

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC066560
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Katie Knox
Inspector	Stella Lovie

Inspection date	18/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The home was last inspected in August 2015. It was judged to be good in terms of young people's overall experiences and progress, and for safeguarding. It was found to require improvement in leadership and management. Four requirements and one recommendation were made to promote necessary improvement. At the point of this interim inspection, the Registered Manager has effectively addressed all the requirements. This demonstrates that she learns from inspection activity and is aware of her responsibility to ensure regulations are complied with. Currently the home is empty and has not had a young person living in it since the end of November 2015. There is no staff team specifically attached to the home. The Responsible Individual has agreed to inform the Regulator in advance of any young people they intend to place there, and to confirm at that point that they have a suitably experienced and trained staff team in place. Since the last inspection, young people have been assisted with good planning to make positive transitions into this home and to new placements. There is particularly good evidence of careful working together with one placing authority to prepare for a new young person moving into the home. That said, the young person's placement was of a short duration as previously unknown, significant mental health concerns quickly became apparent. Staff worked closely with relevant health professionals to try to manage the concerns but came to the appropriate conclusion that the young person needed more specialist provision. The provider responded with flexibility and creativity in trying to deal with the young person's highly complex behaviours while an alternative placement was sought. For example, the manager organised three to one staffing ratios in the home to help manage the intensity of interactions with the young person, and to give staff a chance to re-group during the shift. She also altered shift patterns to facilitate staff having a break rather than just complete the usual 24 hour shift. This helped the placing authority to have time to find a more appropriate placement without the need for an abrupt move. The provider worked closely with the placing authority senior managers who provided additional advice and support to staff as part of on-call support arrangements. As the social worker confirmed: 'Thank you so much and to you all for working in partnership with us to manage what is a very challenging situation. Thank you for being child centred and focused	

on holding our young person while her corporate parent makes the necessary plans to move her on.' The young person was eventually able to transition in a planned way to an appropriate health resource.

Staff work in a non-judgemental way ensuring young people are respected as individuals. They are resilient and show a great deal of perseverance when managing young people's highly challenging and often confrontational behaviour. They have been thoughtful in creating bespoke communication aids to help young people understand routines and be more able to communicate their feelings. Good behaviour is promoted through support, praise and a token economy. Physical intervention is used in a proportionate way. However such interventions are not fully recorded as required by the Children's Homes Regulations. This diminishes opportunities to learn from such interventions with a view to reducing their frequency.

Staff take all reasonable steps to anticipate and manage the challenges and behaviours some young people present. For example, they have received specific training in relation to the management of sexually inappropriate behaviour and self-harming. This has given them confidence in their ability to identify and respond to these behaviours. On occasions, when young people have chosen to absent themselves or go missing from the home, staff have appropriately followed procedures and guidance to ensure their swift return. The home has developed close working relationships with community police to locate and promote the safety and well-being of young people when absent from the home. However, upon the return to the home, independent return home visits are still not routinely provided to young people to explore the reasons for their missing from home, identify any additional risks, including child sexual exploitation, and to inform practice and support provided. This was a recommendation from the previous inspection and is consequently made again to improve practice in this important area.

The manager has been successful in her application to be the Registered Manager of the home. She has embarked on her appropriate leadership and management qualification and reports that she is enjoying the challenge of this. She ensures regular supervision and performance management of staff. They appreciate her style of management, as evidenced in their written feedback to her appraisal: 'She always gives a positive attitude, gives constructive criticism where needed, and is very supportive'. The manager has effective quality assurance processes in place. She is supported by useful critical friend feedback from the monthly independent visitor reports, and takes action in response to any suggested improvements. She has completed a detailed and thorough bi-annual report on the quality of care in the home. However, it does not include an action plan for the next six months. This does not promote a drive for continual improvement based on identified trends and patterns, and any lessons learned.

Overall the home has continued to provide a good service to young people and has therefore sustained its effectiveness. Two requirements and one recommendation are made to further improve practice.

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Information about this children's home

This private children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/08/2015	CH - Full	Good
27/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
08/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
04/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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
35: Behaviour management policies and records: The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (a) (v))	18/04/2016
45: Review of quality of care: After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review. (Regulation 45 (3))	18/04/2016

Recommendations

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

When a child is found after being missing from the home, they must be offered an independent return interview. This should be an in-depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (ie, someone not involved in caring for the child) who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge. (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from care, January 2014, page 14, paragraphs 31 and 32)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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