

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	15/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC371723
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Educare Adolescent Services Limited
Registered person address	Venture House, 12 Prospect Business Park, Longford Road, CANNOCK, Staffordshire, WS11 0LG

Responsible individual	Matthew Fisher
Registered manager	Philip Johnson
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	15/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	A notice restricting accommodation was issued on 21 August 2015. This is due to expire on 2 October 2015.
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. Following a local authority raising serious safeguarding concerns, a monitoring visit was undertaken on 18 August 2015. Nine regulatory shortfalls were identified and a notice restricting accommodation was issued, preventing the home from admitting any young people. This order expires on 2 October 2015. A key part of this visit was to ensure that the requirements made at the monitoring visit were being met. Two young people were resident at the last full inspection on 21 July 2015. Following a serious safeguarding incident, when staff failed to protect both young people one was discharged. The second young person left after the monitoring visit, due to the concerns identified at this time. The safeguarding incidents included substance misuse and episodes of missing from care and child sexual exploitation. Whilst risk assessments had highlighted the vulnerabilities of each young person, the staff on duty were either agency staff, from another homes or newly employed to the home and were unable to protect them. This resulted in one young person being moved out in an emergency without any planning. The registered manager and staff supported the young people on the days of their subsequent moves and ensured that they settled in their new placements. One young person was able to enjoy a special outing followed by a meal out and a proper goodbye before she left. However, the good progress that the young people had made was disrupted by further unplanned moves following the emotional trauma of suffering harm and the involvement of the police. Requirements made at the monitoring visit included ensuring consistent safe staffing levels were maintained. That staff training, consistency of care and	

working with young people to understand harmful relationships were addressed. Also, that the conduct of the home was in accordance with its statement of purpose.

In early August, the quality of care experienced by the young people became dependent upon the registered manager covering a number of shifts, when two staff members went off sick. The registered manager relied on agency staff and staff from the provider's other children's homes to provide care. He acknowledges that this led to some poor decisions being made about the combinations of staff and them not always being familiar with the needs of young people.

The additional staff lacked the skills and experience to recognise and respond appropriately to signs that young people were at risk of harm. In addition, and in keeping with the policy of the provider, agency staff were not trained in the use of restraint. Consequently, they were not able to safely support trained permanent staff in order to manage one young person's escalating violent behaviour. When two of the safeguarding incidents occurred, staff were unable to contact a manager for advice and support. This left young people and staff in a vulnerable and unsafe situation.

When the registered manager took pre-agreed leave, the registered person failed to ensure that there were sufficient experienced staff on duty who were familiar with the young people, and able to meet their complex needs. The registered person prioritised the needs of other children's homes leaving young peoples' needs unmet. On one occasion, the registered person moved staff during a night shift, leaving a young person and the remaining staff member vulnerable. The registered person failed to provide staffing in accordance with the young people's placement plans and risk assessments. As a consequence of this poor decision, staff and young people were placed at risk as staffing numbers were below those agreed with placing authorities.

The registered person failed to provide notifications and update risk assessments when serious incidents occurred in the home. This extended to also failing to inform the placing authority of one significant incident in which a young person went missing and was a victim of child sexual exploitation. This was despite a known history of this specific risk.

Whilst some of the requirements and recommendations have been met, inadequate staffing numbers and lack of training for agency staff in restraint remain a significant concern. These undermine the ability of the registered manager to ensure that if young people are placed at the home, they can receive consistent care. This includes taking into account eventualities such as staff

sickness, annual leave and young people's behaviour escalating.

The quality of care provided to the young people has declined since the last full inspection and they have suffered harm and significant disruption in their lives as a result poor decisions on staffing.

Three of the requirements remain unmet and the registered manager has until 30 September 2015 to meet these.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to care for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home's statement of purpose describes crisis intervention, short, medium and long-term placements for children aged 10-17 years.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2015	CH - Full	Good
22/01/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
28/05/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
20/01/2014	CH - Interim	Inadequate progress

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard so that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2)in particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure- (a) 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. (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. This is with particular reference to all staff being trained in the restraint training programme that is approved by the provider.	30/09/2015
13 The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that- (2)In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) Requires the registered person to – (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (d)ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. This is with particular reference to staffing levels based on the assessed needs of each young person and the use of agency staff and staff from other children's homes.	30/09/2015

16 Statement of purpose: The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. This is with specific reference to its claim to have 'high staffing levels' (Regulation16(5))	30/09/2015
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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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