

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	22/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC065189
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Stuart Roberts
Inspector	Stella Lovie

Inspection date	22/02/2016
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness. The home was last inspected in early September 2015. It was judged to be good in all areas. Four requirements and two recommendations were made to promote necessary improvement. At the point of this interim inspection, two requirements in relation to independent return interviews after a young person has gone missing, and to some refurbishment of the home, have not been fully addressed. This does not demonstrate full commitment to acting on feedback from inspection activity. The home has received some positive feedback from several placing authority professionals since the last inspection. For example, one social worker commented: 'I am very satisfied with the package of care. The team formulated a specific care plan that was unique and catered for all my young person's needs. I was kept informed by phone and email and each method was extensive, clear and concise. I would definitely use the service again.' Nonetheless, two out of the last three placements of young people in the home since the last inspection have been of short duration, and have ended in an unplanned way. This raises questions about the efficacy of placement planning in relation to staff skills at the point of referral, especially in respect of emergency placements. For example, the manager accepted an emergency placement of a young person with known serious self-harming behaviour prior to refreshing staff skills in the management of self-harming. Ultimately this placement lasted only about a week before the young person needed sectioning under the Mental Health Act. That young person placed herself at high risk of harm while in the home. In addition, the manager confirms that half of his team have not refreshed their skills in the management of positive behaviour, including safe physical interventions. This is a training need he identified in his bi-annual report at the end of September 2015. This means that staff are not fully equipped with the skills and confidence to effectively manage some complex behaviours of the young people they accept into the home. The current young person living in the home is not compliant with his education on a full time basis. This has been the situation for several months. Efforts have been made to address this by way of a meeting with his school to identify possible alternative options that he may be more motivated to engage with. However, those	

options have yet to be sourced. Consequently, the young person is significantly behind with his preparation for GCSEs. Overall, it represents drift and decline in his attainment and attitude towards learning. For example, the young person remained in bed on a school day during the interim inspection until late afternoon. The manager conceded that he has been unable to effect any sustained change in the young person's attitude to his education. This is likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on his future life chances. It is not helping him to establish better motivation or a positive work ethic. As an education professional in his school commented: 'It's very problematic around his attendance at school. I've been over to try to get him out of bed and bring him to school but that no longer works with him. When he is in school he is absolutely fine. It's about trying to get him out of bed in the first place. Both the home and school are at a loss as to what to do next. He is in year 10 and is falling desperately behind in his GCSE work. He had been doing well with his key stage 3 targets. He's a bright young man who could achieve good grades. School have been looking for alternative provision for him on a Monday. But the barrier to getting this is his attendance and motivation as employers asks about this.'

The independent visitor notes very positive feedback from the home's linked police officer. That professional confirmed that he has a long relationship with the home and considers it to be one of the best homes he works with. He reports that staff work effectively with the police to manage missing from home events. However, records in the home, and repeated feedback from the independent visitor, identify that return interviews are still not being completed regularly as required from the last inspection. For example, 19 out of 23 missing from home events since the last inspection do not appear to have had an independent return interview completed. Although the manager has ensured that there is a system in place agreed with placing authorities for such interviews to take place, the process is not followed through. This means that the provider is missing vital opportunities to establish why the young people choose to go missing, and to thereby take effective action to reduce these high risk behaviours. In addition, some young people have not had a fire drill within seven days of their admission to the home. This is not compliant with the provider's own safeguarding policy and does not promote young people's prompt awareness of fire safety in the home.

Since the last inspection, the manager has successfully applied to become the Registered Manager of the home. He manages two homes in the local area. He is assisted in meeting his day-to-day responsibilities in this home by the support of a competent deputy manager who has been in a temporary post since the last inspection. The manager advises that this individual's tenure of the deputy manager role is about to be confirmed as permanent. This will help to promote stability in the overall team. Staff supervisions are completed regularly so that staff are appropriately supported to undertake their role. Appraisals are up-to-date but still do not include feedback from young people as recommended in the last inspection. This continues to mean that important information is missed when evaluating staff performance.

The physical environment of the home presents as generally warm and welcoming. That said, specific required improvements to various aspects of the home's furnishings and fittings that were identified in the last inspection, and in the manager's bi-annual report at the end of September 2015, have still to be fully addressed. The manager was able to demonstrate that he has tried to get these matters sorted out but accepts that it is taking an inordinate time to do so. In a similar vein, it is evident that the independent visitor has had to repeat a number of recommended actions in her monthly reports as they are not promptly addressed. This does not inspire confidence in the provider's willingness to learn from inspection and external monitoring to improve practice. For example, the independent visitor has raised on several occasions the need for key documents to be obtained from a placing authority. At the point of this inspection, the current young person still has a local authority care plan that is over a year old and does not clearly reflect the current plan for him two statutory reviews further on. This does not promote proactive care planning and is indicative of the tendency towards drift for this young person.

To conclude, the previous good overall experiences, progress and quality of care has declined in effectiveness since the last inspection. Eight requirements and one recommendation are therefore made to comply with regulation and promote improvement.

Information about this children's home

This is one of a number of children's homes operated by a private company. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/09/2015	CH - Full	Good
06/02/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
07/10/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
22/01/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard 6.—(1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— (a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child; with specific reference to completing identified improvements to furnishings and fittings.	23/04/2016
8: The education standard 8.—(1) The education standard is 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	23/04/2016

such barriers.	
(iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment.	
12: The protection of children standard 12.—(1) 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, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; with specific regard to implementing independent return interviews on each occasion a young person goes missing.	23/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard 12.—(1) 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— (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; with specific reference to conducting fire drills with new children with 7 days of their admission as per the provider's policy.	23/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard 12.—(1) 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— (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.	23/04/2016

13: The leadership and management standard 13.—(1) The leadership and management standard is that 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— 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; h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	23/02/2016
14: The care planning standard 14.—(1) The care planning standard is that children— (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home; with specific regard to more effective placement planning prior to accepting new children into the home.	23/04/2016
36: Children's case records 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; and which are kept up to date; with specific reference to obtaining up-to-date and relevant placing authority care plans for each child. (Regulation 36 (1) (a) (b))	23/02/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account

of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that staff appraisals take into account the views of children in the home's care. (Guide, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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 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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016