

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC399586
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	First 4 Care Limited
Registered person address	7 Albion Place DONCASTER South Yorkshire DN1 2EG
Responsible individual	Carolann Dodds
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	28/02/2014

Inspection date	03/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Children and young people make good progress across all aspects of their welfare and development; this is confirmed by parents and social workers. However, the shortfalls identified in leadership and management are such that it leads to an overall effectiveness judgement of adequate.

Children and young people are well supported by a staff team who provide good quality of care. Care plans, along with individual daily routines, clearly set out how children and young people should be cared for on a day to day basis. This ensures a consistent approach is maintained providing stability.

Children and young people feel safe and are safe. Behaviours are well managed with children and young people responding positively to the consistent approach provided.

There has been a change in the management of the home. A new manager has been in post for two weeks and has already identified a number of the shortfalls raised at this inspection and has taken action to address them.

These shortfalls relate to the Statement of Purpose, sleeping in arrangements, staff qualifications, sanctions and restraint records and the monitoring of the home.

However, none of these impact on the safety or welfare of children or young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home is registered to provide care for up to two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties and/or with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2014	Interim	good progress
16/04/2013	Full	good
10/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
28/09/2012	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
31 (2001)	provide sleeping accommodation for sleep-in staff which is not in a children's area (Regulation 31 (10)(b))	01/01/2015
4 (2001)	compile a written statement of purpose containing all the information listed in Schedule 1 (regulation 4(1) and Schedule 1)	01/12/2014
5 (2001)	notify HMCI of any revision to the statement of purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5(b))	01/01/2015
33 (2001)	ensure visits by the independent person under Regulation 33 paragraph (1) shall take place at least once a month and may be unannounced (Reg 33 (7))	01/12/2014
33	ensure the Regulation 33 visitor interviews, with	01/12/2014

(2001)	their consent and in private, the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working in the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided. (2014 Reg 33(8)(a))	
26 (2001)	ensure all staff attain the required qualification, the Level 3 Diploma, or equivalent within two years from their date of starting work Regulation 26 (4)(a))	01/05/2015
34 (2001)	ensure there is a system in place that shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	01/01/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure any physical intervention or sanction is recorded in a bound and numbered book or a tamper-proof electronic record (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.91)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people make good progress in all areas of their lives. They have developed good attachments to staff and are confident in their abilities.

Children and young people's health needs are well met. This is made possible by having detailed health care plans setting out their specific health needs. Staff have had training to ensure that they have an understanding of medical conditions, for example, epilepsy training. The epilepsy nurse produces protocols to ensure staff know what action to take in the event of a child or young person having a seizure. Some children have a very limited diet. On admission these children would only eat bread products and drink cola. Staff have been proactive in introducing new foods with some success: they now will accept an increasing variety of different foods, such as chicken, broccoli, cheese, asparagus and mushrooms on their garlic bread. Staff have been innovative in encouraging them to drink water by introducing an ice game where they suck ice. This promotes the health of children and young people.

Children and young people are excellent school attendees and fully participate in school activities. For example, some young people have been elected by their peers to sit on the school council. School reports indicate children and young people are achieving their targets and in some areas exceeding them. This enhances their life opportunities.

Children and young people are supported with their method of communication. Staff are skilful in ascertaining the wishes and feelings of those children with communication difficulties.

Children and young people have good participation in a range of opportunities. For example, some are involved in street dance and have won a number of trophies in this field. This promotes their self-esteem.

Children and young people benefit from the support given to ensure that there is good constructive contact with their families. For example, some children and young people are transported home and to make this a smooth process staff facilitate the transition into the family home by engaging in a ritual to support children and young people. Parents are made to feel welcome in the home at any reasonable time and some are frequent visitors. Some young people have nightly telephone or skype conversations with parents. This ensures that good family relationships are maintained. Parents speak positively with regard to the communication they have with the home.

Young people are supported to develop skills that are required to make a successful transition to adulthood. Social workers speak highly of the support given in this area,

in particular independent travel where staff will trail young people who are using public transport. Obstacles, such as lack of phone signals on route are being explored to ensure young people feel confident undertaking this task. Young people are encouraged to keep their personal space in order, help with laundry, meal preparation and the making of light snacks.

Quality of care

good

Children and young people feel well cared for by staff who provide a stable environment in which the children and young people thrive. Social workers consider that they are, 'excellent, I cannot fault them, they provide consistent high quality care'. Staff have a relaxed approach with children and young people who respond well. For example, prior to bedtime, there is good one to one time with staff who read with the children. This helps bedtimes to be a calm and relaxed time.

Children and young people's behaviours are well managed. Behaviour management plans identify triggers that may cause distress with clear guidance on how this can be alleviated. There is an emphasis on consultation and negotiation with young people who are aware of the consequences of them displaying negative behaviours. Some children's behaviours are very controlling and this is managed by a consistent, firm approach which, over time, has resulted in a reduction of these behaviours. Parents agree that this fair but firm approach has been very effective with their children. Staff work with parents and share strategies which have impacted positively on family life.

