

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC356565
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Responsible individual	Millicent Vernon
Registered manager	Millicent Vernon
Inspector	Elaine Cray

Inspection date	08/02/2017
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 judge that it has declined in effectiveness. Safeguarding, leadership and management are ineffective because the registered manager does not carry out required background checks on adults who volunteer and work face-to-face with the young person living in the home. The high turnover of young people coming to and leaving the home, some for a short period of time, shows that young people fail to thrive and develop a sense of belonging and permanence at the home. The registered manager and staff fail to make a positive impact on complex and challenging behaviours, such as going missing, violent behaviour, both inside and outside the home, and education outcomes. Placements are quickly arranged and then terminated by the registered manager, who states she does not receive transparent information from placing authorities. Detailed and explicit information available in the home about the significant vulnerability and risks of young people shows this not to be the case. An agreement to take a young person as a sole placement and with increased payment by the placing authority verifies that the registered manager was aware of these complex needs. This young person has been admitted to the home despite the manager and staff team failing to meet the needs of several other young people previously placed at the home. The manager fails to make effective compatibility assessments in accordance with the home's statement of purpose and the skill-set of the staff. As a result, young people do not have their complex needs met and they experience yet another failed placement. The young person is not adequately supported due poor staffing arrangements. For example, a vulnerable and at-risk young person remained in a bedroom while the registered manager and staff took part in behaviour management training in the home. The young person, who consistently goes missing from the home, was left for long periods of time unattended and unsupervised, only receiving periodic checks from the manager.	

The young person and staff are not safe because identification and management of significant risks to and presented by the young person are inadequate. For example, lone working arrangements fail to address risks such as sexualised behaviour towards females.

Presenting behaviours, as clearly identified in the young person's referral information, such as aggression, use of weapons and a fascination with knives and other sharp implements, are not addressed within the young person's risk assessment and management documentation.

Young people are and have been at risk due to the manager's and staff's ineffective management of missing from care procedures. The young person most recently admitted to the home has spent significant periods of time, often overnight, away from the home. One young person from the last inspection and other young people who were admitted and who have since left the home, also have had periods of being absent and reported missing. The manager and staff fail to have an impact on these patterns of behaviour, and partnership working is poor.

For example, the registered manager's in-house risk assessment fails to acknowledge the extent of known and significant risks presented by the young person living at the home. While the home's risk assessment identifies a risk of going missing, there is no link to known child sexual exploitation, criminal offences, drug taking and drug dealing. There is no detail about harbouring notices on individuals in the community, associations with adults known to pose a risk to children or the young person's propensity to commit criminal offences and pose a risk to the public.

This failure undermines the level of partnership working that is required to keep young people safe from, and to extricate them from, organised child sexual exploitation.

Young people's education needs are not adequately met and the manager and staff fail to support young people to reach their potential. The registered manager has been unable to meet the education-related statutory requirement from the last inspection.

For example, one young person from the last inspection, who has now left the home, failed to attend a college placement over the majority of his placement. Other young people admitted, and who have since left the home, also have poor education attendance and engagement. The most recently admitted young person was admitted to the home with a poor history of school attendance. This admission went ahead in light of the manager and staff having a poor history of enabling young people to attend school and college. Despite this history and the young person's refusal to attend school, there were no in-house arrangements for the young person to engage in informal education at the home.

The security of information in the staff office is compromised because of a mortise-

type lock on the door. The key is held by staff, and visitors to the home cannot receive adequate privacy and security, unless they are locked in the office. On this inspection, the young person consistently entered the office to interrupt private conversations and attempt to remove items. The inspector was unable to benefit from adequate privacy and security due to lone staff working arrangements and the lack of an internal thumb screw lock on the office door.

The registered manager acknowledges her leadership failures and the young person currently at the home is due to move on, due to the manager's termination of the placement. She is now required to provide a full action plan to address the inadequacies at the home.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/06/2016	Full	Good
15/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/06/2015	Full	Good
19/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
8: The education standard: In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; (v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally.	31/03/2017
12: The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard, to ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, the registered person 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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.	31/03/2017
13: The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person:	31/03/2017

(1) enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that: (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to: (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
14: The care planning standard: In order to meet the care planning standard, the registered person must ensure that children: (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure: (a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	31/03/2017
32: Fitness of workers: The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that: (a) the individual is of integrity and good character; (b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; (c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))	31/03/2017

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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