

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/08/2015
Unique reference number	SC066010
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Quality Protects Children Ltd
Registered person address	Quality Protects Children, Pacific Chambers, 11 - 13 Victoria Street, Liverpool, L2 5QQ

Responsible individual	Mr Anthony Nolan
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Mr Morley

Inspection date	03/08/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	One compliance notice was issued after the last inspection conducted on 30/09/2014. This was subsequently met.
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC066010

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Admission and placement planning are not always effective. As a result care plans are not clear and access to services are delayed. For young people affected their placement does not make a positive start.
- There has been no permanent Registered Manager for nearly six months, which does not give stability to the management arrangements.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is weak. It does not ensure that young people consistently benefit from positive experiences and fails to effectively support all young people to progress well.
- The registered provider has not sufficiently monitored recruitment procedures to ensure they are robust.

The children's home strengths

- Young people develop good relationships with staff who they can trust and form positive attachments to.
- Staff are caring, sensitive and nurturing which helps young people feel safe and secure in the home.
- There is good risk management particularly in relation to improving behaviour and reducing risks from missing from home and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

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. 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 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; (ii) support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study; (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child overcome any such barriers; (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.	30/09/2015
14: The care planning standard. 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. (2) In particular the registered person must ensure- (b) that arrangements are in place to- (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and (c) that each child's relevant plans are followed.	30/09/2015
The registered person must appoint a person to manage the children's home if-	30/09/2015

(a) there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and (b) the registered provider- (i) is an organisation or partnership; (2) If the registered person appoints a person to manage the home, the registered provider must, without delay, give HMCI notice of- (a) the name of the person so appointed; and (b) the date on which the appointment takes effect. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(i) & (2)(a)(b))	
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, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3) including that- 3 (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) and (3)(d))	30/09/2015
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which- (a) is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect; and (b) sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (2) The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect must, in particular- (b) provide for the prompt referral of an allegation about current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)(b) & (2)(b))	30/09/2015
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which- (a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; (b) are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a) & (b)). In particular this includes the 'Plans or reports relating to the child', Schedule 3 paragraphs 17 to 20.	30/09/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/09/2014	Interim	Declined Effectiveness
05/06/2014	Full	Adequate
11/12/2013	Interim	Inadequate Progress
12/06/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Admissions and decision making was the focus of enforcement action since the last inspection. In particular the impact of new young people moving into the home. The compliance notice issued was judged to have been met. Practice in relation to admissions is still not consistently good and requires further improvement. Recently one young person was admitted based on insufficient verbal information from the social worker. No written assessments, care and placement plans from the placing authority have been received almost three months later. Despite the manager's attempts to rectify this, the situation has not improved. There are management failings on the part of the registered provider who agreed the admission to resolve this. This has led to placement instability, delays in accessing support services and missed education for nearly a term. In addition staff are not always trained in advance to meet specific needs of young people. This risks negative experiences happening in the home post-admission. Young people's needs for stability and nurturing are being met, helping them form positive attachments with the staff that look after them. The quality of these relationships helps young people feel safe and secure in the home. This has a beneficial impact on their emotional and psychological well-being. One young person commented, 'Staff are friendly and welcoming which helped me settle in.' Young people's health improves; staff encourage a healthy lifestyle, exercise, improved diets and discourage smoking. A health professional commented, 'The home is good at promoting health needs.' Young people attend their health assessments, routine check-ups and have access to more specialist services when needed, for example Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). When there are clear plans in place the manager and staff work with local education services to help young people achieve at school. Individual needs are promoted so that young people benefit from tailored educational programmes, for example mixing vocational study and basic skills. Young people's views are taken seriously and are valued. They have had a say in recent extensive home improvements, making the physical environment more homely and to their taste. Young people have regular daily discussions with staff about their well-being, routines and care. There are further opportunities in key working sessions to talk more in-depth about their individual needs and learn to trust staff that are responsive and sensitive. As a result they all have staff they can	

raise concerns with, feel cared for and able to complain if they are unhappy.

