

Horsebridge House

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	24/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC452713
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Greenfields Adolescent Development Limited
Registered provider address	5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual	Robert Hewston
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	David Kidner

Inspection date	24/01/2017
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 as Requires improvement at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has Declined in effectiveness. The primary reason for the decline in effectiveness is the continuing shortfall of not having a registered manager in charge of the home. This shortfall has been evident since March 2015. Since this date, two interim managers have been in post. The most recently appointed manager commenced his post in May 2016. He has failed to submit a complete application to register with Ofsted as required and has recently resigned his post. A new manager has since been appointed. It is extremely concerning that there has not been a registered manager in post since March 2015. This does not provide young people and staff, with the continuity and consistency of management required to lead the home effectively. Urgent action is required by leaders and managers to ensure that a complete application is made by the newly appointed manager to register with Ofsted. The manager has addressed the vast majority of the requirements that were made at the last inspection. As a result, the local police have a copy of the young person's missing-from-home protocol, all staff have signed their awareness and understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedures, and there are good systems in place regarding the use of monitoring and surveillance approaches. In addition, staff now receive regular fire drills, and other fire safety issues have been addressed. Since the last inspection a young person has come to live at the home. Leaders and the manager undertook a comprehensive assessment of his needs prior to his admission. The young person said, 'It's okay living here. I feel safe, and I like the staff.' Staff have a good awareness of his needs and have built good professional relationships with him. He gave 9/10 for the staff and 10/10 for the activities he enjoys. Football is a passion of the young person and he has become a member of a local football team. The young person's social worker said, 'I do not have any concerns in the quality of care that is being provided. I am impressed with the staff team and there is good communication between us.' Prior to living here, the young person was attending a mainstream school, but was excluded. Although an alternative school nearer to the home was identified, the	

young person is currently refusing to attend. Leaders and managers, in collaboration with the placing authority, have been addressing this serious concern. However, a clear action plan has yet to be devised and agreed for him to return to school.

Staff continue to encourage the young person to participate in alternative educational activities and opportunities, and sometimes he will join in with these. Staff record the activities he has accessed and been encouraged to engage in, but records do not demonstrate the actual amount of hours spent engaged in the activities or the quality of the educational opportunities that are being provided.

Staff are provided with a placement plan that incorporates a number of documents that guide them in how to meet the young person's needs. These documents include guidelines about the young person's health care needs, behaviour support needs, risk assessments and his day-to day-care. However, not all of these documents are accessible and child-friendly. Some are located in various files and some documents do not signpost where further guidance can be found. This process is confusing.

The home remains homely, well maintained and safe. However, the external light to the main car park requires replacing, and staff are not provided with a blood spillage kit.

There has been an increase in the use of restraint since the last inspection. However, this has been used as a last resort to ensure the safety and well-being of the young person. Restraint records and incident records are clear and concise. Leaders and the manager audit these records to ensure that any measures used are appropriate and proportionate. Sanctions have not been imposed.

There have not been any incidents of the young person going missing, and leaders and managers said that there have not been any referrals to the designated officer or to children's services. There are no recorded complaints since the last inspection. The manager has ensured that HMCI is notified of any serious incidents related to a child.

The manager has ensured that there is regular external scrutiny of the home. He has responded to any recommendations made by the independent visitor to further improve the quality of care. Leaders have a good awareness of the weaknesses in the home and the improvements that are required. In conjunction with the quality assurance team, the manager has addressed a number of outstanding weaknesses in order to improve provision of the service.

Information about this children's home

This service is operated by a private company which is part of the CareTech group, a national care agency. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
31/05/2016	Full	Inadequate
16/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Good

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The education standard In order to meet the education standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— 8 (2)(a)(i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible.	18/02/2017
The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure— 12 (2)(d) that the premises used for the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. In particular, the external security light to the main car park is replaced and staff are provided with a blood spillage kit.	18/02/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Ensure staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, review the format in which placement plans are developed and presented, to ensure that information about the child be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child, and accessible to the child and the staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4)

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 that 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 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.

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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