

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/06/2016
Unique reference number	SC487549
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Radical Services Limited
Registered provider address	Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Leeds LS5 3BT

Responsible individual	Sonia Bennett
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Gillian Walters

Inspection date	29/06/2016
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

SC487549

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Challenging external agencies to provide detailed information about young people's specific needs, coupled with the ability to challenge any perceived shortfall on their account, are areas for improvement.
- Consultation with young people, listening to them and where appropriate acting on their views and wishes are not consistently implemented.
- The specialist services identified in the home's statement of purpose (SOP) are not readily available for young people as suggested.
- Improving the quality through greater detail of young people's individual risk assessments should assist staff to develop a greater understanding of the young people that they care for.
- The monitoring systems adopted by the home could be used with greater effect to improve the experience of staff and target their training to ensure that the specific needs of young people are fully recognised and to facilitate continuous improvement.
- The home's SOP identifies the range of needs that a young person should have to be considered for admission. However, this criterion for admission is not always being adhered to.
- The home's SOP has not always been revised and updated appropriately to accurately reflect its functioning. Copies of updated versions are not always being received by Ofsted in a timely manner.
- The actual use of monitoring and surveillance devices is not always accurately reflected in the written consents supplied by placing authorities.
- References received for prospective staff have not always been suitably verified as stated in the home's safe recruitment practice.
- The quality of written records would be improved by ensuring that they are completed in the specified timescale and that they are always signed and dated by the author.
- Incidents considered serious are not always being reported to Ofsted in a timely manner.

The children's home strengths

- Feedback received is positive from the external sources who responded to a request for information regarding the overall care of young people.
- The feedback from young people regarding their care is generally positive.
- Young people say that they can talk with staff and generally feel safe in the home.
- The day-to-day health needs of young people are being met.
- Young people are given opportunities to experience activities and pastimes that are new, with a view to them developing interests and hobbies that can serve them well in the future.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
5: In order to engage with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met the registered person must— (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and (d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.	07/10/2016
6: In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must— (2)(a) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; (b) ensure that staff— (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; (v) help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect.	07/10/2016
7: In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(a)(iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child; (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care.	07/10/2016

10: In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure— (2)(c) that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.	07/10/2016
12: In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(a)(i) 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.	07/10/2016
13: In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must— (2)(a) 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; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (f) 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; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	07/10/2016
14: In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure— (2)(a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.	07/10/2016
16: Keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	07/10/2016
24: Only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24 (1)(b))	07/10/2016

32: Ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. This relates specifically to ensuring that appropriate references are received and suitably verified in accordance with the home's safe recruitment practice. (Regulation 32 (3)(d))	07/10/2016
35: Ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure. This relates specifically to the recording of sanctions. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii))	07/10/2016
36: Maintain records ('case records') for each child which are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c))	07/10/2016
40: Notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	07/10/2016

Recommendations

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

- Emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home's statement of purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high-quality care to children already living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.6)
- Ensure that the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home can provide care and accommodation for up to four children.
- It is owned and operated by a private company.
- The home provides care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/11/2015	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The home has been experiencing a difficult period of late. This is due to some internal issues such as staff turnover. For example, since the previous inspection, a number of new staff have been recruited, along with having to appoint a temporary acting manager. Coupled with accommodating a difficult and challenging group of young people, this has led to a relapse in some of the everyday working practices. Although the report contains a relatively high number of requirements and recommendations, most link into re-establishing sound working practices and routines within the home. For example, many are linked to administrative procedures and in improving managerial oversight. It is worth repeating that during the inspection, no serious or widespread failures were found that resulted in young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. Representatives from external agencies who replied to requests for information, generally expressed positive views about the home. For example, a social worker says, 'I don't have any particular concerns about the home. They seem to be meeting the needs of our young person well. They have been supportive of his education and give regular updates about his progress.' The looked after children nurse reports, 'I have a new staff nurse in the team who is looking after the home and she has no concerns.' Planning documents and individual risk assessments are in place, but along with other general administrative procedures noted in the home, lack detail and overall quality. The home has looked to improve the format of planning documents and individual risk assessments recently, which is currently work in progress. The day-to-day health needs of young people are addressed through the usual community facilities such as doctors and dentists. The home's statement of purpose details the specialist help available through Radical Services. In practice, there has been a shortfall with the consistency of specialist input into the home. Staff have failed to understand fully the role of the specialists involved and how to access their services so that young people receive consistent specialist oversight. Meetings between staff and young people are being arranged, but do not always take place due to young people's failure to engage positively in the process. Consultation does take place daily on a more informal basis between staff and young people. This process has not always reached a positive conclusion. For example, young people are being consulted about their preferred decor in bedrooms. The stalemate that has been reached on one request was discussed fully during the inspection, with a number of options identified to help move the process along.	

