

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC471153
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sara Stoker
Inspector	Jane Partridge

Inspection date	03/11/2015
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	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC471153

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The systems in place for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well are underused.
- Young people who have been missing from care do not always receive an independent interview in a timely manner.
- The home does not have a robust impact assessment to consider the needs of any potential new residents against the individual complex needs of those young people already in placement.
- Whilst young people have risk assessments in place, staff do not routinely sign them to demonstrate they are fully aware, as required by organisational policy.
- Staff are not clear on safeguarding procedures, particularly in regard to the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- Neither the independent visitor nor the manager has gathered the views of family members in respect of the care young people receive. The manager has not gained the views of the wider professional team.
- There is little analysis of the quality of care provided to young people.
- Some of the home's policies, procedures and paperwork refer to out of date legislation, standards and refer to other companies.

The children's home strengths

- Some young people report that staff look after them well and that they feel safe.
- The children's guide is engaging, informative and assists young people in feeling welcomed into the home.
- The home has safeguarded some young people with highly complex behaviours. There has been a reduction in missing from care episodes and in the frequency and severity of self-harming incidents. As a result, young people are safer and experience periods of stable mental health.
- Some young people achieve a high level of attendance at school and make educational progress.
- The health needs of young people are met and a dedicated clinical team enhance staff understanding and management of young people's behaviour.
- Staff support and promote the differing cultural needs of young people in placement.
- The staff group receive regular supervision and access a comprehensive training package, including training specifically to meet the needs of young people placed.

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
12: The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular regard to staff being aware of young people's individual risk assessments, the registered provider must ensure: (2) (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep children safe and to protect each child effectively from harm	04/12/2015
12: The protection of children standard: In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular regard to understanding the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the registered provider must ensure that staff: (2) (a) (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person	04/12/2015
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person, if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home. (Regulation 44 (2) (a))	04/12/2015
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2) (a))	04/12/2015
The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of the children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (5))	04/12/2015

Recommendations

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

Ensure that the registered person only accepts placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 56 paragraph 11.4)

Ensure that staff understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 46 paragraph 9.39)

Ensure that when a child who has been missing from care has been found, that they must be offered an independent return interview. The interview should be carried out with 72 hours of the child returning to their care home. (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014, page 14 paragraphs 31 and 32)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private organisation owns and runs this home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/07/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The young people placed in the home can exhibit highly complex behaviours due to their traumatic life experiences. The manager completes an impact assessment when considering the placement of a new resident. This assessment is not robust, as it does not consider the full impact of any new resident against those already in placement and vice-versa. This has the potential to result in ill-matched placements that have a negative impact on young people. For one young person, the impact resulted in disruption and an untimely move, another young person has felt overwhelmed by others and is having a negative experience of care. A young person said there is 'nothing good' about living at the home. They believe that other young people placed alongside them present with a greater degree of need. This includes challenging and intimidating behaviour, which makes them feel vulnerable. Lack of robust group dynamic impact assessment means that compatibility issues are not fully explored prior to admission. During the inspection, some young people struggled to verbalise any positive aspects about living at the home. They did not consider this to be a home where they could invite friends back to, due to the presenting behaviours of others. As such, their friendships are formed in school and maintained in the community. The home operates a positive behaviour management scheme, which rewards young people for either positive behaviour or where they have managed a situation well. However, the recording demonstrates only minimal use of the behaviour strategy. Young people are not receiving the recognition for the positive changes in the behaviour they have managed. Staff are keen to build positive relationships with young people and are aware of the aspects that create them. Young people are beginning to build positive relationships with staff and are able to identify factors that assist this process. They said, 'he jokes with me and makes the best food,' and 'they help me more, they give me guidelines'. Regular direct work using key worker sessions also offers space to talk about specific issues. Young people are benefiting from establishing trusting relationships with adults that care about their welfare. Some young people are positively engaged in education. Their attendance is high and their progress notable. Some made significant progress in understanding and speaking English. The staff assist young people in completing homework and will look for educational opportunities within social settings. School reports that staff are fully engaged in the completion and review of the young people's personal	

education plans. Staff support the young people in school meetings and parent's evenings.

All young people are registered with appropriate medical professionals. All routine appointments are up to date and young people have received all the required immunisations. The home offers placements to young people who have struggled with their emotional wellbeing and have experienced periods of poor mental health. This has led to self-harming behaviours and put young people at significant risk. The home works alongside the children and adolescent mental health service to engage and support young people undergoing therapeutic intervention.

