

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	11/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC065780
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Milestones Care Homes Limited
Registered person address	32 Fieldway, Maghull, LIVERPOOL, L31 5NB

Responsible individual	Stephen Armstrong
Registered manager	Mark Armstrong
Inspector	Elaine Allison

Inspection date	11/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC065780

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young people's needs in relation to their safety, health, emotional well-being and education are not being met.
- Young people are at significant risk of sexual exploitation because managers and staff do not recognise potential or actual safeguarding concerns. This has included failing to take action to support young people in response to serious concerns about child sexual exploitation.
- Some young people do not have access to a full-time education limiting their progress and ability to reach their full potential.
- Care planning and risk assessments are not effectively reviewed and amended to address the changing emotional and social needs of the young people to ensure they get the best possible support and guidance.
- The written records do not provide a factual record of the young people's care experience or contribute to an understanding of their lives.
- Staff are not sufficiently skilled or competent to meet the individual needs of the young people living in this home.
- Poor recruitment practices do not ensure that only suitably checked adults only work with the young people in line with safer recruitment procedures.

The children's home strengths

- One young person is making make good progress with her education.
- Young people are supported to spend time with their families and maintain important relationships.

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— 2 (a) that staff (vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement; (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access education and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. In particular ensure that a personal education plan is in place for each child and follow up their education needs with the Virtual Head.	30/09/2015
11. The positive relationship standard* In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure: (1) that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— (a) mutual respect and trust; (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and (c) positive responses to other children and adults. (2) (a) that staff— (i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out	30/09/2015

in the child's relevant plans; (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; (v) communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship; (viii) strive to gain each child's respect and trust; (ix) understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.	
12 The protection of children standard* In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered provider must ensure that staff: (2)(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; (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;	30/09/2015 30/09/2015 30/09/2015 30/09/2015

(vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (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; (c) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health; (d) ensure that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. In particular staff: follow local authority care plans and reviews in relation to child sexual exploitation; consult with young people on what helps them manage their behaviour; receive good quality training in safeguarding; follow policies and procedures in relation to serious safeguarding concerns; care planning documents including daily records are complete and legible; and address the bare aerial wire hanging from a young person's bedroom wall.	30/09/2015 30/09/2015 30/09/2015 30/09/2015 30/09/2015
13. The leadership and management standard* In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must - (2)(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; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for 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; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on – (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the	30/09/2015

needs of children are best met; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in 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; and staff receive training in safeguarding, first aid, medication, behaviour management, and in Asperger's Syndrome to meet the individual needs of the young people living in the home.	
The registered person must provide each employee with a job description outlining the employee's responsibilities. This relates to ensuring that the correct name is entered into the employee's employment records. Also, ensure that all staff undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (1)(c)(4)(a))	30/09/2015
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (2) The registered person may only— (a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or (b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (3) The requirements are that— (a) the individual is of integrity and good character; (b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification	30/09/2015

and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; (c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the Individual is to perform; and (d) 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)) *	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if - (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which is the registered person considers to be serious; (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(e)) *	30/09/2015

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned children's home. It is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/11/2014	Full	Adequate
21/03/2014	Interim	Good progress
20/12/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	inadequate
Serious weaknesses in the quality of care provided mean that young people's welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. Young people do not have positive or trusting relationships with staff. Young people said 'I don't feel safe in here and I wouldn't speak to any of them' and 'Sometimes if I go to the door they shout through the door "go away or I will restrain you" – they don't even know what I want.' This means that their safety is compromised because they feel unable to speak to staff or the managers about any concerns they may have. One young person is making good progress in their education. She said 'I go to the best school in the area and I love it I am doing my GCSEs.' However, some young people are not making measureable process towards achieving their educational potential. Staff do not have an understanding about their educational needs and progress. They did not know what the predicted grades are for the young people, despite this information being available in a report from the school in the young person's file. Also staff are not actively supporting and promoting young people's education. One young person has not been education since March 2015. She does not have a personal education plan, setting out her needs, abilities and progress, and the arrangements for supporting her learning. Staff are not working with local authority to identify a suitable placement for her. They are not liaising with the Virtual Head, and, in fact, did not know their name or role in supporting young people's education. This young person does not have an alternative education provision or suitable arrangements to help her prepare to return to full time education. The weekly planner shows a list of chores she is expected to carry out and does not address her education or care needs. As a result opportunities for her to reach their full educational potential are limited, seriously affecting her future life chances. Young people are not involved in the plans for their care and their wishes and feelings are not taken into consideration. A young person said 'I don't know what's in my plans I have asked to see them and the staff told me that I couldn't see any of my records until I was 18.' They are not consulted in any aspect of their care or	

