

SC066010

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The appropriately qualified and experienced manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2018.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 July 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 6 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2019	Interim	sustained effectiveness
29/05/2018	Full	good
19/06/2017	Full	requires improvement to be good
01/09/2016	Interim	declined in effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The progress that children and young people make at this home is mixed. For example, some become more self-aware and develop in confidence. However, given the length of time that some children and young people have lived in the home, they have not made clear progress from their starting points.

Children and young people do not make acceptable progress with their education. Most do not attend school or an alternative provision. Those who are taught by a tutor receive a minimal amount of education per day. Members of staff do not provide children and young people with constructive activities when they are not being educated. This means that they miss out on a key aspect of their development. Children and young people moving into the home do not expect to have to attend school.

The physical conditions of the communal areas in the home are acceptable. However, children and young people are not consistently helped to ensure that their bedrooms are clean and tidy. For some, the conditions are very poor and have been for many months. Members of staff do not give a clear message to children and young people that they deserve a nice room of their own. This was raised as an issue at the last inspection.

Members of staff have not carried out effective work with children and young people about the issues that matter to them most. This means that children and young people have not been helped to deal with the barriers to progress. As a result, their difficulties remain and, for some, become entrenched. Members of staff require further training to help them identify and meet the needs of the children and young people.

Members of staff support children and young people to spend time with their families, including when they are placed a long way from home. This helps children and young people to retain a sense of their identity. If children and young people return to live with their families, members of staff provide advice and support for a period after they have moved.

Professionals reported that members of staff are caring and want the children and young people to do well. Despite the difficulties that some children and young people have, most do not want to leave this home. This is the case even when their placements must end because of incidents or other difficulties.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some children and young people are at risk from criminal exploitation. Staff have undertaken training about this topic. However, some members of staff still find it difficult to identify and challenge possible indicators of exploitation. As a result, children and young people are sometimes left to manage their own risks.

Members of staff struggle to manage the challenging behaviour of children and young people. There have been several significant incidents in the home, some of which have resulted in injury and police involvement. Staff do not present with authority during these confrontations. Children and young people do not feel they are being looked after by carers who can keep them safe.

Some children and young people are involved in a culture of substance misuse. This has been a longstanding issue for this home. Members of staff do not successfully help children and young people to make positive changes. Children and young people do not accept that their health and well-being are at risk from this behaviour.

There have been some incidents of children and young people smoking in their bedrooms. As well as being harmful to their health, this poses a risk of fire to children and young people and staff. There have been improvements with this issue, due to greater staff vigilance, but more needs to be done through education, advice and support.

Children and young people do not regularly go missing from this home. For some, this is significant progress. When children and young people are missing from the home, staff follow procedures, including going out to look for them. This tells children and young people that their carers worry about them and will do what they can to bring them home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager holds the appropriate qualifications for registration and has a clear vision about the shortfalls in the care provided to the children and young people. Managers have recently taken steps to make improvements. This includes staff training, some refurbishment and changes to the ethos of the home.

The registered manager has good oversight of the progress made by children and young people and the issues they face. The registered manager has developed tools to ensure that monitoring is regular and accurate. Because of this approach, the registered manager knows when to take action to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The registered manager ensures that all members of staff are regularly supervised and have annual appraisals of practice. Supervision sessions challenge practice when necessary. Members of staff said that the registered manager and the deputy are approachable. They do not need to wait until formal supervision for advice or support.

The registered manager ensures that staff are recruited using procedures to keep children and young people safe. If issues arise during the recruitment process, the registered manager deals with them appropriately. New members of staff have a period of induction. During this time, they complete mandatory training and are supernumerary on shift. This ensures that the children and young people are cared for by staff who do

not pose a risk.

Since the last inspection, there have been insufficient numbers of staff in the home, due to resignation and sickness. This has led to the registered manager and deputy manager being part of the shift system. As a result, key improvements that were required went unmet for several months. The issues around staffing have improved recently. The last independent visitor report confirmed that most previous recommendations had been met.

The registered manager challenges members of the professional network when they do not prioritise the needs of children and young people. However, the registered manager does not consistently follow up this challenge when required. As a result, some children and young people do not receive the level of service to which they are entitled.

The registered manager has not resolved inconsistencies between members of staff in how they respond to children and young people. Children and young people regularly raise this as an issue, particularly about the use of incentives. The registered manager understands these concerns and has included this issue in the home's development plan.

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, the 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 education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; 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; understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and	20/10/2019

take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers; help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv) and (viii)) In particular, ensure that all children and young people have an education placement and that they are supported to attend and engage with education. When children and young people do not have a placement, work quickly to identify another placement. As an interim measure, staff should ensure that the child's or young person's day includes informal learning.	
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;	15/09/2019

strive to gain each child's respect and trust; 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; de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vii)(viii)(ix) and (xi)) In particular, staff should engage in individual discussions with children and young people to consider issues pertinent to their plans and in respect of their behaviour. Staff should be provided with additional training to give them the skills they need to meet the needs of children and young people, based on positive relationships, regardless of their starting points.	
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in 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; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(d)(e) and (g)(ii)) In particular, the manager should ensure that they have good enough systems in place so that the needs of children and young people continue to be met even when they are not	31/08/2019

present. The manager should respond promptly to any recommendations made by children and young people or by other independent persons, including complaints about members of staff not being consistent in their approach.	
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Recommendations

- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
In particular, ensure that children and young people are supported to keep their own spaces clean and tidy. Regular room checks that take place to establish whether children and young people have completed tasks in relation to their room must also include an element of supporting children and young people to live in a clean space.
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
In particular, staff should arrange a visit from the fire and rescue service to educate the children and young people about the risks associated with smoking in their bedrooms.

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: SC066010

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Quality Protects Children Limited

Registered provider address: Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual: Anthony Nolan

Registered manager: Robert Sharp

Inspector

Jane Titley: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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