

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC359846
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Paul Gouldingay
Inspector	Rachel Britten

Inspection date	10/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection:	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC359846

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is 'requires improvement' because:

- Consistently effective team work is not achieved on every shift. This is because some senior shift leaders and residential care workers are at odds about ways to engage and support young people and tackle their presenting behaviour.
- Some staff do not spend enough quality time with young people and have not forged positive relationships where they role model the qualities of good parents and good family life.
- Young people do not feel their concerns, complaints and allegations are always taken seriously and addressed. Full records are not always made and young people are sometimes unsure what, if anything, has been done.
- Young people's levels of engagement fluctuate according to whether staff help them feel cared for. They choose to stay away from the house or spend time in their rooms when certain staff are working. This adversely affects their sense of belonging and their participation in group activities and holidays.
- Records about young people contain little reflection about the assessment and insights of staff and are rarely shared with young people. They are therefore of little use to help young people; inform staff how to continue care when they come on shift; or for manager's monitoring.
- Insufficient staff numbers and lack of transport means that young people are not adequately searched for or returned from episodes of absence or being missing. In addition, young people are not always accompanied or transported adequately when they have important events to attend.
- Staff have not prepared for new placements effectively enough to anticipate and prepare for young people's established patterns of behaviour.
- Leadership systems for group meeting, individual supervision and appraisal do not help staff to feel well supported and do not deal sufficiently with issues about dynamics within the staff team and their impact upon the quality and consistency of care.

The children's home strengths

- Young people have sat GCSE exams this year and all young people are being well supported by the home to help them engage in education and overcome some ingrained attendance issues.
- Cleanliness and maintenance of the home has improved since the last inspection, as have systems for the safe administration of medicine.
- Many staff have kind, empathic relationships with young people and are good role models for them.
- Professionals say the home provides a 'safe base' for young people that has enabled self-motivated young people to focus and make a lot of progress.
- Matching of new admissions to the home has improved since May 2015 because the manager no longer has to take admissions in accordance with a contract with Wolverhampton Local Authority.
- The manager encourages staff to develop their careers in residential care of children and young people. He has a warm, supportive leadership style which young people, staff and professionals appreciate.

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 standard, the registered person must in particular- (2)(b)(iii) ensure that staff treat each child with dignity and respect; (2)(b)(vii) ensure that staff provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably.	15 Jul 2015
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard in particular, that children receive care from staff who- 1. (a) develop positive relationships with them; (b) engage with them; and (c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting their care, welfare and lives.	15 Jul 2015
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must in particular- (2)(viii) ensure that staff strive to gain each child's respect and trust; (2)(ix) understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.	15 Jul 2015
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must in particular	15 Jul 2015

(2)(x) ensure that staff are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children and to help children to do the same.	
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must in particular- (2)(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (2)(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; (2)(g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received.	15 Jul 2015
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure- (2)(f) that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.	15 Jul 2015
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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))	15 Jul 2015
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	15 Jul 2015
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (3))	15 Jul 2015
The registered person must maintain the records in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date, in particular, a record of all visitors to the home and to children, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit. (Regulation 37, Schedule 4 (5))	15 Jul 2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group of homes operated by the same organisation. Since the last inspection it has ceased to tender solely under contract with Wolverhampton council. The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
05/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
27/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
08/05/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Young people receive varying quality care. Some staff spend too much time in the office and too little quality time listening to young people and helping them in their everyday life. Some staff are rigid in their approach and young people feel those staff do not respect them or try to understand them. There are divisions amongst the staff group about care styles. Young people give examples of being 'put upon' without thanks; talked to unkindly; or finding staff's relatives utilising the home's communal areas. As a result, young people choose to stay in their rooms or go out for extended periods when these staff are on duty. Most staff have forged warm, caring relationships with young people and show this to them. For example, staff prepare a separate evening meal for a young person, that meets their special dietary requirements, while that young person is too busy with exam revision to cook for themselves as they usually do. Other staff bring in films from home and sit with young people, enjoying conversation, relaxation and creating opportunities to listen, help and advice young people. Young people's views, wishes and feelings are not always taken fully into account, despite their openness to talk about issues during the inspection. Practical matters are usually addressed better than concerns about adult and young people relationships. For example, a young person complained because others were using her personal foods and cooking equipment from the kitchen fridge. She asked for a mini-fridge for her room and this was purchased. However, a young person is concerned about certain staff cleaning out her bedroom in her absence without consultation; throwing away items important to her; and telling her that she would always be living in a mess. This has upset her and has not been properly resolved, despite giving some verbal and written feedback to staff, the manager and the area manager. Young people's care is not always well planned. There are not always enough staff to provide support to young people when they have important events to celebrate that a good parent would come to. There has been no home's vehicle available to facilitate activities and bring young people home if they are in any difficulty. Similarly, some staff on duty are not always able to access necessary funds to pay for taxis, bus fares and small treats. Young people feel that some staff withhold activities or treats on a whim. This means young people rarely commit to arranged activities and holidays because they are not convinced they will happen as planned. Young people do not feel prioritised and are unsure how much some staff are really 'there' for them. Nevertheless, some young people have worked	

