

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC431807
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephen Collett
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	132 The Street West Horsley LEATHERHEAD Surrey KT24 6DB
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Gerard Colin Berry
<b>Registered manager</b>	POST VACANT
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	13/01/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	03/06/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>adequate</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>adequate</b>
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The home has recently emerged from a period of change and instability following the departure of the Registered Manager in January 2014. The absence of a manager for a period of three months, and a relatively inexperienced staff team impacted negatively on the quality of care for young people. There was insufficient planning to meet the individual needs of a vulnerable group of young people, resulting in increased use of sanctions and young people not always being kept safe.

The situation has been rectified by introducing an experienced Registered Manager, and improvements have recently been made. Young people are positive about the level of care they receive and benefit from having good, supportive relationships with staff. Young people engage well in education and most are positive about the therapeutic support they receive. Relationships between the young people have improved and all make a good contribution towards the running of the home. The young people are making good progress towards their individual goals and benefitting from a new approach to behaviour management strategies which has led to a decrease in the use of sanctions.

Young people are listened to and have good opportunities to make their opinions known. However, they are not currently provided with information about how to access an advocacy service, and a recommendation has been made to address this.

In recent months, not all young people have felt safe in the home. The manager has taken steps to address the high levels of disruption following the admission of new young people, and this has led to an increased sense of safety for the group. During the period without a manager in post, staff did not always ensure the safety of young people, and a serious incident occurred which resulted in a young person needing medical intervention. Steps have been taken to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future, but the serious nature of the incident has resulted in a requirement being made in relation to safeguarding young people.

Although safeguarding practice has improved in recent months, risk assessments do not always take into account the full range of information available, and a recommendation is made to improve the content of risk assessments.

The leadership and management team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home, and identified policies and procedures to be reviewed, prior to the inspection taking place. There is a development plan for the home which also acknowledges improvements that can be made. The development plan would benefit from being more detailed and specific to ensure it is an effective tool for promoting continuous improvement. A recommendation that the plan is reviewed has therefore been made.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The service is a four-bedded children's home registered for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced abuse. The organisation also provides educational and therapeutic training.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/09/2013	Full	adequate
21/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
22/05/2012	Full	adequate

### What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

### 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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
11 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children accommodated there; specifically, review the policy and procedure for administering medication, so that it is effective in preventing medication being misused. (Regulation 11(1)(a))	31/08/2014

## **Recommendations**

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

- ensure that children know their rights to advocacy and how to access an advocate (NMS 1.5)
- implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment (NMS 4.5)
- provide a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service. (NMS 15.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people living in the home are making good progress. All of the young people are engaging in education and two have college placements arranged for September 2014. Prior to moving to the home a young person was having difficulty engaging with home tutors. The young person now attends the organisations school and the social worker reported 'previous home tutors could not cope but the young person is now engaging and opening up to teachers'.

The home is supporting young people to become more confident and develop their self-esteem. A young person recently admitted to the home had previously experienced social isolation and consequently had poor communication skills. Despite initial difficulties adapting to living in a group with other young people, the young person is now able to make a positive contribution to the running of the home and was observed to participate well in young people's house meetings. Staff encourage young people to participate in a range of outdoor activities and this contributes to their increased self-confidence.

A range of therapeutic interventions are provided by the organisation and all young people engage in treatment plans to improve their emotional and psychological well-being. For most of the young people this is having a positive impact, although the social worker for one young person felt that therapy had been 'mixed'.

Arrangements for the young people to have contact with their families are in place, and staff support young people where difficulties arise. Staff supervise young people's contact where necessary and the organisation makes recommendations for supervision based on their assessment and the stage a young person has reached in therapy. This approach has resulted in disagreement between the organisation and one placing authority, and led to some anxiety for the young person concerned.

Young people make good progress in obtaining independence skills, and for one young person there has been significant improvement over a short period of time. Young people learn to budget, and are given opportunities to try again when they have not progressed well on a particular task. Household jobs, such as cooking, are undertaken by staff and young people and provide the opportunity to learn new skills and make positive contributions to the day-to-day running of the home.

