

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC055912
Inspector	Julia Wright
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Verve Life Limited
Registered person address	1 River View Longmoor Road, Greatham LISS Hampshire GU33 6AE
Responsible individual	David Powell
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Anne-Marie Murray
Date of last inspection	13/08/2014

Inspection date	07/01/2015
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Previous inspection	declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	inadequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	inadequate
Leadership and management	inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	inadequate
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The level of care provided to the young people is inadequate. Practice is not strong and there is a significant shortfall in key areas of practice including leadership and management, quality assurance systems and an absence of managerial oversight. Young people say that they do not feel safe at the home.

A lack of management scrutiny and review of young people's care plans and risk assessments means young people feel anxious and distressed as they are not appropriately supported by staff. This means that they worry unnecessarily and are exposed to bullying by others.

There is poor record keeping and a failure by the manager to monitor young people's files. This has resulted in inconsistent practice as staff do not have all the information they need to understand and meet young people's needs.

A failure to oversee staff development means that staff do not have the necessary skills and abilities to meet young people's needs.

As a result of these shortfalls, the values and principles set by managers to get things right for every young person is not robust and the welfare of young people is compromised.

As a result of this inspection a number of requirements and recommendations have been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to of four young people with learning disabilities, two of whom may also have physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/08/2014	Interim	declined in effectiveness
30/07/2013	Full	adequate
18/04/2013	Full	inadequate
23/01/2013	Interim	inadequate 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
5 (2001)	keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and the children's guide(Regulation5(a))	15/02/2015
11 (2001)	conduct the home so as to promote the care, education, supervision and support of children accommodated there.(Regulation 11(1)(b))	15/02/2015
17B (2001)	ensure confirmation that the person authorised by the registered provider to make the record has spoken to the child concerned and the person using the measure about the use of the measure(Regulation 17B(3)(h))	15/02/2015
23	ensure all parts of the home to which children have	15/02/2015

(2001)	access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety(Regulation 23(a))	
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation(Regulation 24(5))	15/02/2015
28 (2001)	ensure children's case records are kept securely in the children's home so long as the child to whom it relates is accommodated there(Regulation 28(3)(a))	15/02/2015
28 (2001)	ensure the case records of children accommodated in the home are kept up to date and include: the date and result of any review of the placing authority's plan for the care of the child, every school report received in respect of the child whilst accommodated at the home and the date and circumstances of any measures of control, restraint or discipline used in the home (Regulation 28 (a)) *	15/02/2015
30 (2001)	ensure, if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall, without delay, notify the persons indicated in respect of column 2 of the table (Regulation 30(1)) *	15/02/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that premises used for the purposes of a children's home are appropriately and suitably located, and review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of those premises at least once in each calendar year(Regulation 31(1A)(a)(b))	15/02/2015
33 (2001)	produce a written report about a visit and provide a copy of the report to HMCI, the local authority for the area in which the home is located, the placing authorities of children accommodated in the home, the registered provider and the responsible individual(Regulation 33(9)(a-e))	15/02/2015
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once every 3 months (regulation 34(1)(a))	15/02/2015
34 (2001)	supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1) and make a copy of the report available on request to placing authorities where the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home(Regulation 34(2))	15/02/2015
36 (2001)	the registered person shall provide HMCI with a certificate of insurance for the registered provider in	18/01/2015

	respect of liability(Regulation 36(3)).	
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*These requirements are subject to a compliance notice

Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to independent advice and support from adults who they can contact directly and in private about problems or concerns, which is appropriate to their age and understanding. Children know their rights to advocacy and how to access an advocate(NMS1.5)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated(NMS10.3)
- ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake. In particular ensure staff receive core and refresher training(NMS18.1)
- ensure all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification(NMS18.5)
- ensure staff have access and advice and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff(NMS19.4)
- ensure staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for(NMS19.6)
- ensure the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource(NMS15.2).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Some young people struggle with their behaviour and emotions. They do not have tailored placement plans and risk assessments in place which reflect their current needs. Inconsistent care planning undermines the progress of some young people. Support strategies are not in place to address young people's particular needs. This hinders staff safeguarding young people's vulnerabilities. Consequently, young people's well-being is diminished.

Young people are not afforded adequate opportunities to contribute to the running of the home or to their care planning. Young people's meetings and key work sessions do not take place regularly. Their voices are not heard and this undermines their participation and involvement in the running of the home.

Young people sustain meaningful contact with people who are important in their lives. They develop an understanding of their background and circumstances and a sense of self-knowledge is enhanced.

Young people are willing to attend school regularly. This ensures that they have the maximum opportunities for attainment and progress. Consequently young people's self-esteem is enhanced and their achievements celebrated.

Young people harness the support of staff to learn new skills. They learn how to look after their personal care, and their personal space. Their enthusiasm is captured and they learn valuable life skills. Learning is optimised and self-esteem increased.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people are cared for by staff who are concerned about them. They enjoy positive relationships with most staff. Consequently, young people learn to form meaningful relationships with others, enhancing self-confidence. A parent said, 'Staff know and understand my child well. Staff are so helpful, they always listen to us'.

Young people do not always enjoy sound relationships with each other. Deficiencies in care planning means that staff do not always identify where young people need additional support and then ensure that this is in place. Consequently, young people's behaviour can escalate on occasions where this may be avoided. This means that young people are upset and anxious unnecessarily, and they become distressed.

Young people's files fail to hold all key information. For example some files are missing care plans written by the placing authority or updated school reports. These

are necessary to ensure staff have all the key information necessary to care for young people. Essential information about school progress and reviews are unknown and staff knowledge is lacking.

