

SC068827

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The manager has energised and united the staff team. This has enabled the staff to adopt consistent, child-centred responses which young people have responded to positively. Young people are beginning to understand and feel the benefit of positive behaviour. Episodes of going missing and the staff's use of

physical intervention and sanctions have all decreased.

- Staff use training and guidance from professionals effectively to inform their interactions with young people. This underpins the development of strong relationships between them. Young people enjoy being with and doing things with staff, individually and as a group. Staff express their wish to 'create memories' for the young people and support this with photos and other memorabilia.
- Staff have a good understanding of their role in keeping young people safe. Their active risk management informs the implementation of effective risk reduction strategies.
- The manager and staff team have established positive working relationships with professionals and families of young people. A parent described her child as 'happy and safe there'.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The records maintained by staff do not cross-reference effectively, do not contain all the relevant information and are not routinely signed and dated.
- The provider's annual staff training programme does not enable all staff to have timely access to courses deemed essential in the workforce development plan.
- The fire systems in the home have not been repaired quickly enough when a problem is reported.
- Some admissions to the home have been made in an emergency, which is outside the statement of purpose for the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
09/11/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
08/07/2015	Full	Good

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, 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 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. (Regulation 12 (2) (a) (i)) In particular, ensure that documentation cross-references effectively and provides staff with sufficient detail to achieve consistency of practice in their management of assessed risk.	30/11/2017
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— take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (2) (a) (iv)) In particular, ensure that records of room searches show the action taken by staff.	30/11/2017
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(1) applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25 (2) (b)) In particular, ensure that any damage to the fire systems in the home are repaired promptly.	30/11/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4) (a)) In particular, ensure that the training programme enables timely	30/11/2017

access to courses deemed essential in the workforce development plan.	
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; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to understand and apply the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 6 (2) (a)) In particular, only admit children to the home in accordance with the statement of purpose.	30/11/2017
36. (1) The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1) (a) (b) (c))	

Recommendations

- When establishing the home, the registered person must ensure that it is suitably located so that children are effectively safeguarded and can access services to meet needs identified in their relevant plans (see regulations 12(2) (c)). Under regulation 46, the registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. Providers should refer to the non-statutory advice about the location assessment process: 'Children's homes regulation amendments 2014: Advice for children's homes providers on new duties under regulations that came in to effect in January and April 2014'. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff are committed to and enthusiastic about meeting the needs of the young people living in the home. After some early challenges, careful management and structured staff input have enabled a disparate group of young people to live together constructively. This is noted both by professionals and a parent who commented, 'they get on like a family'. However, management impact risk assessments for new admissions to the home do not always demonstrate whether all the referral information has been actively considered and evaluated, nor has the potential impact of the admission on the resident group been analysed.

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff, which was seen in warm interactions and heard in lots of laughter during the inspection. As a result, young people are positive about their experiences in the home, primarily based on their relationships with staff. They enjoy being with staff, playing games, going on trips and joining in projects around the house. Their holiday abroad this summer was a source of much pleasure and celebrated in photographs on display. One young person proudly showed the summer house he helped build. Young people have access to a wide range of social opportunities and activities. Managers and staff support and fund individual interests effectively. Parents report feeling welcomed into the home and say that they know that staff have the best interests of the children at heart. A professional observed, 'I could feel the warmth of the provision from the beginning.'

Young people's health needs are generally well met. Some need a great deal of encouragement to go to appointments and staff provide this. Staff have a sound understanding of young people's emotional well-being and mental health needs. They support these needs effectively under the guidance and direction of a mental health professional. She described advising staff on risk management and working with them through both an 'attachment' and a 'trauma' informed approach. This has informed the ways in which staff build their relationships with young people. A professional was delighted to report the significant difference in presentation and engagement of a young person within a very short time of moving into the home.

The quality of relationships with staff enables young people to say what they want and feel without reservation. Staff respond appropriately, listening to what children say and taking action if required. Sometimes just their acknowledgment of young people's feelings meets a young person's needs. Young people's rights are clearly outlined in their guide to the home and some have exercised their right to an independent visitor. They know how to complain and are confident that any complaints will be acted on.

All of the young people have an education placement chosen to meet their individual needs. For some, this provision is new and they are on a phased introduction with significant support from staff. Even those who are struggling have made some improvement in their attendance this term.

Some young people have left the home in accordance with their plan: for example, moving to semi-independent accommodation. However, the local authority pathway planning is not secure for some young people and this has had an impact on their willingness to practise independent living skills. Staff have recognised this and are working with young people on taking more responsibility in this area.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff practice and understanding of the identification, management and support of individual risks for young people are sound. Their work has resulted in successful risk reduction strategies that staff describe well and consistently. However, the records that should underpin risk assessments and risk management plans do not contain the necessary detail or cross-reference effectively. This aspect inhibits the consistent management of assessed risks.

