

SC429995

Registered provider: A Significant Other Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private provider operates the home.

Inspection date: 16 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 26 June 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection:

There have been two monitoring compliance inspections, which focused on the protection of the children and young people and concerns about the quality and sufficiency of the staff. Ofsted issued three compliance notices that the registered person met. In addition, Ofsted issued a restriction notice to limit the number of children and young people accommodated in the home.

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 to be good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.

The manager and the staff do not always fully understand how the children's and young people's past experiences can impact on their behaviours. Practices witnessed during this inspection demonstrated this lack of insight and understanding. Examples included a young person becoming angry and upset because they 'could not have their pocket money or go to the shop with a member of staff until they tidied their bedroom'. Even though this occurred during the school holidays, the young person was 'grounded' and could not leave the home unless they were with a staff member. The manager and

the staff did not consider any potential rationale as to why the young person might be reluctant to tidy their room, and did not explore this. In addition, they did not consider including any negotiation or flexibility in their stance, to avoid the young person becoming visibly distressed.

Another example of inappropriate staff responses was members of staff not listening to a young person's wishes and feelings. The young person consequently went missing for a prolonged period because they felt 'lonely and not listened to'. This negative approach to managing vulnerable children's and young people's complex behaviours is detrimental to their safety, emotional health and well-being.

The registered person has failed to ensure that they effectively safeguard the children and young people. This puts the children and young people at risk of harm. The manager and the staff failed to adhere to the risk assessment of a young person who is at risk of both going missing and being exploited. They delayed reporting the young person as missing to the police, even though the young person's safeguarding risk assessment stated that this was the required response.

The manager also failed to properly address a safeguarding allegation made by a child against a member of staff. The manager treated the allegation as a complaint 'because the child completed a complaint form'. The manager further compromised the child's welfare by investigating the allegation before he reported the matter to the designated officer.

Further scrutiny of this inappropriate response to a child protection concern showed significant flaws in the home's policy for responding to allegations made against staff members. The policy states that the manager or senior staff member 'shall within 24 hours meet the complainant in order to gather as much information as possible and to ensure that all relevant issues are completely clear'. A later paragraph states: 'Depending upon the nature of the complaint the manager will as soon as practically possible interview the accused person to hear his/her side of the story.' This policy contravenes child protection regulations, and other statutory safeguarding guidance.

Shortfalls in the leadership and management of the home have resulted in the children and young people not fulfilling their potential. The home is not delivering the outcomes as set out in its ethos and its statement of purpose.

The statement of purpose states that: 'The home will provide high quality residential care, with high expectations from qualified and trained staff'; and, 'The home will develop a multi-skilled, highly trained and experienced staff team'. However, this inspection identified concerns in relation to the skills, experience and qualifications of the current staff team.

There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection that has included 10 staff leaving the home and 10 new staff members joining the home. The registered person has tried to recruit qualified and experienced staff. However, the majority of the new staff do not have a relevant level 3 qualification and in some cases they do not have

relevant experience.

The home currently has six full-time equivalent support staff. Two staff have been employed for a year, one for five months, one for two months and two for one month. In addition, out of the full staffing complement only one new staff member has a relevant level 3 qualification. This has negatively impacted on the continuity and consistency of the care and support provided for the children and young people.

In addition, there are concerns about staffing levels and the suitability of staff who are in charge of the home in the absence of the manager. For example, on the evening of this inspection the staff member in charge of the home had worked there for four months, and did not have a relevant level 3 qualification. The other staff member had worked at the home for one month, and were still in their induction period.

Transition planning for children and young people moving into the home is poor. The most recent child and young person accommodated had no positive transitional arrangements, or plans, in place. Consequently, the first time they saw their new home and met the staff and the other young people was the day that they arrived. This approach to moving children and young people, without any preparation, consultation or positive induction, potentially impacts negatively on their emotional well-being and ability to settle.

A child said: 'I didn't know where I was coming to, and it's boring here. It's in the middle of nowhere and I've got no mates.' A young person commented: 'I didn't know where I was coming to. My last home packed my bags when I was at school, then I went to foster care, then they brought me here.'

The registered person and the manager have failed to notify Ofsted, and other relevant people, of significant events that have occurred in the home. This prevents Ofsted from ensuring that all relevant actions to safeguard children and young people have been taken. In addition, the children's and young people's safety and welfare have been compromised where the registered person and the manager have not immediately reported child protection concerns to the relevant safeguarding agencies.

There are two compliance notices and four requirements arising from this inspection. In addition, Ofsted has issued a restriction notice to ensure that no new children or young people are admitted until the registered person can demonstrate that they have addressed all of the current breaches of regulation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
16/05/2017	Full	Inadequate
05/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust and an understanding about acceptable behaviour. The registered person must ensure that staff— understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour, and have the confidence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation (11)(a)(ix)(x))	15/04/2018
*The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and are able to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk from harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.	15/04/2018

(Regulation (12)(1)(2)(i)(iii)(v)(vi)(e))	
*The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— 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; ensure that the staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation (13)(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(e))	15/04/2018
The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; have a positive experience of arriving out or moving on from the home; ensure the effective induction of each child into the home. (Regulation (14)(1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(i))	15/04/2018
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect, that provides for the prompt referral of an allegation about a current or ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located and, provide for records to be kept of an allegation of abuse or neglect, and the action taken in response. (Regulation 34(1)(a)(2)(b)(c))	15/04/2018
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation (40)(4)(b)(c)(e))	15/04/2018

*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC429995

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A Significant Other Limited

Registered provider address: Green Towers, Thistlewood Lane, Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 3HQ

Responsible individual: Donna Thorne

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Debbie White, social care inspector

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