Children and young people's views are taken into consideration in all areas of their lives. Young people say, 'there is always someone I can talk to'. They help formulate the menus and decide what activities they wish to participate in. Social workers who support young people to complete consultation documents prior to their statutory review comment, 'on my visits, he is always calm, sometimes smiling interacting and physically takes me to show me what he is doing'.

Young people know how to complain and are confident that they would be listened to. Children make their displeasure known which enables staff to support them and rectify situations if necessary.

Children and young have their needs set out in their care plans with guidance in place to demonstrate how these are to be met. Alongside their care plan each child has their daily routine set out in good detail from when they wake up to going to bed. This ensures that a consistent approach is maintained. Social workers spoke positively about the monthly updates they receive from the home informing them of the progress of their child or young person.

Children and young people's education is supported. Staff attend school meetings and parents speak positively about the support they receive from the home's staff in these meetings. Children are read to and are encouraged to read to staff to enhance

their reading skills.

Children and young people access a number of services to help meet their complex needs. For example, the child and adolescent mental health service support and advise on managing behaviours, the autistic service supports staff and parents to manage this condition and the epilepsy nurse and dietician offer guidance and support in their specific area. There are good links with other agencies. For example, children who display severe distress in new environments have been taken to the accident and emergency department (A&E) as a way of familiarising themselves with this environment at a time when they do not have an urgent health need. There are also agreements in place should there ever be the need to attend A&E they will be taken to a cubicle and seen promptly. This demonstrates good forethought and promotes the well-being of children and young people.

Children and young people enjoy participating in a range of enjoyable activities. These include ice skating, bowling and the cinema. A recent favourite was a treasure hunt using a mobile phone app. Some young people also go street dancing and have drumming lessons to use the drum kit in the home. They also have access to computer games and television. Children and young people have one to one care which enables individual activities to be pursued.

Children and young people's needs relating to their religion and heritage are well attended to. Parents feel confident that this is addressed while saying they are happy that their children fully participate in the predominant British culture.

Children enjoy living in the comfortable well-furnished home. However, staff currently sleep in a room which is a children and young people's playroom. This is unsatisfactory as it does not enable children and young people to have access to their belongings at all times, should they wish to and does not provide privacy for staff.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children and young people are safe. This is confirmed by them, their parents and placing social workers.

Children and young people are protected by care plans setting out how they are to be cared for safely. In particular there is good guidance for incidents where children or young people may become distressed. These incidents are well managed and any injuries that occur are recorded on body maps and checked.

Children and young people do not go missing; they are well supervised at all times to ensure their safety.

There are no physical interventions. A few sanctions are recorded. Young people are

encouraged to record their views and consider that they are treated fairly. However, neither of these records is in numbered books or tamper-proof electronic records. This does not ensure transparency.

Children and young people are safeguarded by detailed risk assessments for both the individual young people and their activities. There are also relevant risk assessments in place regarding premises issues. These assessments identify potential dangers with guidance in place to minimise the impact.

The management of the home have worked hard to ensure all historical information with regard to people employed in the home has been obtained. This ensures that only suitable people employed are employed.

Children and young people are protected by all health and safety checks being carried out regularly. This includes regular fire drills to ensure that they all know what action to take in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The previous Registered Manager ceased her employment on 20 September 2014. A new manager has been appointed and took up her duties on 20 October 2014. She is appropriately qualified and has extensive experience working with children with learning difficulties. She is yet to be registered with Ofsted.

The majority of the requirements raised at the last inspection have not been met. There has not been a regulation 33 visit for August or October. The regulation 33 visitor does not consult with children, their parents or placing authorities as part of this visit.

The Regulation 34, Schedule 6 report comments that there are no safeguarding concerns at this time. However, there is no evidence that there are systems in place to gain the views of children, their parents or social workers as part of this monitoring. This does not demonstrate how the manager is going to improve the quality of care for children and young people.

The Statement of Purpose is an unwieldy document containing incorrect information and does not comply with regulation. Although this document was reviewed in May 2014, HMCI was not provided with a copy.

There are sufficient numbers of staff employed in the home who are committed to provide children and young people with good care and promote their life experiences. They have all undertaken mandatory training, however a number of them who have been employed for a significant time have yet to attain their Level 3 Diploma. This has been raised at previous inspections. This does not ensure that children and young people are cared for suitably qualified staff.

The new manager, in the short time she has been in post, has recognised many of the shortfalls identified at this inspection. These shortfalls relate to the Statement of Purpose, staff sleeping arrangements, staff qualifications, sanctions and restraint records and the monitoring of the home. She also identified other issues including the quality of the supervision of the staff team and has already introduced a new supervision format which has been shared with the team. She has linked the daily recordings with staff development. This will support staff in providing evidence for their Level 3 Diploma. Staff meetings will ensure all staff will know what is expected of them and share information and good practice.

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.