Staff promote contact with friends and family well, helping young people maintain and develop relationships with those they were close to prior to admission. When young people move into the home from other areas the manager will challenge those placing authorities to ensure young people still have regular family contact. Young people have a telephone they can use in the home for daily contact as well. When it is assessed as safe young people benefit from overnight contact. The manager has built relationships with relatives to ensure these arrangements lead to positive family experiences for young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people feel safe and are safe. Staff that have a clear understanding of the potential risks and individual vulnerabilities of young people. Effective practice at reducing risk ensures that young people experience a much higher level of safety since living at the home. High risk behaviours relating to going missing and being sexually exploited are much lower. Young people respond well to clear direction and expectations from staff on acceptable and positive behaviour. Staff encourage positive behaviour by engaging young people and building up relationships with them. This facilitates staff being able to influence young people to change. There are also a range of incentives that are individualised and used effectively to reward good behaviour. For example girls in the home respond well to treats such as going out to have their nails done. Staff are that successful in making the home safe and secure and promoting good behaviour that there have been no incidents where physical intervention was necessary. The effective parenting styles used lead to positive and settled behaviour. Staff adapt this to the different personalities and needs of young people. One reviewing officer commented, 'Staff have worked her out and know how to approach her in the right way.' The manager has developed effective links with the police and local exploitation agencies. Good systems of communication and working together ensure young people are safeguarded and protected. The frequency of which young people go missing from the home reduces significantly once they have moved in. Staff follow effective procedures to ensure young people return safely on the occasions it does happen.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The manager has been in an acting capacity for five months since the past Registered Manager left. He has not applied for registration. The registered provider has taken this time to try and recruit a new manager and fill this post on a permanent basis. A requirement is set to ensure this takes place to give security and stability for the management of the home. Within the registered provider organisation there has been shortfalls in undertaking the required background checks when recruiting staff and senior managers. This shows a failing on the part of the registered provider to oversee this aspect of management. A requirement is made to ensure that recruitment is robust and only staff safe to work with vulnerable young people are employed. The registered provider implemented an action plan immediately to address this. When allegations have been made about senior staff in the organisation these have not been reported to the local authority in which this home is situated. This is a failing by the registered provider when managing the investigation into these allegations. A requirement is set to address this and ensure the correct safeguarding procedures are followed at all times. Given the close supervision and support staff provide young people, and infrequent visits to the home by senior staff this has not impacted on the safety of young people. There is a track record within the management of the home itself of referring safeguarding concerns to the local authority. One of the aims of the service is to 'create opportunities for young people to work and play together in a range of activities'. This target in the Statement of Purpose is not consistently achieved. Lack of robust planning for all young people admitted to the home lets the service down. A requirement is set to address this so that background assessments and placement plans from placing authorities are obtained to inform future care planning. There are regular monthly independent monitoring visits that check on how well young people are safeguarded and their needs are being promoted. While written reports of these visits focus largely on records and procedures the manager reports that the independent visitor is challenging and robust, prioritising the needs of young people. Staff feel well supported by the manager and senior carer. There is regular supervision that focusses on practice issues, needs of young people and staff development. The manager uses this process to address any staff performance issues and prioritise young people's care. He also has a good oversight of all in-house care plans and risk assessments for young people and ensures that staff	

implement these.

New staff complete an induction and undertake a wide range of training. This promotes the needs of young people, helps them form attachments, feel secure, minimises risks of exploitation and promotes positive behaviour. Although there have been issues with the timing of training to meet young people's needs the registered provider was quick to rectify this. As a result staff are now able to physically intervene if necessary and as a last resort.

The manager and staff generally work well in partnership with other key agencies such as the police, CSE agencies, health services and education. This helps support young people to have their individual needs met. When there are difficulties with other services supporting young people the manager will challenge this. These efforts are not always effective in achieving the desired result.

The manager is responsive to the concerns of parents and has built relationships with them to develop partnership working and share parental responsibility. This helps young people to maintain family bonds and promotes consistency through agreed care strategies.

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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