### Quality of care **good**

The Registered Manager for the home at the last inspection left the organisation in January 2014. The new manager commenced working in the home on 1st April 2014. In the intervening period the quality of care for young people was unsatisfactory. Many of the care staff were relatively inexperienced and without consistent leadership they were unable to provide a standard of care that met the needs of the young people. Relationships between staff and young people were not always positive, and there was a serious incident where a young person was a threat to his personal safety, and the safety of staff on duty.

Good progress has been made since April 2014 and during the inspection positive interactions were observed between all the young people and staff on duty. Staff take a genuine interest in the young people and encourage them to do well in education and the social activities they engage in. Staff were seen to take an interest in how a young person did in an exam taken earlier in the day, upon their arrival back at the home. One young person commented that a particular member of staff will work late to complete all the necessary paperwork so that he can spend as much time as possible with the young people.

Young people are supported to develop positive relationships with their peers in the home and any negative interactions are quickly addressed. Staff are familiar with the placement plans for each young person and contribute towards the development of these in regular professionals meetings. Consequently, the support and guidance young people receive from staff reflects the strategies outlined in their placement plans.

The views and wishes of young people regarding their care and the running of the home are listened to by staff and subsequently acted upon. Where a young person's wish cannot be met, staff offer an explanation or alternative solution. This was observed during the inspection at a young people's house meeting, where a young person questioned arrangements for the young people's holiday. The meeting was effectively managed by staff and all the young people were supported to make their views known.

Despite the commitment to ensuring young people and listened to, staff spoken to at the home have limited knowledge of the role of an advocate for looked after children, or what advocacy services are available locally. Consequently, young people who might benefit from an advocates support are not provided with information on how to access an advocacy service.

No complaints have been made by young people or others since the last inspection. The young people's guide to the home provides clear information on how to complain and provides contact details for Ofsted. The guide is informative and easy to read and gives a clear explanation to young people about how they can expect to be supported and cared for.

In conversation with staff and young people during the inspection, several references

were made to recent improvements regarding the appearance of the home. The manager has overseen the purchase of some new furnishings to make the home more comfortable. Many of the communal areas are in need of redecoration and new furniture, and some of the space, particularly the conservatory and garden, is not being put to good use. The manager has identified these issues, and they are addressed in the development plan for the home. The development plan also identifies new ways to develop young people's awareness of different cultures.

Staff at the home maintain regular communication with other agencies. One social worker reported that he receives regular verbal and written updates and communication is good. However, another social worker referred to partnership working becoming potentially difficult when the organisations assessment of the young person's needs was questioned by the placing authority.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    adequate**

The home has faced some difficult challenges in recent months, particularly during the period when no Registered Manager was in place. During this period young people were not always safeguarded effectively. During the inspection one young person reported that there had been occasions when he did not feel safe due to the behaviour of a peer. The young person was not confident in how staff managed the situation. The young person also acknowledged that some bullying had taken place during this period, but that things had changed since the new manager came to the home.

A serious incident occurred in February 2014 involving the misuse of prescribed medication. Staff on duty at the time did not take effective action to prevent the incident occurring. In interviews with the manager and Senior Management during the inspection, it was acknowledged that staff should have prevented the incident.

Medications are stored in accordance with regulations, and records for the administering of medication and stock control are all effective and up to date.

Comprehensive records contain detailed background histories for the young people, and identify their particular needs and vulnerabilities. However, this level of information is not always reflected in risk assessments written to keep young people safe. Risk assessments contain generic statements and there is a duplication of actions for each young person to minimise risk. Consequently, risk assessments do not benefit from taking into account the unique information known about individual young people.

Behaviour management strategies are in place and there have been no physical restraints used in the home since the last inspection. Staff spoken to during the inspection were able to describe a range of interventions used to de-escalate negative behaviours and promote good behaviour. The use of reward charts has



recently been introduced and young people have responded positively to this approach. As a result, the use of sanctions has decreased in recent weeks. Where sanctions are used, young people have the opportunity to record their views, and the effectiveness of sanctions is monitored by the manager and discussed in team meetings. Reward charts have been particularly effective in enabling young people to maintain healthy diets.

