

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	01/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC369825
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	01/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Relationships between staff and young people are generally strong. Overall, young people are positive about the home and the support that they receive from staff. This support helps young people to make progress in some areas. For example, one young person is more engaged in his education. Another young person's attendance is 97%. This helps young people to achieve academically. A youth offending professional told the inspector, 'Staff know the young person well and, overall, the young person is making progress.' Progress in other areas is variable. Some aspects of young people's behaviour improve. One young person is able to have significantly more 'free time' away from the home, and without staff support, because of the improvements he has made. In contrast, there have been several significant incidents since the last inspection. On these occasions, young people display behaviour that places them at risk. Staff sometimes use sanctions in response to the negative behaviour and this measure is not always restorative in nature. Consequently, staff members do not help young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. Young people sometimes go missing or spend time away from the home without the consent of staff. Staff responses at these times are inconsistent. On some occasions, staff do not take effective action. Specifically, they do not always try to contact the young person or adequately search for them. Staff members do not accurately assess the risks that young people face when away from the home. For example, staff do not always consider the appropriateness of the people that young people spend time with or the places that they visit. Consequently, staff are unable to make sufficient arrangements to reduce these risks. Some records are poor and lack clarity. For example, some documents give conflicting details about when young people are expected to be home. In addition, staff do not always record essential information. This includes some contact details for young people's associates and friends. These shortfalls further hinder staff from taking effective action to find young people. Management oversight is variable. A new manager started in September 2016. He is currently completing his registration with Ofsted. The manager has identified some areas that require improvement and is taking action to tackle them. As a result, he has resolved the majority of the shortfalls identified at the last	

inspection. This includes helping young people to attend education, some aspects of staff training and medication processes. In contrast, monitoring and review systems are not sufficient. For example, actions identified in the manager's monthly audit are not always addressed in a timely way. The management team completes quality of care reviews. However, these are not completed every six months as required by regulation. The reviews do not adequately evaluate the quality of the service provided to young people or secure the opinions of young people, placing authorities, parents or staff. Furthermore, the manager does not ensure that the report is sent to HMCI in a timely way. This reduces the oversight that the manager has of the quality of care and means that the regulator is not kept informed about the service between inspections.

All staff undertake regular training in a range of key subjects. This helps to develop their skills. However, records of training lack detail and are not kept up to date. This prevents the manager from accurately and quickly identifying the professional development needs of staff.

Some areas of the home continue to require improvement. Specifically, one of the sofas in the lounge is badly damaged. Offensive graffiti is also visible on the wall of the bathroom. These issues detract from the homely environment that the manager and staff wish to create.

The manager and staff have positive working relationships with a range of agencies. These include education, social care and youth offending services. One youth offending worker confirmed this by telling the inspector, 'I have been impressed by the manager and staff. They have been spot on. They involve all the agencies well.'

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
29/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2015	Full	Requires improvement
24/02/2015	Interim	Declined in 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) meet(s) the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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
12. The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to going missing from the home, the registered person must ensure that staff: (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; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare.	07/04/2017
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to monitoring, the registered person must: (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	07/04/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every six months. In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children. The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(4)(a)(5))	07/04/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that, for the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, it is homely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Ensure that the workforce plan is updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 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 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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