

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	24/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC381085
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Christopher Whalley
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	24/01/2017
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 full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. One young person has been living at the home for some time and another has recently moved in. The registered manager made sure that this move was well planned. He consulted numerous professionals. Their views were used to consider whether the young people would enjoy living together. They also helped him to assess any potential risks and the strategies required to reduce them. The young people were also actively involved in these discussions. This helped to make sure that the transition was smooth, and alleviated both young people's anxieties. One young person's social worker commented, 'The staff were brilliant; they thought of everything... He was not anxious because of the planning.' Both young people have made good progress in their education. For example, one young person's school attendance has increased from 12% to almost 90% during the time he has lived in the home. This is helping him to achieve his considerable academic potential. The other young person is also progressing well and achieved great GCSE results last year. This allowed her to further her education. A teacher talked positively about staff and the help that they provide. She explained, 'Staff are fantastic to work with.' Young people's independence skills develop. They grow in maturity and take on increasing responsibility because of this. Their emotional well-being also improves and young people understand their emotions better. Incidents have reduced significantly. Young people are more reflective about their behaviour and the impact that this has on themselves and others. This improvement is due to the strong relationships that they have with staff and the support that they receive from them. One social care manager highlighted 'massive improvements as a result of joined-up planning and the skill of the staff'. This improvement allows young people to achieve more and to undertake a range of positive activities. For example, one young person has interviewed potential social workers. She also took part in a 'takeover day' when she assumed the role of a service manager in the local authority. The young person talked positively about these experiences, which helped to increase her confidence. The registered manager and staff have developed good relationships with young people's relatives. This enables staff to offer them good support. This has directly	

contributed to improved relationships between young people and their families.

The registered manager works closely with a range of other agencies. This includes the police, social care, and health and education services. As a result, young people receive the help that they need in a timely way. Concerns regarding the practice of other professionals are challenged. For example, the registered manager has contested a recent health report. The report suggests that a young person is more at risk of engaging in certain behaviours, or of experiencing particular health issues, because of being looked after by the local authority. The registered manager's actions help to fight any negative stereotypes, and show young people that they can achieve, whatever their background.

The registered manager has good oversight of the home. He has developed some effective monitoring systems, with one minor omission. The registered manager produces a detailed 'quality of care review'. However, this report does not consider the views of young people, their parents, the staff or the placing authorities. The relationships that he has with young people, staff and other agencies significantly reduce any impact that this shortfall could have.

The registered manager is aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses. He takes action to tackle shortfalls. This includes supporting staff to improve their performance if necessary. A mental health professional highlighted this, stating, 'I am impressed with how far the staff have moved forward. I am impressed with how reflective they are.' This has improved the quality of the service that young people receive.

The registered manager has addressed the majority of the concerns identified at the last inspection. Most notably, he has made sure that staff are aware of young people's risk assessments and follow guidance should an incident occur. This has helped to reduce the frequency and severity of incidents and helps young people to be safer. In contrast, he has failed to meet one requirement and one recommendation. The former relates to staff skills. Although there is some improvement in this area, one member of staff is yet to receive adequate training in how to support young people should they use ligatures. This has the potential to affect her confidence should an incident occur.

The previous recommendation relates to the clarity of some records. This continues to be an area that requires improvement. For example, some records of incidents when young people go missing lack detail. Specifically, they do not show the actions taken by staff or the arrangements for independent interviews when young people return. On one other occasion, the language used by a member of staff was not clear or appropriate when describing the behaviour of a young person. These are primarily recording issues. They are not reflective of the help that young people receive. However, they hinder management oversight and would not be helpful to young people should they wish to review their records.

This inspection highlighted one additional shortfall. The home is generally well presented and welcoming. In contrast, a number of discarded part-smoked cigarettes were visible on the patio. This detracts from the otherwise homely and

nurturing environment.

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, which supports only young people from its area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/07/2016	Full	Requires improvement
19/01/16	Full	Requires improvement
28/09/2015	Full	Inadequate
11/03/2015	Interim	Improved 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
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to training, the registered person must: (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	17/02/2017
The registered person must ensure that the 'quality of care review' provides for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(5))	03/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that, for the children's 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 staff understand the importance of careful, objective, clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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