

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	30/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC397293
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Gemma Bullock
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	30/01/2017
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 judges that it has sustained effectiveness. This home continues to provide a good standard of care and support to the children and young people who live there. Staff know the children and young people well and are fully committed to meeting their needs. It has not improved its effectiveness, however, because one recommendation from the last inspection has yet to be implemented and two further documentary shortfalls have been identified as the result of this inspection. A strength of this home is the manager's and staff's commitment to ensuring that children and young people have access to as many opportunities as possible to enhance their life experiences. When other partners are more risk averse, the manager is tenacious in challenging this. For example, she facilitated one young person going to London for the day, when this opportunity was at risk of being withdrawn because of his disability. The manager of the advocacy service commented: 'They push for children's rights and fully support them to participate.' This is also the case with activities. The manager is keen to involve children and young people in meeting others who perhaps do not live in residential care. Some young people regularly attend a disco, one young person had a birthday party in the community to which he invited his school friends, and there are plans to have some friends to visit for tea. All the children and young people lead active lives and benefit from a variety of opportunities and experiences. A social worker said: 'They [the staff] think outside of the box and are proactive.' The children and young people also have positive contact with family members and people who are important to them. A social worker commented: 'Staff support contact above and beyond. They are really flexible.' All children and young people have educational placements and attend well. Staff support this fully by ensuring that they have good communication with the schools and by attending all meetings and events, often with the child or young person's parents. The home has the services of a nurse for 15 hours a week. This promotes children and young people's good health through her attendance at all medical appointments to ensure that any advice or changes to medication are fully	

understood.

Transitions are well managed. One young person has been admitted to the home since the last inspection. This was planned well, and staff took time to get to know his needs through visits to the previous placement, as well as through the young person making visits to this home. However, a record of this good work is not available on the young person's file to demonstrate that the placement was well thought out and appropriate to meet his needs. The staff are currently in the early stages of helping to move a child on and have cooperated fully with the social worker to provide a booklet of information about him to assist the proposed carers to understand his needs.

Children and young people are safe in this home because there are good staffing ratios and they are supervised well. Each child or young person has a detailed behaviour support plan that addresses how to recognise triggers and prevent escalation. This works effectively, and there has been only one physical intervention since the last inspection. Although this was appropriate, the record does not demonstrate that the manager spoke to the staff involved or obtained the child's views. Opportunities to reflect on practice are therefore lost. Additionally, records of incidents are not readily accessible on the child's file, and a specific risk assessment had not been uploaded onto the electronic file. This makes it difficult for the manager to monitor and evaluate as effectively as possible, as there is not an accurate and complete record readily available.

Children and young people do not go missing from this home and are not assessed as being at risk from sexual exploitation. The home has a sexual exploitation champion, however, whose role is to ensure that the staff team is fully aware of the issue and the signs to look for. She has attended relevant training and has prepared a folder of information for the rest of the staff. Staff are fully aware of the vulnerability of the children and young people that they care for and are fully committed to keeping them safe. One member of staff described the ethos of the home as 'children come first and foremost', and is fully aware of the responsibilities in terms of whistleblowing if staff practice is poor. The manager is described as 'very approachable', and staff would have no hesitation in relaying any concerns to her.

The manager knows the children and young people well. She spends time with them and discusses their needs with the staff through daily handovers, team meetings and supervision. There are systems to demonstrate the progress that they are making, based on agreed targets in particular areas. The manager knows where improvements are needed and recognises that there are shortfalls in recording that may hamper her monitoring. She feels well supported by the service manager in progressing her own learning and development.

Partnership working is well developed and effective. There is good liaison with schools, and the staff share strategies and communication styles to promote consistency of care. Staff consult with the complex behaviour service to obtain

advice and guidance when particular issues arise, for example when helping a child to understand bereavement. There are good relationships with parents, and staff promote this through providing transport to activities and contact arrangements. One parent said: 'They keep in touch and I can ring whenever I want. I couldn't ask for anything better for contact.'

Three requirements and one recommendation were made at the last inspection. One requirement, relating to staff qualifications, is not due to be met until 31 March 2017, and the provider is on track to meet it. The requirement regarding staff supervision and appraisals has been met. The frequency of staff supervision has improved and all staff have had their appraisal. This affords them a more regular opportunity to discuss and improve their practice. There is now more accurate recording of staff recruitment checks, as in the third requirement, so that the manager can assure herself that the people working in the home are suitable and safe. The recommendation that the workforce plan should provide an accurate reflection of staff training and development needs has not been met. The local authority has developed an improved pro forma, but the manager has not implemented this yet, and the record of staff training and development remains inaccurate. It is therefore difficult to assess staff competency from the records.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for five children who have learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/08/2016	Full	Good
07/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/07/2015	Full	Good
21/01/2015	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) 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that any individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification. (Regulation 32 (4))	31/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that, within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate, and, within five days of the use of the measure, adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii), (c))	31/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- The registered manager should have a workforce plan, which is updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and should be used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of the staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered manager should ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date, with particular reference to incident records, risk assessments and plans for introductions. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

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 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 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 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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