Staff engage well with young people and use their relationships with them to help them make increasingly safer choices. This has led to a decrease in episodes of going missing, none for the eight weeks prior to this inspection, which is a significant improvement. Young people report a positive response from staff on return from episodes of going missing, as outlined in the supporting protocol. Management oversight of missing incidents has led to changes in staff practice, for example immediately actively searching for a young person when their absence is noted.

Staff are knowledgeable about, aware of and alert to child sexual exploitation and sexually harmful behaviour indicators and the particular vulnerabilities of the young people they are caring for. However, the records in the home do not reflect the knowledge of staff or the wider knowledge in the children's social work specialist team, including the outcome of intervention meetings and the detail of any safety plan arising.

Staff use the strength of their relationships with young people to inform and underpin behaviour management in the home. As a result, they are confident in their interactions with young people. Staff focus on praise and reward for positive behaviour and use incentives to good effect. Consequently, staff use physical intervention only infrequently. Young people say that staff only use it to safeguard them, or to prevent them hurting themselves or others when other measures have not worked. Staff strive to apply consistent boundaries; this can be challenging when young people have different perceptions of what is acceptable. Staff employ a restorative justice approach, which works well in practice; their use of wider sanctions is minimal. A professional said, 'they manage diversion from challenging behaviour successfully'.

Staff search the rooms of young people where there is an identified need in accordance with the policy. They endeavour to tell a young person before a search but are sensitive to each situation. The records show what staff have found during the search but not what happened next or what staff did with any items that were removed.

Staff understand e-safety and work with young people on keeping themselves safe online and in their use of social media. Staff monitor young people's internet and phone

use where this has been agreed as part of the care plan.

Managers and staff are knowledgeable about the action they need to take in the event of a disclosure or allegation by a young person. They apply this knowledge to their practice, managing young people's worries and concerns effectively in accordance with statutory guidance. The manager has established good links with the designated officer (for safeguarding) and initiates discussion where needed. This ensures that child protection referrals are made, with direct action taken to safeguard young people when necessary.

The home provides a generally safe environment. However, the registered person has not pressed the relevant contractors to effect repairs to the fire system in a timely way and the compromised system has put those in the house at risk.

Staff know about the recent, relevant information received from the police about concerns in a nearby area. However, the locality assessment of the home has not been updated in the light of this information.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the manager has been registered with Ofsted. He is suitably qualified and experienced for the role.

Staff speak positively about the quality of management support in the home. They value and feel valued by the formal and informal support provided through supervision, team meetings and appraisals. They welcome the manager's open door policy. Staff are developing an increasing sense of ownership in the daily running of the home. The manager has provided a clear structure, with allocated areas of responsibility, and is working with staff on individual targets to improve the home and develop the team.

Staff benefit from a thorough, planned induction. This provides time for document reading and training prior to their first evening shift. The workforce development plan outlines a strong training programme and staff have had the training required at the previous inspection. Staff use the training to inform their work with young people and gave examples of how attachment training had made a difference to practice in the home. However, the provider's annual training programme does not routinely provide staff with timely access to some essential courses.

Professionals are very positive about the quality of their relationships with staff in the home. One described the team as responsive. Another said that the key worker role is undertaken to a good standard, and that they are provided with regular updates and information. Staff make good use of the fortnightly consultation with a mental health professional to inform their work with young people. The managers provide challenge to external professionals where this is needed to meet the needs of young people.

The manager is aware of the strengths and areas for development in the home. His recent focus has been on ensuring that the house has been refurbished to a good

standard to provide a warm and comfortable home for young people. The manager has also been working with the staff team to develop the social pedagogy ethos, initially by role modelling to demonstrate the theory in practice. He is aware that record-keeping is an area in need of improvement.

The manager accepted two emergency admissions which are outside the criteria outlined in the statement of purpose. The home has been through a period of considerable change, with long-term placements ending and staff leaving. The manager considered that the home could meet the identified needs of these young people. Staff maintain a clear focus on the needs of individual young people and are ambitious for them. To achieve this, they provide young people with the necessary support, for example one-to-one support in education settings, to ensure that young people can access the resource successfully.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding and appreciation of diversity. They make simple adjustments to accommodate difference as part of everyday living that provide young people with effective role modelling.

Staff actively encourage and respond positively to young people's views. Young people's pride in the wide range of activities, the decor of rooms and the creation of a music room provide good evidence of this.

Managers, staff, young people and others working with them eloquently describe the progress made by young people but this is not well reflected in the records seen. Daily notes and 24-hour plans do not routinely record the author or date.

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: SC068827

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking GU22 7QQ

Responsible individual: Ian Forbes

Registered manager: Colin Christensen

Inspectors

Maire Atherton, social care inspector
Maria Lonergan, social care inspector

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