

SC065789

Registered provider: Good Foundations Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home for up to three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 February 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: 21 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- Managers have failed to address the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection that resulted in two compliance notices being served. Management oversight of the home continues to be ineffective.
- Young people's safety needs have not been consistently met and this has compromised their welfare.
- Staff supervision of young people does not meet their assessed needs. There are long periods during the day when staff are unaware of where some young people are or who they are associating with.
- Risks to young people are not clearly identified, understood or managed by the staff team and registered manager. The failure of staff and managers to act on information shared by other professionals, or to recognise and respond appropriately to potential or actual safeguarding concerns, has left young people at risk.
- Young people's care plans and risk assessments are not sufficiently detailed and are not reviewed effectively to address the changing needs of the young people.
- Internal monitoring of the home is ineffective because potential risks are not identified or addressed. In particular, the internal monitoring of the home fails to identify weaknesses in practice, such as those found at this inspection.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff have developed and improved young people's health and education plans. This has resulted in improved outcomes in both the health and educational needs of young people.
- Missing from home incidents have significantly reduced for some young people.
- Young people have increased contact with family.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2017	Full	Inadequate
06/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2016	Interim	Improved 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. Also, 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that all identified risks and the strategies to reduce those risks are recorded effectively in each child's relevant plans. Ensure that this is done in a manner that enables staff to follow them in the delivery of care. That staff are familiar with and follow the home's safeguarding policies and procedures. That staff understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. That care is delivered in a manner which takes into account the risks identified in relevant plans, and that measures identified to reduce those risks are implemented and delivered by staff so that those receiving care are safe and protected.	13/04/2018
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in	13/04/2018

relation to the children's home that helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; 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; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(f)(h))	
In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that each child's relevant plans are followed; that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(e)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure that all care planning documents and agreed local authority plans are adhered to by managers and staff.	13/04/2018

* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- The registered person and the home's staff should be familiar with the care planning process for looked after children and must assist children to prepare for meetings in relation to this. Staff should play an important role in these meetings, including supporting the child and enabling a clear understanding to be reached about the child's views, wishes, feelings, and expectations for their future. An independent advocate can also be called upon by the child or staff to support the child in their reviews. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 23, paragraph 4.14).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This is the second full inspection following an inadequate judgement made at the inspection on 22 November 2017 and a further monitoring visit on 14 December 2017. Despite serious safeguarding issues highlighted in this inspection report, all young people have made some progress since the last inspection.

Staff are now taking a more proactive approach and are actively encouraging young people to return to their education settings. Following discussions in team meetings with all staff about the importance of education, they are clearer about their roles and responsibilities in supporting and promoting young people's engagement in education. An education professional commented, 'The staff are very proactive at encouraging him to attend our sessions and it has resulted in a marked improvement in his engagement.' A young person is now volunteering at the local library as part of his work experience. The remaining young people now have aspirations for their futures. The young people said, 'I like working in the library and helping people with their IT problems', 'I want to go to college', and 'I like going to my course, it's sound.'

Staff have developed and improved young people's health plans. These now contain all relevant information. When issues are identified about health concerns, these are now followed up and the outcomes are evidenced. For example, any outstanding dental or medical appointments are addressed, ensuring that there is support, advice and guidance available to young people. Furthermore, staff have been proactive in liaising with the local child and adolescent mental health team to ensure that young people have up-to-date medication reviews. This helps to promote young people's health and well-being.

In general, young people have good relationships with staff. This enables them to develop their confidence in sharing their concerns and anxieties, and to find solutions to what is worrying them. Young people spoke positively about staff and how the staff have supported them. However, when young people struggle with their emotions and feel unable to articulate their views about the plans for their care, there are no arrangements that allow young people access to an independent advocate to support them in their reviews. A young person said, 'I can talk to staff here, but I don't go into my reviews any more because no one listens.'

Young people are encouraged and supported to develop their independence skills in line with their care plan, age and understanding. Young people have plans to budget for the week, cook their own meals, manage their own day-to-day needs and use public transport independently. Staff understand that transitions towards independence for the young people are very difficult and if young people are struggling with, for example, cooking and budgeting, staff amend young people's plans accordingly. This means that young people can move towards independence at a pace that alleviates any anxieties that they may have and they are able to talk to staff about why they find it difficult.

Staff and managers recognise the importance of young people staying in touch with family and friends. Staff ensure that safe and suitable arrangements are in place for young people to sustain contact and their important relationships. The staff have also

been proactive in their approach and have supported young people to re-establish links with their family members. This allows young people to maintain their sense of belonging within their families. A social worker commented, 'The staff have been really good at maintaining his family contact, and I feel that this has contributed to the reduction in him being missing.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

There continues to be an absence of any effective managerial oversight to monitor, review and develop safeguarding practice, or to ensure that the safety and well-being of young people and staff are sustained. The home's day-to-day care is not arranged and delivered to keep every young person safe. For example, a young person is placed at serious risk of harm because staff are not aware of his whereabouts for periods of up to ten hours a day.

