

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC408655
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	David Chedgey
Inspector	Chris Peel

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC408655

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Over recent months the home has struggled to manage the behaviour of a young person who has physically assaulted the manager, members of staff and committed a serious offence against a member of the public. This has had a disruptive impact on other young people.
- Although it is admirable that every opportunity has been given to allow the young person to return to a level of calm this situation has been allowed to persist despite there being no improvement. The emotional well-being of others has suffered as result.
- The repercussions have had gone further and contributed to low morale among the staff group, some of whom express dissatisfaction with the provider, believe that the organisation does not value them and/or feel under too much pressure to their jobs to the best of their ability.
- This pressure and dissatisfaction has led to some discord over the allocation of tasks within the staff group with the feeling that not everyone is contributing as fully as they could.
- There is an inconsistent approach to the particular difficulties of another young person whose motivation to keep his room clean and tidy is very low. Staff have different views about how this should be managed and say that advice as to the approach to be taken is variable.
- The wording of some aims in the statement of purpose is ambiguous and so is difficult for staff to work to and therefore identify if they are being successful.

The children's home strengths

- Young people are making progress in many areas of their lives, particularly in regard to gaining independent living skills such as use of public transport and personal care.
- Considerable effort is made to assist young people to communicate and they are increasingly able to make their wishes and feelings known. They have made good use of the home's questionnaires and complaint procedures.
- The manager and staff have worked well to ensure the transition of a young person from the home to new adult provision has been smooth.
- Young people form good relationships with staff members that give them secure attachments.
- Contact is supported to enable young people to maintain positive relationships with family.
- The manager and staff ensure the individual needs of young people are well met, for example, to observe their faith or maintain particular interests.

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
6 The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must: (2)(b)(i) ensure that staff understand and apply the home's statement of purpose.	30 Nov 2015
11 The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must: (2)(a)(v) ensure that staff communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding.	30 Nov 2015
12 The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: (2)(b) ensure 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; in particular, in relation to harm arising from the behaviour of other children.	30 Nov 2015
12 The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: 2)(d) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable	30 Nov 2015

hazards; in particular, to ensure garden play equipment is included in health and safety checks.	
13 The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: (2)(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; in particular, to have a consistent approach to addressing behaviour and contribute to the setting of targets.	30 Nov 2015

Full report

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
12/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
18/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
14/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
08/10/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Examples of progress can be identified for most young people. These include being able to use public transport unsupervised, clearing away after meals unprompted and cleaning bedrooms. A mother told me that her son 'had refused to do anything' when living with her, 'now he is doing things independently like making his own breakfast and has a bank account. He is talking about things he has never spoken about before'. Another young person's pathway plan states 'since being placed with her current care provider... she has made significant progress with her social and communication development and has blossomed over the last five years.' Such examples indicate the home is achieving aims set out in its statement of purpose. Some are ambiguously worded though (for example, 'we hope to add flavour to young people's lives as well as having a cleansing effect on them') and do not give staff anything tangible to work towards or make it possible to judge their success. Targets are set for young people's independence skills, broken down into steps and regularly reviewed. The devising of targets depends largely on the drive of the member of staff who has overall responsibility and recording of progress is not currently shared with the young people. Young people are helped to work towards targets within individual education plans drawn up by the school (operated by the same provider). They are discussed with teachers by staff who then contribute to them in the home. Young people enjoy the activities staff organise. These are reviewed with them with the express purpose of doing more of what they like. They are also encouraged to follow personal interests and hobbies and some young people gain considerable satisfaction from these, including making their own music. Transition arrangements for young people are carefully worked on, preparing them for the changes to come and smoothing out matters that could disrupt the process, such as altered timings at short notice. The same care has been given to planning the move of a young person whose placement is ending after notice has been given on. This includes the temporary use of another of the provider's facilities to give more time to finding a long term alternative. The atmosphere of the home has been adversely affected by the particularly disruptive behaviour of one young person, such that others have voiced their unhappiness for some months. It has been serious enough to have had a negative	

