

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 is run by a private organisation and is registered to care for and accommodate up to six children and/or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

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

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

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 May 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

- Restriction notice in relation to admissions issued on 19 May 2017.
- One compliance notice in respect of Regulation 11 and one compliance notice in respect of Regulation 12. Both notices were issued on 25 May 2017.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- There are seven requirements outstanding from the last inspection.
- The registered manager and two experienced senior staff have left since the last inspection.
- Key documents, in particular risk assessments and care plans, do not include all the relevant needs of the young people, and those plans that are in place do not guide staff sufficiently to safeguard the young people.

The children's home's strengths:

- The young people are looked after by a committed and caring staff team.
- The response of the provider to the compliance notices indicates a willingness to improve.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/05/2017	Full	Inadequate
05/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
26/04/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Interim	Sustained 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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff— protect and promote each child's welfare; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; (Regulation 6(1)(a) and (2)(b)(ii) and (v))	14/08/2017
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding;	14/08/2017

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone; 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; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence 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; that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11(1), (2)(a)(ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (viii), (ix) and (x) and (b))	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled 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 of 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; (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i))	14/08/2017
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. ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;	14/08/2017

ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to 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; (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(b), (d), (e) and (f))	
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; (Regulation 32(1), (2)(a) and (b) and (3)(a) and (b))	14/08/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; (Regulation 33(4)(a))	14/08/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—	14/08/2017

the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and

any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.

After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").

(Regulation 45(1), (2)(b) and (c) and (3))

Inspection judgements

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

This inspection follows an inadequate judgement in May 2017. While the restriction on admissions remains in place, the two compliance notices issued following the last inspection have been met. However, seven requirements from the last inspection remain outstanding.

There is only one young person resident in the home. Since the last inspection two young people have moved on, either to independence or to other placements. One young person left by their own choice and has moved into a flat with a partner. This young person's placement is held open, and the young person is receiving support from his key worker outside of the home. The second young person has moved to another home following a decision that the staff could not meet his needs. This will impact on this young person's ability to trust the adults around him, and may impact on the new staff team's ability to stabilise and maintain the placement.

Decision-making processes in relation to admissions, raised as a concern in the previous inspection, have been addressed. Impact risk assessments have been developed and there is now a flowchart that outlines the processes to be followed during an admission. The result should be that the matching of young people to ensure safety and compatibility improves.

Educational outcomes for the young people have improved slightly. A young person with no provision previously is now educated via a tutor in the home, and is engaging with them. This arrangement is still less than the required 25 hours of education per week. Records demonstrate that the home is in contact with the virtual head to move the situation on further.

The young people live in a large and spacious home environment. The damage and the health and safety issues noted in the last inspection have been addressed, and large parts of the home have been decorated. This in itself does not appear to have impacted on the behaviour of the young people but indicates an awareness by the staff of the importance of making the young people feel valued.

The impact of inconsistent practice still remains but has improved within the core group of staff. The issue remains one of turnover of staff, and new staff who have a range of experience and skills. The registered individual has further plans in place to address practice issues during team meetings and individual supervisions.

The bullying policy has improved. It is difficult to evaluate fully its effectiveness due to there being only one young person in the home.

Care plans have been reviewed but continue to be ineffective in guiding the staff to meet the needs of the young people. The plans are large, bulky and inaccessible to young people who want to contribute and take part in the planning of their care. The resulting document is more a running log of events rather than a series of plans that address specific needs. This situation also impacts on the ability of the staff team to use the plans as a working tool to manage and meet the needs of the young people.

In addition, the information recorded in relation to the young people on a daily basis is spread over and repeated in a range of files and logs. This leads to the inconsistencies in practice and impacts on the ability of managers to monitor appropriately.

Key-working sessions continue monthly and allow the young people and staff opportunities to discuss specific topics. There is now a plan in place, linked to the overall care needs of the young person, which ensures that the aims of the placements are addressed. Sessions also take place in response to incidents, as appropriate. The registered individual has worked closely with staff to improve recording, and records viewed at this inspection demonstrate that this has been effective in improving some elements of recording.

Access to activities has improved for the young people. There are now plans in place that identify, in consultation with young people, opportunities each day to take part in an activity or club. A member of staff said: 'The days are planned properly and the activities for young people have improved.'

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

Recruitment checks have improved but are not as robust as they should be, particularly in relation to agency staff. This practice leaves the young people potentially at risk. The management of the home needs to assure itself that everyone working at the home is suitable to do so, and such practice needs to follow safer recruitment guidelines.

There has been a reduction in the number of serious incidents since the last inspection. However, prior to the other young people leaving they were still a feature of day-to-day life. The registered individual has addressed this by giving staff clear direction in team meetings and reflective sessions. A member of staff said: 'Things are better, we still have a long way to go though. The structures are now being put in place.' Discussions with the local police indicate that the number of call-outs they received had reduced.

Risk assessments continue to lack sufficient, effective strategies to inform staff practice. When strategies are described in detail, they are generic statements that do not inform the member of staff how to specifically protect and enable that individual young person. In addition, some risks were not included and some conflicted with other parts of the assessment and care plan.

The number of incidents of missing has reduced. Staff are aware of the potential risks to the young people and continue to follow them into the local area to try and ensure their safety. The improvements observed in relationships with some of the staff team have helped with the effectiveness of this practice, as has the reduction in numbers of young people placed. The registered individual has met with the police to clarify protocols and has engaged the services of an independent team to conduct interviews with the young people when they return. This will ensure that the young people's voices are heard and allow any concerns to be expressed.

The use of physical intervention has reduced, but the situation identified at the last inspection when not all staff were trained or updated in appropriate use of the interventions continues. However, records indicate that this training has taken place for the theory behind the practice, and that the second day of the training is booked with an external provider.

The number of sanctions has decreased and the use of incentives has increased. This ensures a proactive response to the behaviours of young people. However, sanction records show that staff are recording some responses as restorative justice when they are in fact just different sanctions. There are some indicators of restorative practice within the record, and the difference between the two was discussed fully with the registered individual and deputy to ensure clarity.

Appropriate health and safety procedures, and partnership working with agencies such as the local fire service, ensure that physical safeguards are in place. Regular fire drills take place and are recorded well.

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

The manager of the home has left since the last inspection, as have two experienced senior staff. The registered individual has stepped in to manage the home with the current deputy while recruitment for a manager takes place. The registered individual is appropriately qualified and has been in post since the home opened in 2011.

There are continued gaps and shortfalls in the monitoring of the home, and this has

been recognised with requirements that have been repeated at this inspection. The home has undergone a difficult period, and it is recognised that the registered individual has prioritised addressing the compliance notices during the short period since the last inspection.

The turnover of staff noted at the last inspection has continued. The staff rota indicates that there are adequate levels to manage and address the needs of the one young person currently resident, but vacancies still exist.

Supervision of staff has improved both in regularity and quality. The registered individual has held supervisions with all the staff to reflect on the findings of the previous inspection, and the results have contributed to the overall development plan now in place.

Training for staff in relation to a basic understanding of attachment and trauma has been delivered by an external provider, with plans for further updates. However, the requirement for wider training still exists to meet in full the identified needs of the young person currently in the home.

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

Responsible individual: Donna Thorne

Inspector

Susan Atkinson-Millmoor, social care inspector

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