day-to-day living arrangements. Young people commented: 'They don't ask us anything, we just get told what to do, I feel like I'm in a fishbowl they just keep watching me and writing and watching and writing' and 'We haven't had a young people's meeting for about three months I wouldn't want to say anything because they will get moody with me.' Staff members consult with workers from child and adolescent mental health service on how to meet some of the needs of young people. However staff have not received training on how to understand and support young people with specific health needs or conditions, for example Asperger's Syndrome. The young person said 'I mask my emotions because I don't know who to talk to in here I can talk to CAMHS.' This means that young people's specific health and support needs are not being met or taken into consideration in the support and care she receives.

Young people are supported to spend time with their families. This positive contact helps them identify with extended family members and spend time in their own community. And helps young people build a picture of their family background.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
Poor safeguarding practice is leaving young people at risk of harm. The manager and staff do not always following the safeguarding procedures, including when a young person disclosed a significant concern about possible child sexual exploitation. They did not take action to ensure the young person's welfare was safeguarded. The poor quality of written risk assessments do not help staff understand the risks to each young person and the steps required to manage these safely. Young people do not have individual risk assessments. The level of risk is not reviewed following serious incidents or changes in young people's behaviour or care reviews. Also, their individual placement plans have not been reviewed or updated after any significant incident. Consequently the plans do not always reflect young people's current needs and the level and nature of risk. Also, the staff's practice is not consistent with the expectations of the placing authority's plans for young people; for example, a young person who required to be monitored using the internet was	

allowed to have unlimited and unsupervised access. Her social worker said 'I was under the impression that the service were monitoring (the young person's) internet use as it is in her care plan'. As a result of this failure she was left at risk of harm.

The quality of written records about young people is poor. They lack the detail and analysis to contribute effectively to an understanding of the young person's life and their future plans. There is very little written evidence to show how young people are being supported on a daily basis and how effectively they are being looked after in line with their plan. Care plans are not complete; some sections stop mid-sentence and do not give a clear, concise direction on how young people's needs should be met. The managers, therefore, have little information to measure young people's progress and help to develop a better understanding of how to promote their welfare.

Young people do not have behaviour management plans, which means staff do not have clear and agreed strategies to help them to manage difficult or risky behaviour. As a result, they not equipped to manage and de-escalate challenging situations. For example, staff have been instructed to call police to manage behaviour that involves damage to property within the home. This is disproportionate and ineffective and could lead to young people being criminalised.

Staff do not talk to young people about how best to support them when they are upset and what works for them to manage their behaviour. A young person said 'they don't talk to me at all, and you know, if they did then maybe I could walk away sometimes and calm down and they wouldn't have to say that I am bad all the time.'

The failure to thoroughly follow safer recruitment procedures for people working at the home means that the young people are around adults who have not been suitably vetted. Suitable written references have not always been obtained or verified by telephone. The content of some references has been changed; the original typed name of an employee had been obliterated and a different employee's name entered onto the reference. Gaps in applicants' employment histories have not been followed up. Staff files do not always include a record of interviews or evidence that interviews took place.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
The ineffective leadership and management of this home are compromising the young people's progress, welfare and safety. There is a lack of thorough management oversight and monitoring of the quality of care and the day-to day-running of the home. This means that areas of weakness and poor practice have not been identified and action has not been taken to put things right. More robust systems are needed to ensure the safety and well-being of the young people is promoted at all times. Potential risks are not identified and addressed. The monitoring failed to identify weaknesses in practice and hazards around the house, such as a bare aerial wire hanging from the wall in a young person's bedroom. The home's Statement of Purpose states that '<i>The home) will provide a caring, structured and homely environment, specifically designed to meet the needs of the residing children/young people</i>'. Leaders, managers and staff are failing to apply this objective within their practice. The care provided does not meet young people's needs and does not enable them to keep safe and well. Staff do not have any knowledge of the home's statement of purpose or the new quality standards. This demonstrates a staff group that are not up-to-date with the relevant national standards for residential child care and how they can most effectively put them into practice with placed young people to help keep them safe and well. Staff said that they feel well supported on a day-to-day basis. However, they are not sufficiently supported, guided and supervised to enable them to provide a good quality of care to vulnerable young people. The manager is not routinely reviewing their performance and practice or enabling their continued professional development. Not all the staff have had training in key areas of their work, including safeguarding, first aid, medication, behaviour management, and in understanding Asperger's Syndrome. As a result they have not had opportunities to develop the skills, expertise and knowledge that they require to safeguard and meet the needs of the young people they are working with.	

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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