

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC066917
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Oracle Care Limited
Registered person address	Unit 54 Wrest Park, Silsoe, BEDFORD, MK45 4HS

Responsible individual	Steven Bromley
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Matthew Hedges

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected, their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC066917

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Young people are not protected. Their welfare is not promoted.
- Risk assessments are poor, and fail to address key issues.
- Allegations against staff are inadequately addressed.
- Staff are not appropriately vetted prior to employment.
- Young people receive inadequate support when they move into the home.
- Young people do not receive sufficient help in relation to their education.
- Staff fail to support young people's behavioural needs.
- The manager lacks appropriate training in physical restraint.
- Physical restraint records are poor.
- The home has not had a registered manager for over 37 weeks.
- Management oversight, monitoring and review are inconsistent.
- The home's statement of purpose lacks detail.

The children's home strengths

- The current manager has taken action to begin to address some of the shortfalls.

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
6. The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to children's welfare including young people's asthma, the registered provider must ensure that staff:- (2)(b)(ii) protect and promote each child's welfare.	01/01/2016
8. The education standard In order to meet the education standard the registered provider must ensure that staff:- (2)(a)(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans.	01/01/2016
11. The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard, with particular reference to behaviour, the registered person must ensure that staff:- (2)(a)(i) meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans.	01/01/2016
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to risk assessment, helping children and hazards, the registered provider must ensure that staff:- (2)(a)(i) 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	01/01/2016

(ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe (d) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to staff and monitoring and review systems the registered person must:- (2)(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	01/01/2016
14. The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard, with particular reference to induction, the registered person must ensure that arrangements are in place:- (2)(b)(i) to ensure the effective induction of each child into the home.	01/01/2016
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1))	01/01/2016
The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))	01/01/2016
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1)(b))	01/01/2016
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. (Regulation 35 (1)(b))	01/01/2016
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a	01/01/2016

child in the home, a record is made which includes a description of the measure and its duration. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv))	
The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of measure of control, restraint or discipline, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	01/01/2016
The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. (Regulation 45 (2)(b))	01/01/2016

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to 2 children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/12/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
19/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress
25/10/2013	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Young people make insufficient progress in key areas of their life. Young people's attendance in education drops significantly after moving to the home, this is due to a lack of support from staff. At one point, one young person's attendance dropped to 23%. They were present at their afternoon classes less than 1% of the time. This impacts significantly on the progress they can make academically and socially. A social worker reflects, 'there was a lack of structure...they missed so much education...this was bad for them'. One professional notes, 'I think they were let down'. The manager has recently taken some action in an attempt to address these concerns. This has seen a significant improvement in young people's overall attendance. However, improvements are in early stages. There have been a significant number of staffing changes, including changes of managers, since the last inspection. This affects the quality of the relationships that some staff develop with young people. One professional notes, 'inconsistent staffing and management changes have not helped young people'. There is a lack of clarity regarding how many different staff have worked at the home. Information provided by the manager is inconsistent with other records. As a result, the manager has failed to ensure the home's workforce provides continuity of care to young people. Staff are inadequately prepared when young people move into the home. This is a result of poor planning. Consequently, they do not meet young people's behavioural and emotional needs. Young people have been criminalised due to their behaviour, which includes assaults against staff. A social worker highlights, 'staff couldn't manage their behaviour'. A relative voiced concerns that staff were inconsistent in their approach, 'some staff let them get away with more than others...they ruled the house'. This has the potential to limit their options in later life and their experiences of living in the home. Staff fail to protect young people or promote their welfare. Young people refuse to attend basic health appointments including going to their doctors. The response of staff is ineffective. As a result, significant questions remain unanswered. For example, one young person expresses concern that they have asthma, and highlights that this could affect whether staff can restrain them safely. This was first raised in March 2015 and is yet to be suitably concluded. This places young people at risk. In addition, young people's basic care needs are not consistently	

