

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC459857
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Responsible individual	Jonathan Joseph Michael Farrow
Registered manager	Nicola Helen Boyce
Date of last inspection	29/01/2015

Inspection date	19/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **declined in effectiveness**.

At the last inspection, all aspects of the service were judged to be good and only one requirement was identified. The registered persons were asked to assess the suitability of the location of the premises by 28 January 2015. This has been completed only recently; the document is still to be shared with the team. The managers have complied with the requirement, but the progress is slow.

At this inspection, six breaches of the regulations were identified. Leaders and managers do not demonstrate that the home is consistently run in line with legislation and good practice. The shortfalls relate to the effectiveness of the behaviour management, the safety and the quality of the environment, sending notifications to Ofsted and a number of issues relating to staffing, such as records of staff duty roster and vetting of agency staff.

A further three recommendations are made regarding the arrangements for providing support to young people at night. Only agency staff work at night in this home. This arrangement is not satisfactory and does not meet the national minimum standard. Although there is always a permanent staff member sleeping on the premises, it is concerning that the agency staff members are left to work alone at night. The concerns are compounded as the home is unable to demonstrate that these agency staff have been robustly vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. There is a consistent failure to evidence that any risk assessments related to lone working, specifically in this context, which significantly increases the risks, have been carried out.

Managers have booked a member of agency staff, who has never worked in this home before and is not known to anyone from the home, to be left alone on duty at night. The home has not had written confirmation from the agency regarding any vetting that they have undertaken. Other relevant information, such as this person's

experience, training or a photo to confirm their identity has not been passed to the home. According to the home's records, this staff member received only a limited induction that did not include protection of children. No record was kept on the staff duty roster to show that this person worked in the home on that night. Their first name was recorded in the home's log, but their full name and evidence of any kind of identity check were not recorded anywhere. The impact on young people is that they are not adequately protected at all times. This incident led to a young person becoming very distressed and leaving the home late at night.

The home has had a challenging time, since the last Ofsted visit in January 2015. The managers, staff and young people describe their experience of the home in recent times as bad, chaotic, unsettled and difficult.

There have been repeated incidents that show that behaviour management strategies are not effective. On a number of occasions, staff were unable to de-escalate the rising tensions in the home. Their interventions did not work and they rapidly lost control of volatile situations. On one day, the police were called twice to help restore order and peace in the home.

In an attempt to prevent further incidents, managers have introduced restrictive rules and rigid control. All privileges and activities that young people enjoy doing have been withdrawn. On the day of the inspection, the staff were locking themselves in the offices. They explained that this was to prevent young people from 'barging in and grabbing records'. The fire extinguishers were also kept locked away to prevent young people from letting them off and throwing them around. It was clear from the records that the kitchen and food were also at times, kept locked. This was to stop young people from using the food as missiles. No clear plan that supports restoration of the homely atmosphere and the boundaries and freedoms usually associated with a good residential setting is in place. No strategy to help young people to develop a sense of responsibility for their behaviours and care for others and the environment was evident at the inspection.

The physical environment has greatly suffered as a result of the behaviour of young people. The walls have been marked and stained by food and liquids and various other items being thrown at them. There is visible damage and disrepair throughout the building. Some examples include a bigger than a football-size hole in the wall and a large chunk of skirting board missing. The premises are not maintained to an acceptable standard. This is not conducive to enabling young people to develop respect for their environment.

On the day of the inspection, a workman was fitting new flooring to some communal areas of the building including the entrance. This created a number of obstacles and tripping risks for people walking through these areas to access the kitchen, the bathroom, the offices and other areas of the home. The work involved dangerous power tools and a large wood saw that at times, were left unattended. No risk assessment was completed. The environment is not kept safe from hazards that are

easily avoidable or minimised.

In addition, no risk assessment has been completed regarding the risks of falling from the fire escape stairs. Those stairs are external to the building and have flat roof-areas on each side of them. Any falls would have a serious consequence likely to cause a threat to life. The unpredictability and impulsive behaviours that the young people demonstrate add to these risks.

The arrangements for joint working with the police when young people go missing are effective. The home has sought to engage young people in specialist help to understand and manage better their attitudes towards themselves and others.

Ofsted has not been notified of an incident when child sexual exploitation was suspected. Although staff have put support in place for this young person and there have been no repeat incidents, lack of notification prevents Ofsted as the regulator from having a current view of the home.

Young people talk positively about the home and the staff members.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated and managed by a charity and provider of social housing. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for no more than eight children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties age range from 12 - 17 years old, with two of the eight bedrooms used as emergency placement only for 140 days each per calendar year.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2015	Full	good
20/09/2013	Full	good

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
17B (2001)	keep under review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management policy. This in particular relates to the practice being more effective at enabling children to behave in a more constructive manner (Regulation 17B (2) (a))	01/05/2015
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety. In particular, evidence that risk assessments have been carried out and that effective strategies to minimise the risks have been implemented (Regulation 23 (a))	01/05/2015
26 (2001)	demonstrate that any agency staff who work in the home are fit to do so (Regulation 26 (1) (a))	01/04/2015
29	maintain in the children's home the records	01/04/2015

(2001)	specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date. This in particular relates to the record of the staff duty roster (Regulation 29 (1) Schedule 4.11)	
30 (2001)	notify Ofsted without delay if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 take place (Regulation 30 (1))	01/04/2015
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained. (Regulation 31 (2)(e))	01/06/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the overall number, competence and deployment of staff can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of children. This in particular relates to the night staff (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that no more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night, at the home are to be from an external agency, and no member of staff from an external agency is to be alone on duty at night in the home (NMS 17.8)
- ensure where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children and staff. (NMS 17.9)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.