impact on their experience of young people in the home and so on this judgement.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people have positive relationships with staff, as illustrated by a comment made by one when asked what he had enjoyed most about a recent holiday, answering 'being with [name of member of staff].' Others were observed to be relaxed in the company of those looking after them. Due concern is given to the rights of young people to privacy, so some now have locks on their bedroom doors (that staff have a key to). The right to have their views known, is also highly regarded, so behaviour that indicated distress when it could not be vocalised has been treated as a complaint. Staff give support to make contact with families enjoyable and part of sustaining important relationships. This is appreciated by parents, one of whom commented 'staff are amazing. It shows that they do this with a passion, it's not just a job. I can't praise them highly enough. They are like an extended family to all of us.' Considerable effort is made to meet the particular needs of each young person, based on their communication abilities, ethnicity, culture and aspirations. As one professional said, 'they think a lot about the individual and what works for them.' An example is assisting two young people to attend church services that reflect their heritage and ensures they still participate in activities the home organises. Their mother was consulted and goes with her children when visiting. Young people are encouraged to help others in line with research quoted by the manager that indicates that 'giving makes you happier'. An example was observed when one verbal young person helped another who uses symbols to communicate in a house meeting. She later confirmed that this is a valuable friendship for her. Safer recruitment procedures are followed when appointing new staff and there is a robust auditing process for monitoring health and safety checks. These contribute to making the environment conducive for the care of young people with developmental difficulties who are less able to assess risks for themselves. Currently play equipment in the garden is not explicitly covered by health and safety inspections, a potential loophole that should be closed. Administration of medication procedures are thorough; minor errors are quickly identified and appropriate action taken to ensure implications are understood. Enquiries are undertaken by someone outside the management structure of the home and lessons learned across the organisation, where appropriate.	

The behaviours of one of the young people described elsewhere in this report do impact on the safety of others living in the home; none have been physically hurt but their emotional well-being and security has been adversely affected.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home's manager is an experienced and committed professional who has a passion to promote the welfare and progress of the young people living here. He has a wish to do the utmost to meet their needs and 'not give up on them'. A dilemma developed when the needs of one drastically impinged on those of others. This manifested in regularly disrupted nights, bedrooms being entered without permission and witnessing violent attacks on staff and the restraints that followed. The situation was the subject of several complaints from young people. Although responded to (including increasing staffing ratios and placing locks on bedroom doors to prevent intrusion) the underlying problem persisted with consequences for the well-being of all involved. Agreement for the use of restraints and measures of control is sought from placing authorities and senior managers. Their use has been proportionate and as a last resort. They have been reflected on by those involved and subject to scrutiny but nevertheless continued for too long without recognition that progress was not being made. Notice has been served on the placement but delay has had an impact beyond the young people and contributed to a level of dissatisfaction amongst staff. Some question whether their employer understands the pressure they feel under and the impact it has on their ability to do the job as well as they would like. This is despite vacancy levels being much improved since the last inspection. Managers consider that once this young person moves on staff will be able to focus on other issues better, but this, in turn, illustrates how handling of the placement has affected the home. There are differences of opinion about how to manage some behaviours, particularly one young person's unwillingness to keep his bedroom and bathroom clean, especially now he is 18. There is a genuine discussion to be had about the approach to take but staff are taking different approaches and some say they are getting different advice. This leaves the young person unclear about what is expected and more scope to avoid responsibility. Although the above issues have pervaded the atmosphere of the home recently	

there are strengths to build on. Staff report that the manager and his deputy are 'very hands on', contributing positively to the life of the home. Supervision is valued as a helpful and regular means to address concerns and improve practice.

There is good liaison with others involved with young people, including their families. Adult services are now responsible for those who have turned 18 and differences in approach to some matters have emerged. The manager has made a strong case for the practices of the home in relation to these.

Induction and probation processes help new staff to obtain essential information and knowledge and to feel confident in their roles, as does ongoing training.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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