

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC392549
Inspector	Deborah White
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Lesley Holywell
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	30/05/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	inadequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
-------------------	-------------------

Young people feel happy living at the home. They have positive relationships with staff and feel consulted and listened to. This values young people. Health needs are met and young people enjoy a wide range of activities. Young people are suitably prepared to make the transition into adulthood. This provides them with good life skills.

Staff are supportive of the young people and network with other support agencies to give young people the support they need. Contact arrangements are known and supported. This enables young people to maintain important relationships.

The home is located in a pleasant rural location and meets the needs of the young people. However, some areas of the home has suffered wear and tear and does not fully present as a homely environment. A recommendation is raised to ensure the home is adequately decorated.

The requirements and recommendations from the last inspection are met. This demonstrates the home have improved in some areas of practice. Child protection referrals are made without delay and notifiable events are shared with the relevant agencies. This ensures new safeguarding concerns are addressed quickly.

All restraint training is current and the restraint records are improved; training to enhance the Registered Manager's knowledge is arranged; the home's admission criteria is clear and the children's guide is updated and improved and risk management is more effective. These met recommendations have improved the quality of care for young people.

There are six requirements arising from this inspection that have been issued to the provider as compliances notices. This is to ensure the shortfalls are addressed within very short time scales to improve keeping young people safe and leadership and management outcomes.

Young people have not been adequately safeguarded. The provider has failed to fully liaise with the host local authority to ascertain the outcomes from staff enhanced police safety checks. Additionally, some historic staff conduct concerns, which are identified and recorded, have not been addressed. This compromised children's welfare.

Not all staff receive effective formal supervision, including the Registered Manager. As a result, the responsible individual has not adhered to his responsibility to oversee the management of the home. Monitoring systems are also poor. As a consequence, the registered persons' have failed to recognise and address a number of safeguarding shortfalls.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for three children with emotional and behavioural problems. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
12/06/2013	Full	adequate
25/10/2012	Interim	good progress
26/06/2012	Full	good

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 accommodated there (Regulation 11 (1) (a)) *	30/06/2014
16 (2001)	prepare and implement written a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation 16 (1) (b)) *	30/06/2014
26 (2001)	not employ a person to work at the children's home unless that person is fit to work at a children's home (Regulation 26 (1) (a)) *	30/06/2014
9 (2001)	ensure the registered provider and the Registered	30/06/2014

	Manager shall, having regard to the size of the children's home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children accommodated there, carry on or manage the home (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill (Regulation 9) *	
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed by him receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal and are enabled from time to time to obtain further qualifications appropriate to the work they perform (Regulation 27 (4) (a) (b)) *	30/06/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months, and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (a) (b).) *	30/06/2014

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Outcomes for young people vary. Some young people are progressing but there are some shortfalls in young people achieving their full potential. As a result, outcomes overall are adequate.

Young people have formed positive bonds and attachments with staff and with each other. This gives young people emotional security. Young people feel they can talk to staff and that they are listened to. As a result, young people can express their thoughts, views, feelings and wishes. A young person said, 'one of the best things about living here is the staff. I get on with all of them and I can talk to them.'

Young people are generally fit and healthy. They enjoy a varied nutritional diet and take part in regular exercise. Young people know about healthy eating and help with food shopping and menu planning. This teaches them life-long good eating habits. Young people access the healthcare services they need and are supported to attend healthcare appointments. A young person said, 'I think the staff look after us, I would tell staff if I feel poorly.'

Some young people have experienced delays in securing a school placement and others have experienced problems with attendance. This means not all young people are fully engaged in education to reach their potential. For some young people missing school also means they have had less opportunities to make new friends since moving to the home. This isolates young people who are living away from home. There are examples of improved educational outcomes that include a young person making a positive move into further education training. This provides a positive career plan that meets the young person's aspirations.

Young people know their contact plans and enjoy spending time with family and friends. This enables them to maintain good emotional links with people who are important to them. Friends and family are made to feel welcome at the home, which creates a relaxing atmosphere where young people are comfortable socialising.

Activities are good and geared towards young people's wishes. There is a varied programme that is diverse. This gives young people the opportunity to take part in new experiences and introduces positive alternatives to anti-social behaviour.

There are acceptable plans in place to support young people into adulthood. Young people are encouraged to learn new independence skills to prepare them to move on from the children's home. This gives young people a solid understanding of what it will be like to live and manage on their own. A social worker said, 'Overall the outcomes for my young person are good. They have been taught independence skills.'

My young person has progressed.'

Quality of care

adequate

Staff promote positive relationships and understand the importance of making respectful bonds with young people. Interactions are appropriate to the age and understanding of young people. This helps young people to learn good social skills. A reviewing officer said, 'The home has done really well supporting my young person. The staff are very caring and try hard to engage young people.'

There is sufficient consultation with young people. They feel they can talk to staff and that they are listened to. This values young people. Each young person has a key worker who they can talk to about private or difficult things. This enables young people to learn to trust the adults who care for them. Young people's meetings provide a forum for group discussions about how it is to live at the home. This encourages positive community living.

Staff work with external agencies and services to support young people. They have linked with other professionals who specialise in teenage problems. This provides holistic care to young people with complex needs. A social worker said, 'The change in my young person is amazing, they are doing so well. I think the home are doing a great job.'

Education is seen as important and staff have made good links with education providers. Staff support young people who are not in education by engaging them in school work and educational activities. This helps young people become accustomed to a school day routine in preparation for when they move into their identified education placement.