Risk assessments relating to young people accommodated at the home contain significant deficiencies in ensuring the provision of safe care. In particular, a young person has, on numerous occasions, travelled in a taxi to an unknown destination in the Liverpool area. There was no evidence of staff intervening or taking action to tackle this concern, other than to record the taxi's registration number and then to pass this information on to the young person's social worker and the police. There is no risk assessment in place in relation to the young person's use of taxis, including who pays for the fare or where the money comes from. This demonstrates a lack of analysis and understanding about the risks that the young person may be exposed to during the prolonged periods that he is away from the home. Furthermore, the manager and staff failed to identify or implement effective multi-agency strategies to reduce risk, including potential risk of exposure to criminality and drug misuse, for this young person. Likewise, there is no evidence of how staff assess the young person's presentation, demeanour, nutritional needs and well-being on his return to the home. This means that not all young people are protected and cared for effectively. Significantly, the above issues were raised at the previous inspection and resulted in a compliance notice with regard to protecting young people. This ongoing failure to identify and act upon signs that a young person is at risk of harm demonstrates a continued failure by staff and managers to understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting young people in their care.

Records continue to be ineffectual in providing a full insight into the young people's lives and experiences. For example, the few records that are on young people's files detail informal discussions, rather than a more comprehensive record of planned sessions that address the individual needs of the young people. This is particularly evident in the lack of recorded key-working sessions, after periods of young people being missing from home or after concerns about possible substance misuse, to show the work that the staff have undertaken to educate young people about the risks that they are exposing themselves to. This is despite the registered manager being present at a multi-agency risk management meeting when he agreed that sessions would take place for a young person on keeping safe and substance misuse. Therefore, there is limited information to measure all young people's progress or to identify the effectiveness of the support provided.

For some young people, there has been a reduction in the number of missing from care episodes and staff have been effective in reducing the risk to young people when they are absent. However, some young people still go missing at night. They receive return home interviews from the same independent person, and this helps young people to build trust and develop their confidence in sharing information. One young person said, 'I don't go missing as much now, cos I can get to see my family more.'

All medication is stored and recorded appropriately. Consent for medical treatment and first aid is in place for each young person. The registered manager has an auditing system in place for overseeing the safe administration of medication.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Management oversight of the home and of daily practice continues to be poor. Despite the registered manager being a skilled and qualified practitioner, he has not been able to exert sufficient influence to ensure that required changes to meet regulatory shortfalls have been made.

There continue to be gaps within the monitoring and review systems, which deplete the analysis and evaluation of the standards of care provided and their impact on outcomes for young people. For example, the manager has failed to review any of the care planning documentation held at the home for young people. The registered manager and a director of the company informed the inspector that the systems for monitoring and reviewing young people's files were 'a work in progress'. Although the provider has an organisational system in place for managers to monitor and review the care provided to young people, this is not utilised. There is no evidence to show that any meaningful action has been taken to meet the steps set out in the previous leadership and management notice. This notice required the home's leaders and managers to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided at the home through their monitoring and review systems. The registered manager and director acknowledged that they have not made progress in this area, so have not addressed the shortfalls in the service being provided to young people.

Staff are supported by the registered manager, and state that he is always available to give support and advice. However, the registered manager continues to be part of the main roster and as such is deemed to be a team member on these days. This means that there is a lack of sufficient dedicated management time and this has an impact on addressing the required improvements identified at the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, the staff have received good training opportunities. The staff spoken with said that training and learning opportunities have been helpful. They said that they have learned to consider different approaches when responding to the young people's presenting behaviours and needs. Since the last inspection, gaps in staff training about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder have been addressed. Consequently, it is clear that all staff have the necessary knowledge and confidence to address the individual needs of young people in relation to this. A staff member commented, 'It was really interesting for me to see how different behaviours present in different young people.'

The home now has the appropriate systems in place to notify Ofsted and other relevant

bodies of significant events that occur at the home or with young people. This ensures that those with an interest in young people's welfare are kept appropriately informed.

The continued lack of rigour by the registered manager and the senior team to meet the requirements set out in the previous compliance notices has been acknowledged by the responsible individual. As a result, an additional manager has been appointed. This demonstrates the commitment of the provider to improve the standard of leadership and management, and ultimately to improve outcomes for the young people living at the home.

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 differences 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: SC065789

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Good Foundations Limited

Registered provider address: 6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 1BP

Responsible individual: Andrew Mannix

Registered manager: Robert Jones

Inspector

Elaine Allison, social care inspector

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