Young people have recently been damaging regarding the fabric of the building, with repairs still to be carried out. Each young person has their own bedroom. The one occupied when the inspection took place has been personalised and was found to be clean, neat and tidy. Both the kitchen and living room are functional, but dated in appearance.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
There have been no direct safeguarding referrals linked to child protection made since the previous inspection. The acting manager and her team understand their role and responsibilities with regard to keeping young people safe. Due to some new and inexperienced staff being recruited since the last inspection, gaps in staff training have been identified which, when addressed, should help them to understand better young people's behaviours and how to address their needs as a result. For example, around child sexual exploitation. Although staff have received basic training in this area and currently it is not a live issue in the home, two young people are deemed at being potentially at risk. More in-depth training could go some way to reducing that risk. Staff are dealing with challenging behaviour by attempting to improve relationships and trust with young people. They make every effort not to work with young people negatively and in a punitive way. For example, since the previous inspection, there has been only one incident of physical intervention and four sanctions imposed. However, sanctions have not always been recorded within the specified timescale required. This links into the recurring theme regarding the overall quality of record keeping, which is poor due to a lack of detail and management oversight. Most of the notifications received by Ofsted link to young people going missing or failing to return to the home. Staff are responsive and understand the procedures to follow when an incident occurs. These procedures are based on the home's own procedures and local protocols. Staff understand the potential of young people to bully or be victims of bullying. Young people raised no concerns or made any complaints about bullying. Work has been completed with one young person about the safe use of the internet. There has been some turnover of staff since the previous inspection, which has reduced the overall experience of the staff group. Recruitment and clearance practices were reviewed. The files of new recruits were checked, which generated discussion regarding the failure to follow up with an employee about a previous offence. Fire drills take place regularly with the fire risk assessment being updated since the previous inspection. Appropriate service contracts are in place, which helps to ensure that both young people and staff live in an environment that is safe.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The acting manager took on the role approximately two months ago and is due to submit an application to be registered with Ofsted shortly. She is waiting to be enrolled on a level 5 course, which should be finalised soon. Both the manager and the new area manager understand the issues facing the home if it is to become good. They worked cooperatively with the inspector as the inspection progressed. The acting manager is starting to build relationships with external agencies and is looking to challenge and make reasonable demands on them when needed. Failing to do so in the past has created some problems. For example, there is little information available on the young person who was most recently accommodated. This included background as well as information that would have helped with the matching process, should it have taken place. As a result, this leaves the home exposed and in danger of admitting young people who are not appropriate and outside the categories of young people identified in the home's statement of purpose as being suitable for admission. Challenging external agencies in the past for information or advocating on a young person's behalf has been an area of weakness. Changes to the staff team have resulted in new staff coming in with little experience. This has impacted on the home due to the difficulty for some staff in knowing and being able to keep consistent boundaries in place for young people. However, there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty and no concerns from staff about the current staffing arrangements. A formal staff supervision programme is in place, but is not taking place with any consistency. For example, in the case of new staff, they were found not to be receiving the frequency of supervision required. Generally, the reports prepared by the independent person are being received by Ofsted, with the quality of reporting noted as having improved since a new visitor was appointed. Internally, monitoring is an area for improvement. More consistent and in-depth oversight of written records should improve their quality. This would give staff a better understanding regarding the quality of care being given. Areas of progress and areas of need that require addressing would also be highlighted. By doing so, the use of monitoring to review systems and working practices should lead to an increase in the overall quality of care being provided. The statement of purpose was last reviewed and updated in June 2016. However, the home failed to send Ofsted a copy within the prescribed 28 day limit. Similarly, the home should ensure that any incident deemed notifiable to Ofsted is done so without delay.	

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 that 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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