

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	25/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC398391
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Options BESD (1) Limited
Registered person address	Turnpike Gate House, Alcester Heath, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5JG

Responsible individual	Richard Jones
Registered manager	Carina McLean
Inspector	David Morgan

Inspection date	25/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness. This interim inspection follows a full inspection in December 2015 when the service was operating at an outstanding level and no requirements or recommendations were made. Since the full inspection, there have been no admissions or discharges. This interim inspection concludes that the service has declined in effectiveness. Substantial failings occur in the induction and supervision of new staff. The effect of this is to compromise the safety and welfare of children and staff. On some occasions, new staff go directly onto shift patterns with children rather than have any sort of induction training in the home. As a result, they do not know or understand, for example, the policies, procedures, risk assessments, or behaviour plans for the children. They also do not understand the daily routines of the home and have no understanding of emergency and fire procedures. As a direct consequence, harm has occurred to them and to children. The formal supervision of new and established staff is not always sufficient to meet their needs and those of the children. The manager does not verify the work of senior staff sufficiently well. This means she does not always check that what they are doing either conforms to policies and procedures or has taken place, for example, regarding their support of new staff. In some situations, such as the implementation of specific key worker sessions, the manager does not check that her instructions are carried out. Correspondingly, the supervision of new staff by team leaders is not always sufficient to enable them to care for children either confidently or safely. This is demotivating and stressful for those staff. When new staff raise such anxieties, senior staff do not always take robust action to support them, for example through supervision meetings. As a result, the lack of competence in some team members endorses children's existing fears and their difficulties escalate. Children's needs do not always influence the staffing arrangements. This means, for example, that children who have been severely traumatised by male family members are sometimes placed in the sole care of male staff they do not know. Negative behaviour then ensues that could have been avoided. Senior staff	

understand this but do not always act on it. In addition, written risk assessments do not adequately or promptly reflect behavioural triggers. Consequently, not all staff members are sufficiently familiar with the necessary control measures. This risk increases because staff do not always read updated documents such as written risk assessments and staff meeting minutes. Therefore, the aim of the home to safeguard and promote children's welfare is not met.

A recent improvement to the risk assessment of one child resulted in him needing two staff when he uses the car. This addresses concerns about the safety of him and of staff. However, implementation was delayed significantly. Also, because children have staff assigned to them on a one-to-one basis and the number of staff has not been increased, it reduces the quality of care to others who now have to share transport more often. The manager is keeping this under close review.

Unsuitable decisions about the staffing arrangements have occurred in the introduction of new staff. On one occasion, when the manager was on holiday, two new staff started at the same time and at a time of day when the children needed attention. This poor planning meant that the induction of those staff could not occur as required. In turn, this resulted in the care of children not reaching the necessary standard and negative incidents occurred.

Staff continue to liaise appropriately with other agencies, for example about children's health issues. They maintain contact with the police and teaching staff, particularly about minor episodes of children absconding from school. Older children are preparing for independence and are doing well. They feel positive about their experiences overall and are developing plans for the future. Their skills are increasing and they have good relationships with the staff. There are noticeable improvements in children's ability to deal with difficulties.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to accommodate up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is also registered to accommodate young adults as long as the overall number of children is reduced correspondingly. The home is operated by a large, private company and is located in a rural area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/12/2015	CH - Full	Outstanding
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/10/2014	CH - Full	Good
03/03/2014	CH - 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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard to ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe, the registered provider must ensure- (2)(b) 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 regard to ensuring that written risk assessments are current, accurately compiled, and are read and applied by staff.	29/02/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered provider must: (1)(b) enable a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes children's welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; this is with regard to keeping children safe; (c) ensure that staff have the experience and skills to meet the needs of each child; this is with regard to shift leaders being sufficiently competent; (e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; this is with regard to minimising the turnover of staff working with individual children; (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; this is with regard to managing the staffing arrangements to meet children's individual needs.	29/02/2016
Make arrangements for persons working at the home to receive	29/02/2016

suitable training in fire prevention; and ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. This is with particular regard to new staff. (Regulation 25(1)(c)(d))	
Ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. This is with regard, for example, to children's needs, the property itself, to critical records, and written procedures. (Regulation 33(1)(a))	29/02/2016
Ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. This is with particular regard to new staff receiving such supervision in a timely way and existing staff in sufficient detail. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	29/02/2016
Ensure that a notification under this regulation includes details of (1) the matter; and (3) any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter. This is with regard to notifications to Ofsted being complete and in sufficiently evaluative. (Regulation 40(5)(a))	29/02/2016

Recommendations

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

- Plan staffing levels to ensure that they meet the needs of children and can respond flexibly to unexpected events. This is with regards to ensuring that any new staffing arrangements do not compromise the care of children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.15)
- Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. This is with regard to ensuring that all staff are up-to-date at all times with any new documentation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.20)

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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