

SC066458

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and managed by a private company. The home provides care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 December 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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: 16 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Although leaders and managers have assessed the risk of harm to the young people in the majority of areas, there are some risks that have not been sufficiently addressed This includes allowing family members to visit the home

without identified risk management measures in place to ensure that other young people living in the home are protected.

- In one instance, the ill-considered response from a staff member placed a young person at risk of an accident. The manager did not identify the significance of this action and take steps to improve staff understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the young people.
- On occasions, staff respond to the young people in a negative and judgemental way, which serves to exacerbate situations when the young people are struggling to control their behaviour.
- Although some progress has been made, the requirements and the recommendation made at the last inspection are not yet met.
- Leaders do not ensure that care is delivered in line with the home's statement of purpose.
- Insufficient monitoring by managers results in incidents of poor practice going unchallenged.

The children's home's strengths:

- The young people are making positive progress in their education and their emotional development.
- Young people benefit from warm relationships with staff, which have stabilised their behaviour and reduced incidents of going missing and physical intervention.
- The manager shows tenacity and commitment to the continued placement of the young people, even when they are faced with significant challenges.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/11/2016	Full	Good
25/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Outstanding

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 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— are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11(1) and (2)(x)) Specifically, that staff respond to young people with calm, non-judgemental comments which help young people de-escalate their behaviour more effectively.	07/02/2018
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; and understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i)(v))	30/01/2018
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and	07/02/2018

use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(vii))	
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; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b) and 2(a)(h))	07/02/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(a)(b)(c))	30/01/2018

Recommendations

- It is good practice for a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions to be kept and to ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

Inspection judgements

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

The home has a good track record in providing long-term stable placements. Two young people have left since the last inspection. One of these was unplanned, but the other was a successful progression to semi-independent living. Two young people have been admitted and continue in residence.

There has recently been a significant turnover in staff that some young people have found a little unsettling. However, new staff are in the process of starting at the home.

One young person has just commenced attendance in mainstream school after a long time in alternative provision. Another young person who has not received any education for three years is now engaging with a tutor, daily. A third is achieving good and outstanding grades in school.

All of the young people have made progress in their ability to manage conflict more calmly. They are learning to regulate their behaviour, which is helping them to succeed in education and to build more positive relationships with their families. These achievements are due to dogged persistence by staff, working through the challenges the young people have presented and providing them with warmth and security. One social worker commented that the care that young people receive is 'strong and nurturing'.

The inspector reviewed a record of a key-work session and a record of a complaint. Both recorded a response from staff that was negative, indicating there had been verbal exchanges between the young people and the staff and that the staff responded inappropriately to young people. These responses do not promote the self-esteem of the young people or defuse tense situations. A requirement in respect of this is raised.

The health needs of the young people are well met. One young person has progressed from cigarettes to an electronic device and has also ceased using illegal and harmful substances completely. With staff support, the young people are improving their self-care and personal hygiene.

Other people involved in the lives of the young people are kept well informed about their day-to-day lives. A social worker who is based some distance from the home said that, because of the good communication, it is 'easy to monitor my child's care and progress'. Family contact is encouraged. Staff welcome family members and provide flexible support to facilitate these relationships. However, when contact takes place in the home itself, the manager has not assessed any risks and put appropriate plans in place to manage the movements of family members while on the premises.

A requirement that was previously made to maintain the home was met, however, there is now recent damage to the home that has not yet been repaired. Damage to the office door has not been repaired, the door to the room of one young person is unpainted, and the door frame to another is missing. There is damage to the wall in the hallway. This does not present young people with a high-quality environment which

encourages pride in their surroundings and a requirement is made at this inspection.

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

Some of the young people enjoy their family visiting them in their home. However, there is no exploration of whether these family members pose any risk to other young people living there. No strategies are in place to manage their movements while on the premises. A pet rabbit is being kept in the basement, but there is no risk assessment regarding hygiene and handling. One member of staff received a large scratch from the rabbit during the inspection. The newest resident has not taken part in a fire drill. These shortfalls potentially place young people at the risk of harm. A requirement in respect of ensuring that risks to young people are assessed is raised.

However, the young people are protected by individual risk assessments which identify the majority of their vulnerabilities and put measures in place to reduce these. Missing from care protocols are well understood by the staff and the work done with the young people is successful in significantly reducing missing from home episodes. The manager works with the police and youth offending services to ensure that a well-coordinated response and a return home interview is offered by the placing authority.

The staff are working with social workers to allow the young people to take age-appropriate risks. Two young people who have not been able to have any unsupervised time in the community are now able to do so and are gradually building up the amount of time allowed.

The manager is encouraging staff to use a restorative approach when managing behaviour and, for the most part, staff are positive when dealing with challenges. Incidents of physical intervention and sanctions are reducing. However, there are gaps in the understanding of staff about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding young people. One young person was left alone in a locked car when he refused to get out. He subsequently released the handbrake. Although an accident was averted, this could have resulted in harm to both the young person and the public. A requirement in respect of staff awareness of their safeguarding duties is raised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The requirements regarding supervision and appraisal made at the last inspection are not met. The registered manager and company policy consider that supervision should take place every four to six weeks. However, this is not occurring. Annual appraisals have taken place, but the manager is unable to produce individual action plans for continuing staff development which were carried out by other senior staff who have left. This limits the manager's ability to provide staff with the appropriate training and skills to provide high-quality care.

Managers are not ensuring that care is delivered in line with the statement of purpose. Not all of the young people have a child-friendly care plan or have input into or explanation of their plans. They have not been consulted about the ways that they prefer to be supported to calm when they become upset. Feedback is not requested

from the young people and significant other in order to improve the service. Staff are not fully protected in terms of health and safety. The office and staff sleeping area is cramped and cluttered. Large files are kept on shelves well above head height, with no appropriate equipment to reach them. A requirement is made with regard to ensuring that care is as set out in the statement of purpose.

There are management monitoring systems in place; however, these are insufficient. For example, key-work sessions are not evaluated by the manager. This has resulted in some inappropriate and judgemental responses to young people going unnoticed. In other instances, the manager has failed to react to evidence of poor practice and this results in this practice going unchallenged. Because there is no systematic way of gathering the views of the young people and others, the six-monthly review of care does not benefit from a wide breadth of evidence on which to evaluate practice and improve practice.

Despite these shortfalls, the manager enjoys very warm relationships with the young people and is passionately committed to their progress and well-being. She is prepared to challenge others when the young people's needs are not being met and 'go the extra mile' to support them.

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: SC066458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Registered provider address: Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3BT

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: Jane Wilson

Inspector

Janet Black, social care inspector

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