanding of whistleblowing policies and procedures. One recent incident involving a member of staff not using the correct whistleblowing procedures was considered during this inspection. Managers took prompt action and contacted relevant agencies and professionals, once they became aware of the issue. There are plans for this to be discussed at a team event in the near future, which is positive.

Following the last inspection, improvements have been made to the recording of allegations involving staff members. Recent allegations have been responded to in a very timely and clear manner by the registered manager. Records seen during this inspection reflect close working with the designated officer and other involved professionals. Involved staff are provided with independent support and clear information during the investigative process. Personnel files reflect the action taken by managers, including detailed timelines, minutes of meetings held and formal response letters to involved staff members.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager recently returned to work, having been absent for several months. Interim management arrangements were put in place to cover her absence. The registered manager is very experienced, qualified and skilled. Since her return, it is already evident that she is fully aware of the current issues and has clear plans in place to address them. She is a highly competent manager and viewed as a strong and positive leader by staff spoken with during this inspection.

Due to the recent unsettled period and pressures in the home, the monitoring of the quality of care provided to young people has been negatively impacted on. Managers admit that, due to staffing issues, they have been unable to provide the level of management oversight that they previously did. The responsible individual has recently agreed that there will be no new admissions of young people to the home for the foreseeable future. This is in order for the registered manager to address the staffing vacancies and to provide placed young people with consistency of care and support. This is a positive response by senior managers and reflects their commitment to improving the quality of care provided.

The use of agency staff has recently ended, as staff from another children's home within the organisation have been supporting this home. There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of young people living in the home at this time. Managers have clear recruitment plans in place to secure more permanent staff for the home. Through the use of staff mainly from one other local home, young people are experiencing some consistency of care, but there is a need to recruit and retain a permanent staff team.

An independent person visits the home each month and produces a very detailed and comprehensive report, which includes recommendations for improvement. Following a recent independent person visit and report, senior managers have enlisted the support of the quality and assurance team from within the organisation to support them in considering and addressing the identified shortfalls. A detailed action plan has been devised, to address each of the identified shortfalls. This was fully considered during this inspection and provided assurances of how the registered manager and responsible individual intend to make improvements.

The action plan formulated includes details of how training and development needs of staff will be considered and addressed. Some staff have not undertaken core training and development refresher courses, due to the demands of the young people placed recently. Records considered demonstrate that staff have undertaken the necessary core training, but there is a need to ensure that this is closely monitored and updated. There are also clear plans in place to ensure that all staff receive monthly formal supervision and support, as this did not place consistently in March 2017.

The statement of purpose for the home was very recently reviewed and updated, following a recommendation from the independent person. A copy of the revised statement has not been sent to Ofsted. This undermines the ability of Ofsted to monitor the home and its compliance with regulatory requirements.

The home is furnished and decorated to a good standard, and young people are involved in deciding how their bedrooms and other communal areas are decorated and furnished. Any damage is reported to the maintenance team and repairs undertaken, to ensure that the home presents as safe and secure.

Case records require further improvements in order to more clearly demonstrate the work done to support young people and reflect their needs and plans. The registered manager accepts the need to ensure that all required information is contained on young people's case records and for an audit to be completed as a matter of priority. This should provide young people with a clear sense of the care and support provided to them by staff and managers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it

meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC063895

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Castle Homes Care Ltd

Registered provider address: 80 Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UD

Responsible individual: Julie Wallhead

Registered manager: Kelly Watson

Inspectors

Tracy Murty, social care inspector

Ros Chapman, social care inspector

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