

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC405985
<b>Inspector</b>	Joanna Heller
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Registered person</b>	ERA Care Limited
<b>Registered person address</b>	Unit G22 Allen House The Maltings, Station Road Sawbridgeworth Hertfordshire CM21 9JX
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Stephen Milton
<b>Registered manager</b>	Wayne Ronald George Russell
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	02/10/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	19/11/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	One compliance notice was issued on 7 October 2014. On 20 October 2014 a monitoring visit was undertaken and the compliance notice had been complied with.

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

## Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	<b>adequate</b>
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Young people views have not fed into this inspection as no young people were accommodated at the time of the visit. No young people have lived at the home since the last inspection.

A statutory compliance notice was issued following the last inspection as there were particular concerns regarding poor quality admission processes. A further monitoring visit identified the notice had been complied with.

The provider and manager have ensured that the vast majority of requirements set at the previous inspection have been addressed. For example, improved admission systems mean that inappropriate placements are less likely to be made.

The provider has invested in staff training and now ensures that all staff have completed the core e-learning.

The organisation has invested significantly in enhancing the home environment. Fire

prevention systems now ensure that young people are suitably safeguarded from fire. Health and safety shortfalls continue to remain in some areas, such as, the lack of provision of window restrictors and current electrical safety certificate.

Five requirements and three recommendations have been set as a part of this inspection. These relate to improving health and safety arrangements, improving record-keeping and providing sufficient guidance to staff.

The management oversight of the home has improved since the last inspection and new systems have been put in place. As a result the quality of service provided has improved and overall effectiveness is judged as adequate.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This children's home is a private provision which provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties aged between 11 and 17 years.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2014	Full	inadequate
18/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
31/05/2013	Full	good
06/12/2012	Interim	good progress

### 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
12B (2001)	notify, in writing, the local authority for the area in which the children's home is located without delay of the admission of a child into and the discharge of a child from, the children's home (Regulation 12B (a) &(b)	30/01/2015
16 (2001)	prepare and implement written a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect. In particular; provide suitable guidance to staff on how to act following a safeguarding incident, furthermore submit a copy of the home's policy to the local safeguarding children board for review (Regulation	30/01/2015

	16 (1) (b))	
23 (2001)	ensure all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety. In particular; ensure any long cords are secured and window restrictors are provided in the absence of a suitable risk assessment. Ensure a current electrical installation certificate is in place (Regulation 23 (a))	31/12/2014
29 (2001)	The registered person shall maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date. In particular; maintain an accurate admission register (Regulation 29 (1))	30/01/2015
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. The system referred to shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1) (b)&(3))	31/12/2014

## Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a written record of all medication given. In particular; ensure home remedies are suitable for children to take and evidence staff competency in the administration of medication (NMS 6.15)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff and volunteers are supported to undertake (NMS 18.1)
- ensure that there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. (NMS 22.1)

## Inspection judgements

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

Only one young person has resided at the home since the last inspection. This young person was resident for two days immediately following the last inspection. There is insufficient information to effectively judge outcomes for children and young people at this inspection.

Improvements in systems promote improved quality of care and indicate the potential outcomes for young people are likely to have been enhanced since the last inspection.

### Quality of care **adequate**

The organisation has reviewed and improved the assessment and admission procedures within the home. The Responsible Individual is now clear on their professional role in supporting the Registered Manager, ensuring sufficient information is in place to enable the home to effectively meet the child's needs. This means that an inappropriate placement is unlikely to occur and ensures that staff have sufficient information to meet the child's individual needs.

Young people have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. The manager has established new systems to promote young people's attendance at preventative health appointments. This means that young people are more likely to attend such key appointments therefore enhancing their individual health outcomes.

Medication is stored securely in a locked area. Clear records are maintained of medication administered. However, where over the counter medications have been given by staff there is no evidence that these have been checked as being suitable to administer. Staff have undertaken online training in medication awareness, however, there is no evidence that their competence has been assessed. These shortfalls mean that staff may administer medication without full awareness of the potential impact of other medications which the child is taking, and the importance of having such knowledge.

The manager has ensured all staff update their food hygiene training and are more vigilant and aware of good food hygiene practices. This means that food storage arrangements have improved and now protect children from the possibility of illness developing through poor food hygiene practices.

The manager has reviewed systems for promoting positive contact with families and schools ensuring that children's educational outcomes are effectively enhanced. For example, weekly school contact is now scheduled to ensure that staff are aware of the individual educational progress of each child. The manager has introduced a reward system linked to young people's regular attendance at school and participation in school activities.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. Young people moving onto independence have been well supported by staff. For example, staff have supported young people to choose and visit their new home and make suitable educational arrangements. Young people continue to keep in contact with staff and say they are progressing well.

There have been no sanctions or restraint used since the last inspection. Sanctions when used in the past have been appropriate and proportionate, and physical intervention has been used rarely. Thresholds for the use of physical restraint are clear.

