

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	23/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC379357
Type of inspection	Interim
Registered person	Castle Homes Care Limited
Registered person address	Castle Homes Care Ltd, The Manor House High Street, Rothwell, Kettering Northamptonshire NN14 6BQ

Responsible Individual	Shelley Frances Whiting
Registered manager	Debra Leighton
Inspector	Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	23/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Declined in effectiveness. The home has addressed some of the recommendations made at the last inspection. Work has begun to support young people to develop their understanding of e-safety. When young people's meetings take place, there is feedback to the young people from the manager. Bully buster meetings have not been happening, though bullying has not been an issue within the home. A computer has been available to support young people with their education. However, progress in relation to keeping risk assessments up to date and enabling staff to access training has not been robust enough. Missing from care protocols are in place and up to date, although they do not sufficiently identify additional factors staff will need to consider if a young person goes missing in darkness, for example, taking a torch or high visibility clothing. The approach of following young people in a car has not been consistently effective in managing the risks. In addition, there are a number of other shortfalls identified at this inspection. The service has recently become aware of these issues and is in the process of addressing them; these plans are in their infancy. Combined, the shortfalls have significantly impacted on the experiences and progress of young people placed in the home. Three young people have moved into the home since the last inspection. The manager completed impact risk assessments prior to the young people coming into placement. These are not comprehensive enough and have not robustly considered predictable risks. For example, impact assessments did not consider the potential risks of placing two young people from the same local area, with histories of going missing, in the same home. This has resulted in poor placing decisions. It has impacted on the stability of the home and the experience of the young people and contributed to a lack of progress and positivity for the young people. There have been resultant placement break downs. Two of the new placements have ended abruptly in an unplanned manner. A third placement is going to end shortly. There has been no formal reflection on why these placements have broken down. There has been no learning undertaken to explore how to improve practice and identify if there is anything the service can do	

differently to prevent future placement breakdowns.

Leaders and managers have been ineffective. Until the week preceding this inspection, the staff had not received supervision since the last inspection. The majority of staff had not had supervision since 2014. This is despite the supervision matrix indicating that supervision had occurred. One member of staff had not had supervision since starting in post seven months ago, until the day of the inspection. Her induction did not include any formal supervisory meetings. The staff have not received the training that was identified as necessary at the last inspection and nor have they started the new in house training programme. As a result, staff have not had the support that they should expect in order to safely care for the young people in the home.

Despite these issues, the staff team did not raise concerns with senior managers within the organisation. Senior managers have responded robustly since identifying the issues. The responsible individual has promptly put in place interim management arrangements to support the staff and the young people and this has led to some immediate improvements. For example, the majority of staff have now had supervision and plans are in place to provide the rest of the staff team with supervision and appraisals. Senior managers have reflected on the processes in place to enable staff to whistle blow. They have reiterated these to staff in team meetings and the staff interviewed as part of this inspection were aware of the routes available to them.

The young people continue to struggle to attend education. The unplanned absence of the onsite teacher has not helped this. Whilst an interim arrangement is in place with a teacher from a linked school setting work, the young people are not accessing the educational support that is expected. The progress one young person was making in relation to attendance also dipped after other young people came to live in the home. Impact risk assessments did not address the potential for this to occur and therefore did not identify any ways in which the staff could anticipate and respond to the likelihood.

There have been frequent instances of difficult and aggressive behaviour from the young people since the last inspection. Despite this, risk assessments have not been strong or updated in a timely manner to incorporate knowledge gained after significant incidents have occurred. As a result, they are not live, up to date assessments that reflect the developing knowledge and behaviour of the young people. This limits their accuracy and effectiveness. When incidents have occurred, the staff involved have not consistently received a debrief to ensure that they are managing their feelings regarding the incident. Whilst there has been recent improvement in this area, the staff have not previously been consistently receiving the emotional support necessary to carry out their role.

The manager has updated the location risk assessment. However, this does not sufficiently consider risks associated with the location of the home. For example, it does not identify or address the risks from the nearby canals, dykes or unlit road. This does not protect the young people as far as reasonably practical from the

predictable risks associated with the location.

There have been two instances when young people have made complaints. The manager has followed these up appropriately. She shared these complaints with the local authority designated officer and with placing social workers. The placing social worker of one young person was positive about the communication he has with the home and was fully aware of incidents involving his young person. The young person's views do not feature directly in this inspection report as the young person present did not want to participate in the inspection.

The quality of records requires improvement. There are contradictions and errors in placement matching documentation and records of significant incidents are sometimes difficult to follow. For example, records of missing incidents are not consistently clear about how the young person has managed to go missing. As a result, they do not assist in planning or consistently offer a clear overview of incidents that have occurred in the home.

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home offers short, long-term and emergency placements. There is a school on site, which is registered with the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/10/2015	Full	Good
13/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/09/2014	Full	Good
20/03/2014	Interim	Good 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
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationship standard with particular reference to the provision of supportive debriefs with staff, the registered provider should ensure that staff: (2)(a)(x) are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same.	07/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered provider must: (2) (a) (i) ensure that staff 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. This is with particular regard to ensuring that thorough impact risk assessments are completed that fully consider the risks and that young people's risk assessments are updated promptly after incidents occur.	14/04/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered provider must: (2) (b) ensure that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. This is with particular regard to ensuring that the risks associated with the river and road are adequately assessed and responded to and are reflected in associated risk assessments.	14/04/2016

The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1) (a))	07/04/2016
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	14/04/2016
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	07/04/2016
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. This is with particular regard to ensuring the information recorded is accurate and of a sufficient quality. (Regulation 36 (1) (a) (b) (c))	14/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure the necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education or training. This is with particular regard to ensuring the availability of an on site teacher in the attached school. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28 paragraph 5.13)
- Continue to emphasise the importance of whistleblowing and consider undertaking a lessons learned exercise to identify why staff did not raise concerns about shortcomings in the home and whether there are any further improvements needed to the processes currently in place. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.9)
- Ensure that where a placement breaks down, management review the reasons why and any lessons to be learned. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55 paragraph 10.24)

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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