

SC429995

Registered provider: A Significant Other Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The 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 dates: 18 to 19 April 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: 16 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

A monitoring visit was undertaken on 26 March 2018. The home has been subject to three compliance notices issued in relation to the positive relationships standard, the protection of children standard and the leadership and management standard. A restriction of accommodation notice is in place.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
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 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; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c)(f)(g)(i)(h))	31/05/2018

Recommendations

- Regulation 5 sets out overarching requirements that run across all of the Quality Standards. To meet the aspirations embodied in the Quality Standards, children's homes need to connect with and be part of the wider support system for each child in their care. No children's home will be able to meet, on its own, all of a child's needs. It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, but particularly the child's local authority and statutory social worker. The registered person and the staff of

the home cannot force a relevant person to engage or work productively with them and the regulation does not require this. The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.1)

- Any registered manager placed in charge of a children's home or staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' should have substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home and have successfully completed their induction for the home in which they are employed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.21)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, the outcomes and the experiences of the children and young people have been mixed. Some children and young people have had positive outcomes, while others have not benefited from their time spent living at the home.

The staff team has focused on developing positive relationships with the children and young people. Additional training has equipped them with a better understanding of the underlying reasons why some children and young people find it difficult to form bonds and attachments. Consequently, relationships are becoming more meaningful. The children and young people are encouraged to develop their independence skills.

Educational outcomes vary. Some of the children and young people have struggled to attend education, despite having tuition arrangements in place. However, other children and young people have engaged in their education provision and they have experienced positive outcomes. These children and young people are progressing and achieving.

Activities are well planned and varied. The staff consult with the children and young people about how they would like to spend their leisure time, which includes them in decision making. The children's and young people's healthcare needs are met, and they have access to the healthcare services that they need.

There have been occasions when the children and young people have experienced negative transitions. Poorly planned admissions have left some children and young people feeling unsettled, and unplanned transitions to new placements have caused upset and distress. However, the manager has undertaken a full review, based on lessons learned, to improve the home's transitional arrangements. This is good progress.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The home's safeguarding practice has improved by the manager and the provider

meeting a previous compliance notice. The staff have received additional child protection training and they have a better understanding of what they must do if they are concerned about any child or young person being at risk of harm.

There are no children or young people at risk from radicalisation or extremism. Nor has any child or young person made a complaint since the last inspection, and there has been no bullying.

Developments in positive risk management, and the ways that staff communicate safeguarding information, are reducing the risks to vulnerable children and young people. In particular, the staff now have a full understanding of how to respond to children and young people who go missing and those at risk of exploitation.

There have been occasions when some children and young people have gone missing, and they have potentially been vulnerable to exploitation. Recent improvements in supporting these children and young people have seen a reduction in incidents of going missing. The manager is working with placing social workers to review individual safety plans, which is good progress.

The manager is beginning to forge relationships with other safeguarding agencies and organisations. A recent meeting with a local authority safeguarding officer to seek their advice proved very helpful. However, there are some shortfalls in practice where the manager and the staff do not fully understand the roles of some professionals who focus on supporting those at risk from exploitation. Therefore, there have been some missed opportunities to share important safeguarding information.

The manager and the provider have strengthened their recruitment policy to ensure that they take all reasonable steps to protect the children and young people from being looked after by unsuitable adults. Visitors are checked and vetted, and records of all visitors are kept so that the manager can regularly monitor these.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The manager has been in post for seven months and he is awaiting his fit person interview to apply to be registered with Ofsted. He has the right qualifications to undertake his role. Since the last inspection, the manager has improved his management skills and he has gained useful experience by working with the registered provider to meet the previous compliance notices and requirements.

Staffing adequacy has improved. However, there are still some shortfalls that the manager and the provider have yet to address to fully ensure that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced staff. The rate of staff turnover is less than it was, which is beginning to provide the children and young people with stability and consistency. However, there are currently not enough staff employed to maintain safe staffing levels should the number of children and young people increase.

Staff training, and recruitment, in relation to all staff having a minimum level 3 diploma

qualification in caring for children and young people is an ongoing issue. The manager and the registered person have strengthened their recruitment strategies, and reviewed their terms and conditions of employment, but this is not fully resolving staff shortages.

Staff support is better, with all the staff having regular supervision and undertaking reflective practice. Team meetings are more organised and meaningful. The manager is making better use of the team time to focus on the care and support of the children and young people and to promote staff development. Feedback from the staff at this inspection is very positive.

The manager has reviewed how he monitors the home and the children's and young people's progress and outcomes. He has introduced new, improved auditing systems and he is beginning to identify trends and patterns in operational issues and the children's and young people's behaviours. This work meets a previous compliance notice.

However, the manager's monitoring reports do not include evaluative evidence that demonstrates how effective monitoring drives improvement or how improvements made positively impact on the children and young people or the home's performance. In addition, there is little indication that the manager uses research or evidence-based knowledge to make informed decisions about how best to steer improvements.

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.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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