

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	10/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC408655
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Chris Peel

Inspection date	10/02/2016
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 judge that it has improved effectiveness. The Registered Manager resigned in January and the provider is in the process of selecting a successor. In the meantime the home is being ably led by an interim manager and the deputy manager. All the requirements imposed at the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. The transfer of a young person to another of the provider's facilities (due to the high frequency of challenging behaviour) has made a considerable difference to the atmosphere of the home; children and young people are relaxed and staff express greater confidence in their roles. The planning of and completion of the transfer was carried out extremely well, with the young person prepared for the move and staff from this home continuing to be involved in his care until settled. Another long-standing dilemma over how to manage the reluctance of a young person to keep his room clean, leading to inconsistent practice, has been resolved. The manager has implemented a 'room agreement' which the young person has signed up to, it is endorsed by the social worker and the staff follow it in practice. Although still requiring considerable encouragement this has led to the young person taking more responsibility for his living conditions. He has also taken significant steps towards independence in planning meals, shopping for them and cooking for himself. His placement plan does not fully reflect these advances but others seen are detailed and thorough documents. The placement plan, individual risk assessment, positive handling plan together with an excellent impact risk assessment for a recently admitted child have contributed significantly to the early success of his placement. There are firm boundaries to ensure that the young person is clear about expectations and to avoid the potential of escalation of difficult behaviours. Staff and the manager were observed to hold these boundaries consistently when they were being tested. Following careful preparation good safeguarding practice, agreed with other agencies, to facilitate this admission is now embedded in and practice. The agreed protocol has been rigorously followed on each occasion which has ensured that the young person is kept safe and the placement remains stable. In addition, the frequency of incidents has reduced in recent weeks, as has the need for physical	

interventions.

No other young person has needed to be restrained but some have had sanctions imposed. All instances have been monitored to ensure fairness and appropriateness and the manager has occasionally made helpful feedback to staff about practice. The logbook does not allow for the timescales laid down in regulations to be fully monitored but it is clear that some entries have exceeded them. The format used requires the manager's comments to be squeezed into what is already written so does not lend itself to drawing out lessons to be learnt when reviewing entries. There is insufficient detail given to identify the precise location of the incident and what exactly occurred.

One complaint from parents has been received since the last inspection, and was dealt with appropriately. However, the record in the complaints log consisted only of emails exchanged; a clear account of the process and how it led to a resolution was not therefore made (although a more thorough description has been kept in the safeguarding records).

During the inspection a young person raised two complaints. The manager was already aware of one and had acted quickly to address it; the other was new but he put in place a plan to make enquiries immediately. The latter involved hygiene in the kitchen and it was found that a cupboard next to the cooker lacked a return plinth from the front to the rear wall, leading to a possibility of food and other debris getting behind it. Otherwise the home is a well maintained and safe place.

Children and young people are able to raise concerns, which the manager and staff take seriously and act on. Those who use symbols or pictures to communicate are enabled to make contributions to house meetings, which are recorded in the minutes. Regular key work sessions are regularly held with both planned and unplanned sessions recorded. The deputy manager is revising the format for these to capture more information and make outcomes clearer.

Staff are sensitive to other non-verbal methods of communication, including changes of mood and behaviour; for example, during the inspection one young person's restlessness was interpreted as not wanting to be indoors when he was expecting to have been going to school and so was taken out with another child.

Some residents have reached adulthood but have remained appropriately placed, either to complete their education or to maintain relationships with a sibling also placed in the home. As they come to move on the manager of the home and senior managers have encouraged placing authorities to prepare transition arrangements and make plans, assisting with information but resisting requests to prolong placements when this is solely because alternatives have not been identified.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is for seven young people. The home is run by a private organisation, providing care and accommodation for young people with learning disabilities.

All the young people currently resident at the home are educated at the provider's school approximately six miles away.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/10/2015	CH - Full	Requires improvement
12/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
14/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory 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
The registered person must ensure that a record is made within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control or discipline; within 48 hours that the user has been spoken to about the measure; and signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days an addition is made to the record that the child has been spoken to about the measure; in particular, records must show that these timescales have been adhered to. (Regulation 35 (3)(a-c))	11 March 2016
The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation so that the process followed and how it has led to the outcome is clear. (Regulation 39 (3))	11 March 2016

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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