met. A relative cites an example that a young person came to visit them with insufficient clothing which was, 'all screwed up'. This impacts on their appearance, and sense of self-worth.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Risks are not adequately identified or understood. For example, some young people are described as displaying 'sexualised behaviour'. Assessments in this area lack clarity and do not make suitable arrangements to reduce the risk of harm. Staff do not respond appropriately to significant incidents which are then poorly recorded. Consequently, staff are unclear when events have occurred or who is responsible for working with young people to address specific issues. As a result, staff fail to help young people understand how to keep themselves safe. Opportunities to explore their behaviour are lost. Staff are not safely recruited prior to working in the home. Temporary workers recruited through an agency do not have a full employment history. Permanent staff files do not evidence verification of the reasons why they left previous positions (with children or vulnerable adults). This places young people at risk from potentially unsafe adults working in their home. Managers fail to ensure that allegations against staff are adequately addressed. There has been one complaint of this nature made by young people since the last inspection. The Designated Officer in the Local Authority was not informed and senior managers within the company were unaware. Consequently, young people's concerns were not acted on. This places young people at risk of harm in their own home. It does not reassure them that their concerns are heard or taken seriously. Poor, ineffective, inconsistent support to young people who display challenging behaviour has resulted a high number of physical restraints being used. The frequency has recently started to reduce, however one young person has been restrained 34 times since the last inspection. This significantly affects their experiences and their relationships with staff. The manager is not trained in the physical restraint methods adopted by the home. Despite this, he has been involved in several restraints. This contradicts the home's 'behaviour management policy' and has the potential to place young people at risk of physical harm during incidents of restraint. Furthermore, it impairs his ability to offer effective oversight, or guidance to staff. Records of physical restraint are poor. They lack sufficient detail and do not include	

a description of each restraint or its duration. In addition, young people are not routinely spoken to after they have been restrained. This reduces their opportunities to raise concerns and seek the support they may require.

Staff fail to protect young people from avoidable hazards. Specifically, outbuildings on the grounds are unsafe. This was raised as a shortfall at the home's last inspection. The manager has taken insufficient action to address this. This puts young people at risk of physical injury should they decide to access these buildings.

Young people rarely go missing from the home. Staff demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the steps they should take if this occurs. This safeguards young people who may leave the home without permission.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The home has had four managers since the last full inspection and has been without a registered manager since February 2015, this is over 37 weeks. As a result management oversight is not effective and is characterised by inconsistency. As a result, the service has failed to make adequate progress. The home is currently managed by a suitably experienced, qualified, manager. He has been in post since July 2015 and has submitted an application to be registered. Monitoring and review systems fail to identify significant shortfalls or outline how these will be addressed. Key information is inaccurately recorded and is not always logged in the appropriate place. This further hinders the oversight the manager has. These shortfalls affect the quality of care provided to young people and the progress they have made. Managers do not adequately monitor, review, or evaluate the feedback and opinions of young people about their home, its facilities or the quality of care they receive. This means that there are few/no opportunities for young people to influence the running of their home. The home's statement of purpose lacks key details. In particular, it fails to outline how the home's 'child protection' and 'behaviour management' policies can be accessed. This omission prevents young people, families and professionals from ensuring the home is run in accordance with these policies. All of the staff in the home are male and the statement of purpose fails to address this and lacks detail about how the home will promote appropriate role models of both genders. As a result, young people lack the support of female carers and the opportunity to	

experience positive female role models in their home. The manager has failed to adequately assess the impact this has on young people.

The quality of the support offered to staff, including formal supervision, has been inconsistent. Staff talk positively about improvements made by the current manager in this respect, one member of staff stating, 'supervisions and team meetings were not regular, they are now'. This provides staff with greater opportunities to reflect on their practice and ensures they currently feel supported.

Some professionals also note progress in relation to working relationships, communication and joint working. One social worker comments that, 'the new manager is starting to improve things'. This also includes challenge to other agencies when their practice is poor. These improvements are still in their infancy and so it is too early to fully evaluate their impact.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2015