Young people rarely go missing from the home, and a proactive approach is taken to identifying the triggers for missing episodes when these do occur. The manager has worked in partnership with other agencies to identify innovative approaches which successfully reduce the frequency of young people going missing. Staff observe young people who leave the home without permission, and have agreed protocols in place with the local police for reporting young people missing when they lose sight of them. This reflects the level of vulnerability of the young people living at the home.

An inspection of recruitment documents at another of the organisations homes in May 2014 identified that on two occasions references have not been taken up from the applicant's most recent employer. It was also unclear from the documentation if this issue had been explored during the recruitment process. The organisation has not demonstrated consistently good safe recruitment practice.

Records held in the home demonstrate that fire drills, fire risk assessments and the checking of equipment are undertaken within the required timescales. There are some minor anomalies in the records, but these do not impact negatively on the overall fire safety precautions. A fire extinguisher was seen to be placed on the stairs at the home as the wall bracket to hold it had come away from the wall. This was repaired promptly after being brought to the attention of the manager.

## **Leadership and management**

## **adequate**

The manager at the home has been employed by the organisation for several years, and is the Registered Manager at another of the organisations homes, which is a twenty minute drive away. She came into this post on 1st April 2014 and the application to Ofsted for registration was made in late May 2014. The application is currently being processed. She has obtained the Registered Manager's Award (20/06/2006) (NVQ4 management).

The previous Registered Manager left the organisation in January 2014. Senior management made a decision to appoint the current manager on 28th February 2014, to commence on 1st April 2014. There was therefore a period of three months when effectively, there was no manager in place, although senior management were overseeing the running of the home. During this period the number of incidents and use of sanctions continued to rise. The current manager has overseen recent improvements in the quality of care and safeguarding practice.

The track record for leadership and management over the last six months has not been satisfactory. Recent improvements need to become embedded in practice and sustained in the home. There is a plan for the current manager to work closely with a recently appointed person who, it is planned, will become the Registered Manager in the near future. The purpose of this is to avoid young people experiencing further disruption during the transitional period.

Discussion with the manager and senior leaders during the inspection confirmed they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Many of the areas for improvement identified at the inspection had already been recognised, and plans made to address these.

Requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been acted upon, although it is recognised by the manager that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure all areas of the home are comfortable and homely. This is addressed in the homes development plan.

The manager has produced a development plan for the home. The plan makes reference to purchasing new fittings and furnishing for the home, but is not specific about the maintenance work that needs to be carried out. There are cracks in some of the woodwork and holes in some walls in the communal living areas, and the standard of decoration is not good. The development plan does not identify individuals who have responsibility for seeing an action is completed or have timelines for completion. The plan is not an effective document for ensuring the proposed improvements will be made.

The organisation has reviewed the arrangements for visits under regulation 33, and a new company has been commissioned to undertake these. Two visits have taken place since this change, and the quality of the reports is good. The manager recognises that comments on the content of the regulation 33 reports have not been made by the leadership and management team in recent months, and will make written comments and observations on future reports.

The manager reported that staff from the two homes she manages now see themselves as one team. Staff interviewed during the inspection saw this as a positive development and could identify many benefits from this new way of working. Some staff work in both homes, and this has meant more staff are available to cover staff absences. Consequently, young people experience more consistency from the staff caring for them.

Staff receive a good level of support from managers, and those spoken to were positive about the supervision they receive. Staff were particularly impressed with the induction process when joining the organisation and the support they received during the probationary period. The child protection module of the induction training is delivered in week five or six, and there is a risk new staff could not be familiar with the organisations child protection procedures when working with a young person

before the module is delivered. During this period however, new staff 'shadow' an experienced member of the team.

All staff are either qualified or are working towards an appropriate qualification. Staff have to complete their probationary period successfully prior to undertaking the qualification. Staff have access to a number of training courses provided by the organisation, which address risks associated with internet use and child sexual exploitation.

## What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

## Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.