

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC366002
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Alliance Care & Education Limited
Registered person address	Brow Top Farm Quernmore LANCASTER LA2 0QW
Responsible individual	Andrew Taylor
Registered manager	Wayne Turner
Date of last inspection	20/08/2014

Inspection date	30/03/2015
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged adequate at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

The focus of this inspection is to assess the effectiveness, progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection. Since the last full inspection there have been a total of four new admissions to the home. Of these four admissions only two of the young people have remained living at the home. Outcomes for young people are mixed as a result of compatibility issues upon placement.

One admission to the home lasted approximately three months. No impact risk assessment was completed on the suitability of the placement. As a result, there were incidents of them bullying other young people in the home. Although the manager has identified some teaching materials that the staff can use with the young people to help them understand the issue of bullying, this work has yet to begin. One young person spoken to said that on occasions they have not felt safe because of the bullying. They confirmed that most staff do challenge this when it happens, but they do not have access to independent advice or advocacy to talk about any problems or concerns away from the home.

Impact risk assessments have been undertaken on some placements. However, the document does not identify strategies that need to be in place to manage the known risks to keep all young people safe. At times the safety and well-being of young people already residing at the home have been compromised. For example, there has been an increase in young people going missing from home and subsequently attendance at school has been affected. The manager has taken action to address the impact of this on relationships between young people. As a result one young person has moved over to the semi-independence flat that is available. While this is still in the early stages it has reduced some of the negative behaviours.

Since the last inspection the home has made some progress in responding to the

requirements and recommendations made. There is evidence that young people's case files include copies of any statement of special educational need. However, in the case of one young person their Independent Reviewing Officer has taken away the copy of their SEN and personal education plan. The manager was unsure why they had done this but there is evidence in the form of emails that they have been following this up. A concern in relation to a member of staff was not notified to Ofsted; that said the relevant safeguarding agencies were informed, including the local authority designated officer (LADO) and a strategy meeting held in respect of this matter. This requirement is therefore repeated. A recommendation was raised in relation to work being undertaken with young people so they understand any bullying is not acceptable. This work has not yet been done and young people have been subjected to incidents of bullying, therefore this is raised as a requirement.

A young person expressed positive comments about the home and their relationships with staff. Young people's emotional and physical health is promoted. For example, they have access to an in-house therapist to help improve their emotional well-being. However, health care plans do not clearly reflect how issues, such as smoking and weight management are being addressed. The home encourages young people to take part in activities that help to keep them fit and healthy. The medication records for some young people demonstrate that on occasions they have refused to take their prescribed medication. Their health care plans do not identify how this issue will be addressed should this happen in the future.

Staff have at times been required to use physical intervention to manage young people's challenging behaviour. While the records show these are only used as a last resort the manager does not consistently measure the effectiveness of these to ensure safe practice by staff. Furthermore, a previous recommendation to ensure young people have their views recorded in the disciplinary records has not been met, this is therefore repeated.

The manager recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He commented that the home has been through an unsettled period prior to his appointment. The manager demonstrates a clear commitment to improving standards of care practice in the home, but acknowledges there is still some way to go. For example, daily information about each young person is recorded in both a handover book and on a daily record sheet. The quality of this information varies and could result in inaccuracies. In addition staff lock the kitchen and lounge as a form of behaviour management during school hours. However, there is no risk assessment in place to reflect why this intervention is necessary.

Two requirements and one recommendation are repeated, and a further requirement and five recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This service is a private children's home which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. A registered school is also on site.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/08/2014	Full	adequate
21/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
31/05/2013	Full	adequate
08/02/2013	Interim	inadequate progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there; specifically that children do not identify bullying as a problem in the home (Regulation 11(1)(a))	30/04/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the effectiveness and any consequence of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B(3)(f))	30/04/2015
30 (2001)	ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted. (Regulation 30 (1))	30/04/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. Children know their rights to advocacy and how to access an advocate (NMS1.5)
- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that children understand their health needs, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their own health (NMS 6.2)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. Avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet (11.2)
- ensure information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future. (NMS 22.5)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.