

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC371723
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
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	Paul Anthony Callander
Registered manager	Philip Kenneth Johnson
Date of last inspection	28/05/2014

Inspection date	22/01/2015
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 **improved effectiveness**.

The home's effectiveness has improved significantly since a new manager began work in August 2014. This Registered Manager leads staff well and has placed all aspects of the home's organisation on an improved footing. Requirements and recommendations from the last inspection and from the home's monthly visitor are acted upon and kept in mind. Young people find the manager visible and approachable too. They say they like the atmosphere of the home 'much better than the last place' and they are well engaged in the running and personalisation of it. Recording systems are now well organised, understood by staff and used to underpin good quality and safe care.

Two young people have been placed in the home and two have left, during the eight months since the last inspection. Overall, progress and experiences have been positive. One young person's social worker has complimented the quality of staff's work in helping a young person settle in. She noted early progress for the young person and put it down to good support by the staff. One young person has moved at his own request to a more urban placement. This is after over two years at the home. The manager said, 'I feel he was ready for that transition to a new location and was doing well overall. He was very emotional about moving.' Young people's moves have been adequately planned and carefully supported by staff and the manager. However, the manager did not consult with the young people who have moved, or the professionals involved with them, about their impressions of the placement. This is a missed opportunity to reflect, learn and identify points for developing the home.

Staff successfully engage and promote young people's interests and invest good amounts of quality time to promote their learning, emotional development and family relationships. Staff ensure through diligent work with teachers, tutors and work placement providers that young people's education continues, as much as

possible, throughout testing behaviour. Young people feel valued from the outset because they are involved, for example, in interviewing new staff and creating art work to personalise the home. Young people's weekly meetings are also working well. Meetings are centred around young people's views, wishes and feelings: these are promptly and clearly recorded and responded to in writing by the manager.

The Registered Manager and area manager work effectively together to improve and support staff in their care practice. They are available for discussion, supervision and training. For example, they have ensured that staff receive good induction and training in areas such as self-harm and autism, de-escalation, working within local authority procedures and children's homes regulations. There is also good partnership working with in-house clinical advice, police, education and child protection teams. As a result, staff are well able to meet the specific needs of young people placed at the home and to safeguard them when incidents have occurred.

However, a consistent staff team has not been retained over the past eight months. Agency members of staff have been required. A lack of experienced and qualified staff has meant that some shifts have been led, as well as supported, by staff from a neighbouring home. Managers minimise the number of changes by using the same agency staff and staff from other homes. Nevertheless, young people comment that they want to see their own staff. Consistency of care is held back because the home's own team has three vacancies.

Leaders and managers use monitoring activity well, particularly in reviewing behaviour incidents. They look intelligently and creatively for patterns and trends. The home's independent monthly visitor said in December 2014, 'The manager is very proactive and positive and children's behaviour has and is continually improving.' Leaders and managers have developed strategies to minimise the triggers and/or circumstances that might contribute to young people's unsafe behaviours. This includes looking for possible links between behaviours and the individual staff on duty; the mix of young people in the house; and young people's responses to changes in their care plans or relationships with peers/family members. As a result, care planning is responsive and any risky or unsafe situations are minimised.

As a result of this inspection, two recommendations have been made to improve staff continuity and consultation with the young people.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and the organisation operates other children's homes in the area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/05/2014	Full	adequate
20/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
22/05/2013	Full	good
21/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the views of the child, the child's family, social worker and IRO are sought regularly on the child's care. This is specifically with regard to planning for, and learning from, placement endings (NMS 1.4)
- improve the continuity of staffing, so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted. (NMS 17.8)

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.