

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC064663
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered persons	Jim Buchanan and Ivy Thompson
Registered person address	Eastfield Group, 6d Ryeground House, Ryeground Lane, Formby, Merseyside L37 7EQ
Responsible individual	Ivy Thompson
Registered manager	Paul Smith
Inspector	Lisa Mulcahy

Inspection date	07/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection the interim manager has successfully completed the registration process with Ofsted and is now the registered manager of the home. He is suitably experienced and qualified. He is a highly motivated and committed manager. The manager is very supportive of his staff, who are as committed to the home and the young people as he is. The manager and staff work hard to ensure that young people's needs are met so that they have positive experiences and their outcomes are improved. The home has made some progress in addressing the requirements and recommendations that were made at the last inspection. However, further improvement in the safe recruitment of staff is required. There continue to be some shortfalls in the references for new members of staff. The independent visitor's reports that have been received by Ofsted do not demonstrate that the manager has fully considered the recommendations from the visits, nor do they show whether or not the registered manager agrees with the recommendations that have been made. It is unclear as to what action, if any, the registered manager has taken in response to the reports. This means that the monitoring and review systems are not as robust as they could be. Since the last inspection two young people have moved out of the home. These transitions from the home were due to the behaviours and safeguarding concerns that were presented by the young people at that time. The decision to end the placements was seriously considered and was made in order to ensure that the staff and young people living in the home were safeguarded. Two young people have moved into the home since the last inspection. Although impact risk assessments were undertaken for these placements, the decision to accept the young people had been made before the impact risk assessments had been completed. This demonstrates that full consideration is not being given to the effect that placements could have on other young people living in the home. Educational progress for most young people is good. The manager and staff support young people well with their education. Young people have good routines that enable them to attend their education provisions regularly. Young people are	

supported to complete homework in the education room in the home and have safe access to a computer and the internet. However, one young person is not currently provided with appropriate education. He has no more than 10 hours per week of tuition in the home. This tuition is delivered by a tutor who is provided by his placing local authority. The manager has challenged the local authority regarding the lack of education provision for the young person, but this action has not yet led to a resolution of the matter. The placing authority has indicated that it is in the process of identifying a residential placement with on-site education for the young person. However, this means that the young person is not receiving appropriate levels of education in the interim period. The manager has stated that he will continue to pursue this issue so that the young person's educational needs can be met without any further delay.

Safeguarding practice in the home is a priority in order to ensure that young people are kept safe. However, during discussion with a young person it became evident that she is a regular substance misuser and does not engage with the young person's substance misuse service to address this. Furthermore, she has no desire to reduce or stop her substance misuse. She also spoke about another young person's substance misuse. The home has not been proactive in ensuring that staff have the necessary information, skills and understanding with regard to addressing substance misuse with young people. This means that staff are not able to raise the young people's awareness and understanding of the risks that they pose to themselves through such behaviours. Furthermore, risk assessments do not include up-to-date information relating to the substance misuse of young people who live in the home and how this is being managed.

Missing-from-home procedures in the home continue to be robust. All young people are provided with an independent return interview following any missing-from-home-episode. Two such interviews were completed on the day of the inspection and were observed by the inspector. These interviews were in line with the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. Not only did the independent missing-from-home coordinator address issues relating to the missing-from-home episode, but she also addressed other issues that could have been having a negative impact on the young person; these included substance misuse, education, relationship and contact issues. This demonstrates that there is an effective system in place to ascertain the young person's views, wishes and feelings, which could have contributed to the reasons why they went missing. Consequently, the appropriate support and intervention can then be identified in order to ensure that the young person's needs are being met and that they have fewer missing-from-home episodes.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of new members of staff and young people in the home. However, fire drills have not been undertaken as part of their induction into the home. Therefore, the staff and young people are not aware of how to respond if a fire was to occur in the home. This means that staff and young people would be potentially placed at significant risk if a fire was to occur in the home.

There have been no incidents of physical intervention in the home since the last inspection. Effective behaviour management practice and positive relationships between staff and young people mean that there are good levels of communication, negotiation and compromise. This avoids the need for constant sanctions and consequences as a way of managing behaviour. This was evident when young people were unsettled during the inspection. Staff were observed to interact well with young people and used de-escalation techniques to calm young people down. Furthermore, one member of staff took the female young people out of the home while another member of staff spent time with the male young people doing activities. As a result, the young people settled down and the home environment became much calmer.

One young person in the home reports to be transgender. Although the manager and staff call the young person by their preferred name, they have little understanding or knowledge of transgender issues. This means that they are not able to fully support the young person in this aspect of their life. This is a particular training and development need for staff so they can meet the needs of the young person and ensure that appropriate support and intervention are in place in relation to the transgender issues.

Consultation with young people is good. In addition to weekly meetings in which young people and staff plan activities and menus, young people also have their own monthly young people's meetings. These meetings enable young people to have a say on the care that is provided to them, the meals they like and the things they would like to do. Furthermore, the meetings give them the opportunity to raise any areas of concern or make requests for any items that they would like to have in the home. For example, in one young people's meeting the young people requested more board games and DVDs. The manager has also introduced a monthly consultation sheet for young people to complete; this enables young people to share their views on all aspects of their care. The majority of the responses in these consultations are positive. The good level of consultation with young people in the home demonstrates that their views, wishes and feelings are paramount.

Partnership working is well established in the home and continues to improve. The manager has developed positive professional relationships with significant professionals in order to ensure that there is a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of the young people and that they are safeguarded. For example, following incidents which required the involvement of the local authority designated officer (LADO), the manager attended regular meetings and made suitable arrangements for the LADO to visit the home. These visits allowed the LADO to meet with the staff team in order to improve their understanding of their roles and of what is expected of them. This has resulted in an improvement in the recording of significant incidents by staff. Therefore, there are detailed accounts of all incidents; these support safeguarding professionals in their investigations and their decision-making around incidents. This ultimately results in young people being

safeguarded more effectively. Furthermore, the manager has devised consultation forms for professionals to complete. These enable him to identify the strengths and weaknesses within the home and make any improvements that are required.

Monitoring and review practice in the home is undertaken on a regular basis. This supports the manager to identify shortfalls in professional practice and in the quality of care that is provided in the home. In addition, independent monitoring takes place on a monthly basis. This supports the manager to make the necessary improvements. However, the reports on the independent monitoring visits that are provided to Ofsted do not include the manager's response to the recommended actions. Therefore, the regulatory body is not always aware of how the home intends to make improvements in order to address any shortfalls.

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/09/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2015	Full	Good
03/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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) meet(s) 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
32: Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(d)) In particular, this relates to staff references.	23/03/2017
44: Independent person: visits and reports The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions. (Regulation 44(5)) In particular, the registered manager should demonstrate that they have considered whether or not to take action and that this can be evidenced.	23/03/2017
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is 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	23/03/2017

make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.
(Regulation 12 - (1)(2)(a)(i))

In particular, risk assessments should include up-to-date information to provide a true reflection of the current risks and how these will be managed to safeguard young people.

Recommendations

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

- The registered person must challenge (under regulation 5(c)) any placing authority who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead (in circumstances other than an emergency) is inadequate in relation to their role. It is essential that the home understands what will be required of it before it accepts responsibility for a child's placement, in order to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.5)

In particular, impact risk assessments should be completed prior to the agreement of the placement of a young person in the home to ensure that it is a suitable placement.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, staff should be given the opportunity to improve their understanding and awareness of specific issues relating to young people so that they can offer them appropriate support.

- Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm. 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

In particular, fire drills should be undertaken when any new members of staff start to work at the home or any young people move into the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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