

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC373941
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Martin Sutcliffe
Date of last inspection	29/08/2014

Inspection date	29/01/2015
Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the previous inspection.

This inspection

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

Young people are positive about living in the home. New residents settle into the home quickly and successfully. They personalise their bedrooms and receive information about expectations and routines. This lessens anxieties during a time of transition. Observations show that young people are relaxed and interact positively with staff. Young people learn and continue to make progress with independence skills by helping with the running of the home. For example, young people enjoy assisting staff with cooking.

Since the previous inspection, the Statement of Purpose has been revised and now contains an age range as required by regulation. The Registered Manager has also submitted the revised document to Ofsted in line with regulatory requirements. This ensures the regulator is kept up-to-date with changes within the service such as staffing and overall objectives.

Systems in place for the imposition of sanctions are improved. Sanctions records now record routinely young people's views on measures given and whether the sanction is successful. This assists the Registered Manager in assessing if sanctions are fair and effective. Young people no longer receive sanctions if they are reported absent or missing. This supports a warm and consistent approach for young people who return from such episodes.

Some young people who were previously missing from the home on a regular basis have now ceased this behaviour completely. This has been achieved through creative practice which has successfully engaged some young people and ceased their risk taking behaviour. Other young people continue to place themselves at possible harm in the community. Positive feedback has been received from the police in relation to working together with home staff to protect young people

accommodated. Staff attend regular strategy meetings and follow agreed actions in order to keep young people safe. This effective partnership working ensures all parties are kept up-to-date with relevant information and progress.

A previous requirement was set to ensure internal monitoring reports contain evaluation of feedback gathered from young people, family members and social workers. These reports now contain consultation with these key parties. This now demonstrates that the Registered Manager is listening and responding to feedback shared to improve the service.

The systems to ensure that notifiable events are shared with all relevant parties are improved. Since the previous inspection, 22 incidents relating to the welfare of young people placed have been shared with Ofsted. This ensures the regulator and child protection professionals are aware of safeguarding matters within the home. Staff now have access to agreed local police protocols in relation to reducing the criminalisation of children in care. This ensures staff can apply a consistency of approach if such events were to occur. Positively, there have been no such incidents within the home since the previous inspection.

Care planning practices within the home are not personalised. Some young people's care plans are identical. One care plan had reference to a child of the opposite gender, and another plan named a former home resident, not the current young person, in one paragraph. This does not demonstrate an individualised approach. Young people have been living in the home for several months, but their care plan remains the same. Significant events involving these young people have occurred, but their care plans have not been reviewed to reflect these incidents and inform staff. Care plans lack detail about how to care for young people. This means staff may take an inconsistent approach, but no negative impact was identified on this inspection. Information from key documents such as health plans and referral information is not always transferred into individual care plans. For example, previous known behaviours, or current exercise programmes are not referred to within care plans. The quality of young people's risk assessments varies. Some risk assessments are detailed and accurately reflect the young person's presenting behaviours. Other risk assessments lack detail about what the risky behaviour young people display actually is and information about actions staff should take are minimal. This does not demonstrate a clear and consistent approach to risk management.

Key worker meetings are recorded within young people's files. These sessions may be planned time with young people, or they may be significant conversations held between the staff member and a child. Not all keyworker records have clear actions and outcomes included within them. For example, one young person asked about their past history but received no answer or follow up work. This does not demonstrate a good understanding of children's background histories and supporting them to understand their past.

At the last inspection, safeguarding records were improved through the introduction of a centralised log which captures child protection concerns. The effectiveness of this system is currently compromised by some safeguarding concerns being recorded elsewhere. This means that not all welfare concerns are recorded centrally for effective auditing and to review patterns and trends. Staff support some young people in the home who display risk taking behaviours and misuse drugs on occasions. Not all staff have completed child sexual exploitation or drug awareness training. This means only some staff have up-to-date knowledge in these topics to care for young people effectively.

A previous recommendation relating to admission processes remains unmet. Since the previous inspection new young people have moved into the home. Records do not demonstrate how the placement decision was made taking into account the Statement of Purpose and the needs of young people already placed. The home continues to be decorated to a good standard. The on-going redecoration plans focus on further enhancing the home environment. However, current problems with the building's heating means portable heaters are being used. This has been in place for some weeks now. The use of such appliances should only be used as a temporary measure. The local authority have arranged for heating repairs to take place, but timescales are not definite.

The current Registered Manager is due to retire shortly. The local authority are actively recruiting for a replacement, although no appointments have been made yet. In the interim period, young people and staff are supported by a suitably experienced Registered Manager from another children's home within the same local authority. This provides the children's home with continuity and appropriate short-term leadership.

Information about this children's home

This home is run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/08/2014	Full	adequate
23/01/2014	Interim	good progress
28/10/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory 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 that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children; and care, education, supervision, support and where appropriate treatment of children accommodated there; with reference to individualised placement plans and risk assessments. (Regulation 11 (1) (a) (b))	01/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure children develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background (NMS 2)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated; with particular reference to the prompt repair of the heating system (NMS 10.3)
- ensure the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonably expect to meet, in particular ensuring there is a written risk assessment of compatibility which relates to current children and the needs of potential new children (NMS 11.2)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments; with particular reference to child sexual exploitation and drug awareness training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure records kept are well maintained and better organised; specifically the child protection and safeguarding records. (NMS 22)

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.