Complaints are not dealt with robustly. There is a failure in the recording of complaints. Young people are not always informed of the outcome of their complaint and the reasons for any action taken. This means that young people do not develop confidence that their complaints are dealt with rigorously.

Some staff have not received adequate training in the administration of medication. This means that not all staff can be considered fully trained and competent in the handling of medication. Consequently, appropriate and safe care is not maintained for young people.

Staff support young people's attendance at routine health appointments. This means that young people receive the necessary care they need to maintain good health.

Young people all attend school full time and their attendance and punctuality are good. Staff support young people with homework or additional project work. As a result, young people's learning and educational opportunities are enhanced.

Staff organise a range of leisure and social pursuits for young people. Some attend football club, or go swimming. Social outings for meals are arranged. Where young people express a desire to make friends or have a friend visit them at the home, staff support these requests. This promotes a healthy lifestyle and encourages the development of social skills amongst the young people.

Parents say that liaison and communication with staff is good. Information is shared between parents and staff following contacts. Staff update families about their child's progress at the home. This ensures that young people understand that adults talk to each other to promote their welfare and it contributes towards seamless care for the young people.

There are shortfalls in the standard of decoration of the home. For example, bedrooms need redecoration due to damage to the walls. This means that some parts of the environment are unwelcoming. This affects young people's self-value and personal comfort.

Keeping children and young people safe inadequate

Children's safety and welfare is not sufficiently protected in this home. Young people have complex needs and measures put in place to support and manage behaviour are not always updated and reviewed. Some young people say that they do not feel safe. They worry about other young people's behaviour and the impact this can have on them.

Risk assessments are in place to minimise the risks of harm to young people but these are not always reviewed and updated. For example, where young people express concern about each other's behaviour, or where they are worried about their own reactions, these risks are not reflected in the risk assessment. Strategies for staff to manage these risks are not identified and staff are not meeting young people's needs. This compromises young people living in a home that keeps them feeling safe.

Records of physical intervention are not robustly recorded. Essential information is missing. Young people's safety is therefore compromised. There is a failure to record information about debrief sessions with young people and staff following physical interventions. Consequently, it is not clear if young people understand the reason for the physical intervention, or whether they suffered any effects from it. There is no managerial oversight of the use of physical intervention. This demonstrates poor monitoring by the manager in this area and compromises young people's safety.

Recruitment practice does not meet the home's own recruitment policy. Whilst disclosure and barring certificates are received when staff are appointed, these are not always renewed in line with the home's policy. References are not verified to check that they are authentic. This means that the home does not meet its own standards, and young people are potentially placed at risk from adults who may wish to harm them.

Whilst staff at the home feel confident in addressing safeguarding issues regarding young people, there are gaps in the safeguarding training for some staff. This means that staff do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding to fully protect young people.

There are shortfalls in the health and safety of the home, for example some fire doors do not close properly. In addition, the risk assessments in place to evaluate the environment of the home were out of date and need review. Consequently, young people may be exposed to risks and hazards in the home that are physically unsafe. This places young people in danger.

There have been no incidents of young people being missing from care since the last inspection. The manager and staff have developed relationships with external professionals including the police, and this contributes to the promotion of a safer environment. Young people become familiar with seeing police in roles other than enforcement. This assists young people's sense of citizenship and understanding of society overall.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The home has been without a Registered Manager since May 2014. The current manager has applied for Registration with Ofsted.

There is a continued failure to meet Regulations. Two requirements made at the last inspection have not been met. Three out of five recommendations made at the previous inspection have also not been met. The home is not improving the quality of care offered to young people. The young people are not living in a home that is well managed, monitored or appropriately quality assured. The safety and welfare of young people is impaired.

The manager has failed to send monthly independent reports to Ofsted. The manager's approach to self-evaluation lacks rigour. Three monthly audits from the manager have not been forwarded to Ofsted since July 2014. This means that prior to the inspection, the regulator has been unable to review the home's quality of care or how the manager responds to issues relating to young people. The young people's files have key information missing from them. These include school reports, physical intervention logs and updated care and placement plans. This means that staff do not have all the information they need to work safely with young people. As a result, young people's needs are not always fully addressed.

There is no development plan in place and steps to improve the service provided to young people are not identified. There can be no confidence that the service for young people will improve.

Revisions of the Statement of Purpose are not forwarded promptly to Ofsted. The Children's Guide fails to contain all relevant information for young people, for example the full details to contact Ofsted.

Supervision of staff does not take place regularly. This means that staff performance has not been thoroughly monitored to identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice. Annual appraisals of staff have not taken place. The strengths and weaknesses of staff have not been reviewed.

There are gaps in staff training. These include fire safety and safeguarding. This limits staff knowledge in meeting the needs of young people. This means young people may not be sufficiently protected. The procedure for notifying significant events to Ofsted required under Regulation 30 of the Children's Homes Regulations has not been met. This was a requirement at the last inspection. The repeated omission means that Ofsted continue to be unable to check whether staff have taken appropriate action to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people following the incidents. Young people's safety is compromised.

Management oversight and auditing of files, assessments and procedures is lacking. Young people's files do not always contain the required documentation needed to ensure that staff understand young people's needs. A system of reviewing and updating information is not in place. This prevents staff being aware of the young

people's current needs The manager has not prepared a location assessment addressing safeguarding and accessibility of local services for young people. This hinders the home ensuring that young people are adequately safeguarded.

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.