extremely hard in education and have done well, both academically and in other hobbies too. They are in good routines and show determination, ability and independence, which will stand them in good stead for their futures.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Young people's behaviour of absenting themselves from the home and going missing fluctuates, and has been significant during April and May. Some young people say they don't want to be here when certain staff are working and say that this links with their episodes of being missing. Others know their placement is coming to an end and have decided to spend most of their time back home with family. The risks to young people when they are missing are identified and staff make adequate efforts to find out where young people are. However, insufficient staff numbers and lack of transport means that young people are not adequately searched for or returned from periods of absence or being missing. Although the mix of young people vulnerable to exploitation is better than earlier in the year, there is little evidence that the response of staff to missing episodes and the work they do, is making enough difference for the behaviour to stop. In addition, staff have not anticipated and prepared effectively for newly admitted young people's established patterns of behaviour. They have not planned their response to young people's expressed intentions to go missing or their known resources of money, drugs and continuing connections. For example, they are not working proactively with police and utilising the home's available procedures for room search or holding money in safe-keeping. As a result, young people go missing with relative ease and all young people in the home are subject to increased risk. Cleanliness and maintenance of the house has improved since the last inspection, as have systems for the safe administration of medicine. Episodes of damage to the home take place on occasions and most staff address this in a calm, proportionate manner, helping young people recover from, and talk about the incident and help clear up the mess. Regular maintenance means that young people feel more valued in their home. However, behaviour management styles vary between staff and young people feel some staff are too 'strict' and impose unfair sanctions or withdraw activities and their attention too readily. Young people feel some staff do not understand the impact of past experiences on their present emotions. This undermines their sense of well-being and security in the home.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home is managed by a qualified and experienced Registered Manager who is accessible to staff, professionals and young people. He is available during week days and prioritises the day to day running of the home over other responsibilities. His warmth and approachability mean that staff and young people alike have confidence in him. His deputising arrangements are the three senior staff who lead the home in his absence. Leadership meetings and staff meetings take place periodically, but not often enough, and not effectively enough, to tackle issues about practice and care style differences between staff. Inconsistent care results from this. The manager has addressed some issues about fairness in shift allocation; annual leave for staff; and supervision; but differences of opinion about care styles and approaches have not been properly aired or addressed. Senior staff receive direct supervision from the manager and the senior staff supervise the other care staff. Supervisions do not always revisit the matters raised for action following the previous session. A number of supervision records are not on file, calling into question the signed sheet where staff sign against a date to confirm that a supervision meeting has taken place. In addition, staff do not all have their performance appraised annually. These shortfalls reduce the usefulness of supervision and appraisal systems. For example, the manager cannot clearly track staff learning needs and development from them. Despite this, most staff feel well supported and the manager believes that one of his main strengths is developing staff through promotion and higher qualifications in residential care. Young people do not feel their concerns, complaints and allegations are always taken seriously and addressed. Full records are not always made unless young people have put their complaint or allegation in writing. Young people rarely receive a written response and the manager's actions are not collated into a clear complaints record that shows all the action taken and the outcomes. Similarly, young people do not always receive clear feedback on their views and ideas given verbally or on feedback forms. As a result, even young people who have lived here a considerable time still have unresolved complaints and want things to be different for the next young people that live here. Matching of new admissions to the home has improved since May 2015 because the manager no longer has to take admissions in accordance with the contract with Local Authority. At the same time, all those young people placed under the terms of that contract have already been moved or have a plan to move. The manager has advocated for young people's move-on plans to be timed in their best	

interests, for example ensuring that they take their GCSEs while here before moving to independence. However, there are too few efforts to research placements fully and plan behaviour management early and effectively when new young people are coming.

The manager does not know or fully understand the weaknesses of the home. He addresses obvious and practical issues best. For example, he has acted fully on the matters raised at the last inspection and on the weaknesses found by the home's monthly visitor. He has partially addressed some issues around staff dynamics but has been too quick to assume that this has dealt with the whole problem. The complaints record, staff files, sanction and rewards records, and young people's files are not comprehensive enough or evaluative enough to evidence staff's practice in a way that shows young people, other staff and the manager, everything that is happening in the home. This holds the manager back in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the home. It holds back staff in understanding one-another's practice and what care practice and strategies work well for each young person. It therefore also holds back the progress and experiences of young people because staff do not build on what one-another do.

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*.

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