

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC472164
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Amegreen Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	2 Granary Court, Fair Oak Green, Stratfield Saye, READING, RG7 2DL

Responsible individual	Mr Gary Carlin
Registered manager	Adam Law (acting)
Inspector	Mr Peel

Inspection date	22/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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 Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has recently had a change of management team: the previous Registered Manager has a new role in the company and the deputy is currently acting as the manager, applying to be registered with Ofsted. A team leader is acting in the deputy role. They are being helped to fulfil new responsibilities and establish relationships by regular meetings with senior staff in the organisation and a team leader from the home. This is having a beneficial effect with residential workers reporting high levels of support and communication. One commented, 'we get such a lot of feedback that is balanced, what's good and what could be improved'. Another mentioned the good relationship she has with her supervisor that allows them to address difficulties constructively. The outcome is a staff group who are enabled to engage with the challenges that children and young people who have experienced early trauma and deprivation bring. The manager has commenced training to the Level 5 Diploma standard and or other staff training to Level 3 has also started. Children are making progress from the point they were admitted, some significantly so. This includes educational attainment, managing strong feelings and personal care. Quality of experience for young people has, in some cases dramatically, improved too: one young person previously used to 'living rough' was on a field trip abroad at the time of the inspection. Another is being helped to contain feelings that were previously overwhelming as illustrated by much reduced incidents of physical interventions. Using a behaviour reward chart has been very effective in making progress but other children have not responded as well to the method. Since the last inspection changes have been made to recording of restraints and sanctions but the log does not make it clear who has made the entry or the date it was made. This information is contained in separate, more detailed records. There is confusion as to the use of the complaints log and a complaints file, with no records currently logged in the former.	

Children are invited to give their own views in logs and often do. The manager always evaluates the appropriateness of the restraint or sanction with a focus on consequences arising out of behaviour.

Case files are in good order and up-to-date Looked After Child documentation is present other than for a Health Plan, which had not been followed up.

The home's Statement of Purpose includes references to the understanding of developmental trauma to underpin the work being done and 'systems-centred' methods. These are well articulated by the manager but staff were not able to explain how they inform practice. Nevertheless, they are coached in their approach to children and in managing specific issues through individual supervision, team meetings and group consultation with the organisation's psychologist.

The team are motivated and contribute to developing services, with the piloting of a new assessment tool being a good example. This identifies levels in various areas of development from admission onwards, charts progress and provides a narrative that is comprehensive and informative. It demonstrates areas of progress and those that need additional input to make further headway.

Collective decision making and a '24 hour therapeutic management plan' for each child ensures a consistent approach. To some extent the stability this gives has been undermined by constant changes of the staff of the home. Recent recruitment is improving this situation. Files demonstrate that appropriate safeguarding measures are used in the recruitment process.

Children and young people are being consulted about revising the Young Person's Guide to make it a more relevant document. Currently it does not include information about advocacy services and the children I spoke to did not have an understanding of their role or that of independent visitors.

One child told me he would like to go out of the home more but he and others are helped to engage in a number of different activities and clubs, including plenty of exercise and creative arts. None of the young people are currently using the equine therapy available.

There are procedures in place to monitor matters such as fire safety equipment, temperature testing and health and safety. The reports for the latter do not specifically cover garden play equipment and so obvious hazards from wear and tear to a trampoline and debris left in it have not been recorded or addressed. One young person said he was disappointed he could not play in it. Otherwise the home is safe and secure. Thought has been given to the use of rooms and the re-siting of a quiet area has made it more effective as a space for children to become or remain calm.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned service accommodates up to four children or young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home uses 'systems-centred' methods of working with children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma. It has access to equine therapy with the organisations own horses.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2015	CH - Full	Good
14/01/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
11/11/2013	CH - 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/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
In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person is required to: keep the home's complaints procedure under review to ensure that recording processes are clear, understood and implemented. (Regulation 7(c))	22 August 2015
The registered provider must ensure "children's guide" explains, how to access advocacy support. (Regulation 2 (d))	22 August 2015
In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person is required to: ensure that staff understand and apply the home's statement of purpose – in particular the specific models of work employed. (Regulation 6 (2) (i))	22 August 2015
In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person is required to: ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health – including garden equipment. (Regulation 12 (2)(d))	22 August 2015

{an asterisk is added in the table above where Compliance = 'Y'}

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Recommendations

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

Liaise with placing authorities to ensure up-to-date health plans are available for each child, (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations 7.4 p 33)

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 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 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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