

SC486167

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for one child or young person who may have some emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 July 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 28 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/09/2017	Full	Good
15/09/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/04/2016	Full	Good
01/10/2015	Interim	Declined in 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
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met. In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans; seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs. In particular, in relation to arrangements being made for children who go missing to have an independent return home interview on their return. This requirement is also in relation to ensuring effective communication and decision making with the placing authority to ensure a comprehensive understanding of a child's needs prior to any child being admitted to a home. Additionally, it refers to the importance of escalating concerns with the placing authority to ensure children are supported to be safe and their needs are met once admitted to the home. (Regulation 5 (a)(b)(c)(d))	20/07/2018
13: The leadership and management standard. 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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;	20/07/2018

ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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. In particular, in relation to: ensuring the registered manager has sufficient support and time to complete her management responsibilities; ensuring enough staff are deployed to the care team so that staff from other homes are not constantly required to provide base line staffing ratios; ensuring staff rotas provide at least one experienced member of staff on each shift and not exclusively probationary staff; ensuring all staff complete mandatory and specialist training prior to working with children. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (e))	
14: The care planning standard. The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if— the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs; the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission. In particular, this is in relation to improving practices around the assessment and the admission of children to the home and in taking robust action with the placing authority to address concerns about a child's safety and welfare. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(a)(e)(i)(ii))	20/07/2018

33: Employment of staff. The registered person must ensure that all employees—undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	31/07/2018
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* These requirements are subject to a compliance notice.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the local authority provides opportunities for children and young people to have independent return home interviews when they have been missing. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. This information should be shared with the placing authority and, where appropriate, with the child's parents. Evaluation of missing incidents should be undertaken to identify any gaps in training, skills or knowledge for staff to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care. Where a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, such as frequently being absent from the home to meet with inappropriate adults, the registered person, in consultation with the child's placing authority, should convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the child. Children missing from home protocols agreed by local authorities should be reviewed regularly and be scrutinised by the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB) when the above is not happening. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraphs 9.23–9.32)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leaders and managers do not ensure that children have a positive experience when they move in to the home. There is a lack of consideration and planning in the arrangements for helping children to move in. Consultation and communication with the previous home and with the placing authority is poor. As a result of being moved in a hurried and unplanned way, children suffer unnecessary distress.

Leaders and managers failed to consider the well-being of the child most recently admitted to the home. The home was not ready to admit the child. For example, suitable staffing arrangements were not in place. In the 19 days of living in the home, the child was cared for by 15 different staff, nine of whom were from other homes in the company. Furthermore, the child had been cared for by seven members of staff in just one shift. These arrangements are unacceptable as they do not help a child to feel safe

and form positive relationships with those primarily responsible for caring for them.

Staff are not provided with the vital information that they need to successfully care for the child. The manager has worked excessive hours providing direct care and support to the child. As a result, fundamental management tasks have not been completed, such as written care plans, comprehensive risk assessments or behaviour management plans.

Positive arrangements are in place to meet the educational needs of children. The registered manager works with the local authority to secure school places and introductory visits have already taken place.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

The help and protection afforded to the child currently living in this home is inadequate. The combination of a lack of robust assessment and admission planning, the insufficiency and lateness of information from the placing authority, and the inadequate staffing arrangements in place at the home have placed the child at risk of harm.

Leaders and managers do not protect children sufficiently. Children frequently go missing from the home. Procedures are in place to facilitate the return of children as quickly as possible. However, on most occasions independent return home interviews are not conducted, this is despite information that a child may have been at risk of significant harm while away from staff supervision.

Behaviour management plans are not in place. As a result, staff are not provided with the required information about how to manage the child's behaviour. Some staff use incentives; however, with such a large number of staff involved in the care of children, the approach to managing children's behaviours varies too much. Consequently, children are unclear about expectations around behaviour. This uncertainty adds to children's anxiety and the extent to which they feel safe.

Leaders and managers have not fully completed children's risk assessments. There are many known risks, as well as other risks that are only recently coming to light that have not been taken into account. A risk planning meeting has taken place with the placing authority to gather further information. The delay in identifying and devising strategies to mitigate risks does not protect children sufficiently.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is inadequate, and admission arrangements to transfer children and to ensure their well-being and safety are inadequate.

Senior leaders do not pay sufficient consideration to the views expressed by the registered manager in the assessment, the decision-making and the admission of all children. In addition, the registered manager had not completed the necessary preparations to accept a child into the home. As a result, there is now an urgent need for leaders and managers to rapidly develop effective partnerships with the local authority to keep the child safe and to sustain the future of his new home.

Leaders and managers do not make suitable staffing arrangements to support the needs

and best interests of children. On too many occasions, inexperienced probationary staff are on duty together; this is unsafe and unacceptable. Staffing shortages and the number of adults working in the home are excessive. These arrangements are not conducive to the provision of consistently good caregiving.

The registered manager has not provided the required documentation to the staff team to help staff to understand the child's needs so that they can deliver care in a safe and consistent manner.

The registered manager has not provided good-quality and regular supervision so that she can identify the development and training needs of the new staff team. There are shortfalls in mandatory training and specialist training for staff, which further prevent the delivery of good-quality care to the child.

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: SC486167

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: South West Childcare Services

Registered provider address: 46 Durnford Street, First Floor Flat, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3QN

Responsible individual: Angela Glynn

Registered manager: Lauren Young

Inspector

Norma Welsby, social care inspector

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