Financial arrangements within the home have been reviewed to ensure suitable resources are available to promote family contact. The manager has ensured that suitable equipment is provided to enhance young people's independence and experience of living in the home.

The building provides young people with suitably spacious accommodation. The change of use of the room previously used as a utility room to an additional communal area, means that young people now have an area to study or meet their visitors in private. The provider has ensured that maintenance tasks have been addressed and areas requiring improvement have been redecorated. This investment in the building has significantly enhanced the living accommodation available to young people.

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

The home's safeguarding policy does not give staff sufficiently clear guidance on what to do in the event of an allegation. For example, the policy does not state that members of staff should not talk to the alleged abuser. This is of particular concern as at the last inspection staff did not understand that this was not appropriate. The policy has not been sent to the Local Safeguarding Children Board for review which would assist the home in understanding the quality of the policy and ensure it is in accordance with the local authority policy.

Staff are provided with on line safeguarding training. However, the manager has identified that this has not always effectively equipped staff with sufficient knowledge of how to act to robustly to safeguard young people. Therefore, individual supervision sessions have taken place to enhance specific staff awareness of

procedures and good safeguarding practice. The provider is reviewing ways to provide classroom-based training to build on existing e-learning in order to enhance staff's awareness of child protection. This means that staff should be better equipped to effectively safeguard children should an incident occur. The manager and deputy have undertaken designated safeguarding officer e-learning training. Suitable designated safeguarding officer training is scheduled for senior staff who undertake the role of designated safeguarding officer. This means that the senior management team's knowledge will be enhanced enabling them to lead staff more effectively in relation to safeguarding.

The manager has not ensured that the home's premises are sufficiently physically safe. For example, long cords on blinds are not appropriately secured, nor are window restrictors in place to prevent accidental or intentional harm. Furthermore, no current electrical safety certificate is in place to demonstrate the safety of the electrical supply. These shortfalls present no immediate risk, as no young people are currently accommodated within the home. However, there remains the potential for harm should these shortfalls not be addressed prior to a young person being admitted.

The provider has improved fire precaution arrangements within the home. These new arrangements have recently been assessed as suitable by the local fire brigade. Young people and staff are therefore safeguarded from fire in line with current good practice.

There have been no incidents of bullying or of a safeguarding nature since the last inspection. No sanctions or restraints have taken place since the last inspection. Staff employed for the home have current training in the home's control, restraint and de-escalation techniques.

There has been one incident of missing from care since the last inspection. Staff followed local protocols and worked appropriately with partner agencies to promote the child's welfare.

Young people are safeguarded from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home through sound vetting practices. The home ensures that staff are not employed until all checks to their suitability are in place. The building is appropriately secure and suitable systems are in place to ensure that visitors are appropriately monitored.

## **Leadership and management**

## **adequate**

The Registered Manager has been in post since May 2014. Between December 2013 and May 2014 there was no manager in post and the Responsible Individual oversaw the management of the home. This is the manager's first experience of managing a children's home, however, they have suitable experience of senior roles within



residential children's homes. The manager holds a level four qualification in the management children's homes and is in the process of enrolling on level five. The manager has informed Ofsted that they have resigned their post. The Responsible Individual is aware of the requirement to keep Ofsted informed of interim management arrangements in the home.

The organisation has updated the Statement of Purpose within the past six months and provided a copy of the updated document to Ofsted. The provider has reviewed financial arrangements to ensure that suitable resources are in place to enable the home to operate in accordance with its Statement Of Purpose. This means that young people will be able to enjoy an enhanced environment and quality of service.

All staff have now undertaken the core e-learning training program which includes areas, such as, food hygiene, child protection, medication and first aid. The manager is planning on building upon the foundations of this training to enhance staff professional awareness and competence.

Staff have received individual and group supervision as appropriate since the last inspection to ensure that they are more effectively supported and guided. There are currently no young people accommodated in the home and staff have been re-deployed to other homes. The provider plans to provide all staff with a two-day induction prior to the home admitting young people. This will provide an opportunity for further staff training, supervision and guidance ensuring a consistent approach across the staff team. The provider now has systems in place to ensure more appropriate shift planning to ensure young people's needs are effectively met by a consistent group of staff.

The most recent quality of care review does not identify the strengths and weaknesses within the service nor clearly identify how the service can improve. The views of young people and partner agencies are not utilised to fully understand the strengths and areas for growth within the service. Furthermore, young peoples' first names are used in the report, which has the potential to undermine their confidentiality.

Staff do not always maintain sufficiently accurate recording and reporting systems. For example, the admission and discharge register has not been kept accurate and up-to-date.

The manager has not ensured that suitable notification has been sent to the local authority where the home is situated, advising them of admissions into, and discharges from the home. This does not have a direct impact on the support offered to young people, however, undermines the knowledge of the host authority on the number of looked after children in the area and where they are accommodated.

The Registered Manager and Responsible Individual have taken appropriate action to address the vast majority of requirements set at the last inspection. Some shortfalls

remain within the home, however, the provider has demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of care. The potential outcomes for young people are improved as a result of these actions taken.

## 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.