Activities are a strength at the home. Staff are creative in planning unusual activities that are fun and educational. A recent wild camping trip was a great success and taught young people how to be resourceful. There are a lot of outdoor activities that include sporting events such as fishing and cycle riding. This helps young people keep fit and burn off teenage energy. Other activities involve visits to the local leisure centre; cinema and bowling alley. A child said, 'One of the best things here is the activities. I learned how to start a fire with string and we sat in the dark eating sausages. It was great.'

The standard of accommodation is generally good and meets the needs of the young people. However, there are signs of wear and tear inside the house that have not been dealt with. Some areas of paintwork are quite badly scuffed and damaged, which looks unsightly.

The home is located in a village that is within travelling distance to local towns and amenities. There is a good village community spirit that includes the home and young people. This helps young people feel included in their locality.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

Behaviour is managed appropriately. Young people know the home's expectations and boundaries and respond positively to staff interventions. For example, staff use discussion and negotiation to help young people understand necessary restrictions, such as coming in times and keeping in touch when they are away from the home for long periods of time. Staff promote positive behaviour management by using praise and rewards; for example, individual incentive schemes. This improves behaviour and makes young people feel good about themselves by achieving agreed goals.

Restraints are rarely used and only as a last resort. There have been no restraints since the last inspection. Where restraints have occurred, written records are kept to allow for the Registered Manager to monitor good practice in the home. This ensures young people's rights are protected.

Health and safety is taken seriously to ensure young people live in a safe environment. Fire safety, and environmental, checks are regularly carried out and written generic risk assessments reduce identified risks to young people.

Young people say they feel safe and know they should talk to someone if they are worried or upset. There is no bullying between the current young people. Instances of young people going missing, since the last inspection, are significantly reduced.

Child protection concerns that were raised at the last inspection are improved, however, further concerns are identified at this visit. There are some significant shortfalls in outcomes for keeping young people safe. As a result, three compliance notices to improve how young people's safety and welfare is promoted have been issued to the registered person. This action is to ensure the provider takes immediate action to address the points listed in the notices.

The provider has not adequately liaised with the local authority designated officer (LADO) as part of a recent child protection investigation. Following an allegation made by a child; the provider failed to ascertain important safeguarding information from the LADO before agreeing a no further action outcome following a provider internal investigation. The provider had previously agreed with the LADO, at a strategy meeting, that further safeguarding checks were needed regarding a situation in the home. Therefore the provider has failed to fully safeguard young people's welfare.

The provider also failed to adequately address safeguarding concerns that have

occurred over a period of time. Records in the home show that some staffing conduct issues were identified and discussed but no actions were taken. As a result, the concerns regarding the care of young people were allowed to continue without being addressed, investigated or reported to the LADO. This put children's welfare at risk.

The above shortfalls were discussed with the Registered Manager during this inspection. The provider took immediate action to ensure the young people currently living at the home are safe. However, this does not detract from the seriousness of the historical, ongoing, unchallenged safeguarding failings.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The Registered Manager has been in post since the home was registered in 2009. She is a suitably qualified and experienced person. Prior to managing the home the Registered Manager worked in a residential children's home.

There is some improvement in leadership and management. For example, the home has progressed by meeting the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection. However, outcomes from this visit point to failures of the registered persons' to provide good safeguarding and leadership outcomes. As a result, three compliance notices to improve the management of the home have been issued. This action is to ensure the provider takes immediate action to address the points listed in the notices.

There are examples where formal staff supervision is ineffective. The responsible individual does not provide any formal management supervision to the Registered manager to check and monitor that the home is robustly managed. Therefore, the responsible individual has not fully carried out his responsibility to supervise the management of the home. Additionally, some senior staff have failed to act upon conduct issues that have been raised during staff supervision. This has compromised young people's safety and welfare.

Monitoring at the home is deficient. The registered persons' have failed to highlight or challenge the shortfalls identified during this inspection. Therefore, incidents of concern have been allowed to carry on over a period of time. This has compromised the safety and welfare of young people.

A previous requirement to immediately report safeguarding concerns to the host local authority is met. A new concern, since the last inspection, was notified without delay. The Registered Manager also met with the LADO to discuss the home's safeguarding procedures and the role and responsibility of senior staff employed at the home. Feedback from the LADO who met with the Registered Manager was positive. This shows the Registered Manager has taken steps to improve her knowledge and understanding.

Notifications are improved. Records show that the right people have been informed of significant events in the home. This ensures statutory agencies are informed of important events regarding young people.

Requirements to improve risk assessments and staff training for restraint are met. There are new risk assessment formats in place that better show how risks to young people are reduced. Staff training in safe restraint is current and the provider is reviewing the training programme content to ensure young people's needs are met in a safe way. This will ensure children are handled safely.

The Statement of Purpose is updated to clearly reflect the admission arrangements for new referrals to the home. The admission criteria makes it clear that any new young person's admission will be agreed by both the Registered Manager and the responsible individual. This collaborates the registered person's knowledge, experience and judgement that the home can meet the needs of any potential new admissions.

Recommendations to improve restraint recording and to provide the Registered Manager with human resource training are met. Additionally, all shifts are now covered by an experienced person to take charge in the absence of the Registered Manager. This provides consistency in the home's management.

The children's guide has been updated to include important contact information for young people. This informs young people how to contact persons who are independent of the home. Lastly, the home's child protection procedures have been updated to include important information about child sexual exploitation and e-safety. This information guides staff how to be vigilant in tackling any concerns involving vulnerable young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.