

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	09/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC067810
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	09/02/2017
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 judges that it has declined in effectiveness. There are two main reasons for this judgement: ■ the progress with the only requirement and some of the recommendations that were made at the previous inspection has been slow; ■ new weaknesses have begun to show. The main factor that underpins the decline in overall effectiveness is the number of changes that have taken place in the last five months. The amount of change has had an unsettling impact on the home. The changes have affected managers, the staff team and young people. The home has a new interim manager. The registered manager left at the end of November 2016. The organisation's practice development manager has stepped in to manage the home, on an interim basis. He is an experienced, qualified social worker, who has a strong commitment to developing staff and young people's talent, learning and skills. He is applying to register with Ofsted, while recruitment for the permanent manager is in progress. There have been multiple changes to the staff team. Three staff members left their employment. Three new staff members have recently joined the team and are undergoing an induction programme. Another staff member is on probation. Having regular team meetings supports the team building, cohesion and consistent approach to care. The staff members are still getting to know each other and the young people. Young people have experienced multiple changes in relation to peers who live with them. A number of placements have ended in the last few months. The effectiveness of the placements was varied and they ended for different reasons. Two young people were discharged to semi-independent provision. One young person returned home. Two young people were moved to a different residential provision, as the staff failed to secure the young people's positive engagement. The home's most recent admission was an emergency placement, 12 days before	

the inspection. The manager has been pro-active in making sure that the placement planning meeting takes place. This has not happened as yet. The future of this placement remains unclear to everybody involved. This adds another uncertainty to the home.

The manager is acutely aware of the unsettling impact of the changes on the relationships within the home. He said that he made a decision to be very selective around admitting any new young people at this time.

Strengthening the admission process was one of the recommendations at the full inspection. This needs to be improved further. The current process that is in place for considering placement referrals follows good practice, but the decision-making is not sufficiently careful or refined. For example, a negative influence between two of the young people could have been easily foreseen, particularly in the light of the team's instability and inexperience in looking after young women whose behaviours put them at increased risk of going missing and of child sexual exploitation. The reciprocal negative influence led to increased risks to both of them. This played a significant part in the termination of one, and possibly both, of the placements.

Another recommendation that has been restated in this report relates to having a more structured approach to supporting young people to develop independence skills and prepare for adulthood. The manager has developed a programme, but this has not yet been shared with any staff or young people.

The requirement regarding the review of the home's location risk assessment has also been restated. The manager has started working on it. He has contacted relevant partner agencies and invited their contribution to the review. The actual assessment review has not been finalised.

New requirements relate to behaviour management and staff training, skills and supervision.

The behaviour management practice has not been effective in promoting young people's positive behaviours and relationships. On several occasions, young people have threatened and abused each other and staff members. In those situations, order was restored with police intervention. The staff members were unable to defuse the conflicts at a lower level of challenge and enable young people to express themselves more constructively.

In the last three months, staff have had to resort to using physical interventions with young people on six occasions. This is a very high incidence of restraint, and is particularly notable as, prior to that, there had been no physical interventions for over a year. The lack of detail in records of restraints makes it difficult to build a clear picture about what exactly happened, establish whether the restraint was necessary and appropriate, and identify any learning points. One of the records specifies that the young person was physically removed from the office, 'so that a handover could be done'. This is not an appropriate reason for a physical

intervention to take place.

The log of sanctions shows that the manager has voided some of the sanctions that were given by staff, as they were not appropriate. This shows good monitoring of the sanctions but poor staff practice. Despite the home specialising in supporting young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, fewer than half of the staff team members have up-to-date training in behaviour management.

The manager has recognised the need to move the behaviour management training forward. However, there is no date set for the training on online safety, despite no staff having had training on this safeguarding topic. Some staff have not had regular supervision, since the last inspection. Some staff have not had a formal practice-supervision for over four months.

The manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. He is rolling out a programme for further improvement of the service. The report following a review of the quality of care is due to be received by Ofsted by the end of February 2017.

The service has many strengths. Some aspects of practice have improved since the last inspection. The manager has actioned the recommendations regarding fire safety, and enhanced working together with the placing authorities around the return home interviews (following a young person's episode of missing).

All current young people are in education. Their attendance and commitment to learning are improving. This is a significant step forward for them, particularly for those young people with a history of non-attendance and non-engagement. Some of them have also begun engaging with the specialist support services, such as on psychotherapy and substance misuse work.

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people. Staff use a therapeutic approach to caring for young people who may experience social, behavioural and emotional difficulties. In addition to having two more children's homes, the company is also a registered education provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/08/2016	Full	Good
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good
30/03/2015	Full	Good

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13 The leadership and management standard– In order to meet the leadership and management standard, (1) the registered person must ensure that all staff receive training in behaviour management and online safety and any other training required to evidence that they (a) 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; that would (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	01/05/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees– (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	01/05/2017
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out– (a) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and (b) the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. The registered person must ensure that– (a) 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– (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and	01/05/2017

(viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; (b) within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")– (i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and (ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and (c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(1)(2)(3))	
The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. The consultation must be clearly evidenced. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	01/05/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- implement a more structured approach to supporting young people to develop independence skills and prepare for adulthood. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'; page 17, paragraph 3.27) and
- strengthen the admission process and fully consider the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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 that 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 whom 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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