The organisation has a dedicated clinical team, which offers staff support and understanding of individual circumstances. For young people, the team undertake an individual clinical assessment at the start of placement. This evaluates, past experiences, presenting needs and the required management strategies. This assists staff to meet young people's health needs and to promote good mental health. Young people's health and development also benefits from their engagement in a wide range of activities, offering them a physical and social outlet. All staff have trained in first aid; this ensures that young people receive appropriate attention in the event of an accident.

Some young people settling into the home have conflicting views, unsure of whether they like living in the home or not. They do recognise that the home is safe and that they feel safe. They add: 'Staff look after me well, and the best thing about being here is that they make you feel at home.' For some young people who had experienced several placement moves, social care staff reported: 'The fact the young person has remained in placement is very positive.'

Promoting and supporting equality and diversity is central to the daily practice of the home. Some young people did not have English as their first language when first placed. The staff have worked with interpreters throughout the placement. Initially, translated information was available. This stopped when the young person voiced they wanted information in English to enhance their skills. The staff are due to support another young person to learn Welsh. They have worked with young people on the equality of gender to promote respect and regard for British cultural values.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Clear risk assessments identify support needs and age appropriate risks for individual young people. However, each member of staff has not signed to confirm	

that they know and understand these highlighted areas of vulnerability. This falls short of the organisational expectations and means it is unclear whether staff are fully aware of each young person's risk management plans.

Some staff are unclear about the processes and procedures in relation to investigations into allegations of abuse and child protection. This does not safeguard young people's welfare and may leave them unsupported and unprotected during an investigation.

Some young people are safer as their episodes of missing from care have dramatically reduced since coming to live in the home. As part of the missing from care risk assessment, staff pass the details of each new resident to the missing person liaison within the local police force. Should a young person go missing, the staff take appropriate, well-coordinated action. However, when missing young people return, they do not always experience a timely return home interview. Therefore, there is a delay in uncovering information that can help protect young people from the risk of going missing again or the risk they may have been exposed to whilst missing.

Young people spoke positively about the children's guide. They liked that staff contributed some personal information, such as their favourite film, as this helped them to get to know staff more quickly. They commented that it was full of information they found helpful. One young person said, 'I'd give it 10 out of 10.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The registered manager brings a wealth of experience to the post, having worked in the social care field for the past 12 years within both the adult and child care sectors. She is appropriately qualified, holding a relevant level five diploma in leadership and management. She became registered with Ofsted in July 2015. The registered manager went on maternity leave in October 2015 and the deputy manager is covering the post. The deputy manager is applying for registration while the registered manager is on maternity leave. Staff believe it was a natural progression for the deputy to take on the manager's role. However, whilst this is the fourth manager the home has experienced in the past year, staff and young people have experienced some continuity as the deputy has worked in a management capacity within the home for the past twelve months. Paperwork, policies and procedures contain out-of-date legislation and	

inappropriate inclusion of information from other agencies. Whilst this may not directly affect the care of young people, it does not demonstrate an effectively or efficiently run service. The general monitoring and evaluation of information requires improvement.

The independent visitor has not sought the views of young people's families in relation to the care young people receive. The manager has not sought the views of young people's families or the wider professional team within their monitoring of the service. This does not ensure that young people are effectively safeguarded and their wellbeing promoted and it means opportunities to gain feedback that could contribute to improvements in the service are lost.

Monitoring tools are in place but they are of little effect in improving the quality of care to young people because review and evaluation of the information does not form part of the process. The lack of evaluation results in a failure to identify, for example, triggers in young people's behaviour, or strategies that have helped young people to self-regulate their behaviour. Consequently, this process results in little or no insight into the effectiveness of the quality of care delivered.

Although new into post, the deputy manager does recognise some of the strengths and areas of development for the home. Staff are complimentary about her management and leadership abilities stating: 'She has already identified areas of work for us.'

The home has just achieved a full staff complement and this new team are committed to achieving good outcomes for young people. They are proud of the positive changes they see in young people and their part in these achievements, such as a reduction in missing and developing English language skills.

Staff undergo robust recruitment and vetting checks to ensure all those employed are safe to work with young people. The organisation offers a comprehensive induction programme and ongoing refresher of learning through a wide range of training. Staff also complete specific training to meet and care for the young people in placement. This ensures young people experience care from a knowledgeable staff team who have particular regard for their past experiences and their presenting behaviours.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision, where they are able to focus on areas of practice and development. They also benefit from the regular input of the clinical team, who offer further opportunity for reflection on practice and how to meet young people's needs.

The home has an up to date statement of purpose that reflects the service provision.

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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