

## Children's homes inspection - Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>20/08/2015</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC481040</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>590 Wokingham Road Earley Reading RG6 7HN</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Mr Gerard Berry</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Post Vacant</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Mrs Maire Atherton</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>20/08/2015</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
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.	
<b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

**SC481040**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is requires improvement because:**

- There has been a period of instability in the management of the home. This has led to a lack of monitoring and evaluation to identify trends and patterns with a view to making improvements to the service. Independent monitoring visits have not taken place as required.
- The staffing of the home is not always consistent. This has contributed to inconsistent behaviour management.
- Risk management is not supported by detailed and current recording. There has been a lack of engagement with the placing authority on their responsibilities in the management of young people reported missing in particular the return interviews.
- Transition planning is variable, particularly for young people moving within the organisation.
- Recruitment records do not show that the full range of required checks has been undertaken.
- Management action in response to concerns expressed by young people has not been timely or well evidenced.
- A hard pressed staff team have not thought creatively about how to engage young people in a range of social and recreational activities.
- Records are not consistently comprehensive; neither are staff using the current care plan in all cases.

## The children's home strengths

- A small core of staff are building good relationships with the young people.
- Young people have a good understanding of, and pride in, the progress they have made in a range of areas. This includes securing part-time work and/or education placements, giving up smoking and cutting down on time spent gaming. A social worker and parent both observed that a young person is 'exceeding expectations' since moving into the home.
- Young people report that their engagement in the therapeutic programme is really making a difference, and this can be seen by family and staff too.
- A significant change in the organisation is the development of a positive touch policy, in a therapeutic context, and involving young people in determining what this means for them on an individual basis.

## 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due Date
<p>12 The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person is required to ensure:</p> <p>12 (2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(Regulation 12(2)(a))</p>	15/10/2015
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>In particular</p> <p>(d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p> <p>5. Documentary evidence of any qualifications which the person considers relevant for the position.</p> <p>6. A full employment history, together with a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment, in writing.</p> <p>(Regulation 32(1)(3) Schedule 2 (5)(6))</p>	15/10/2015
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation.</p> <p>(Regulation 39(3))</p>	15/10/2015
<p>7 The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the</p>	15/10/2015

<p>registered person is required to:</p> <p>7 (2)(c) keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document.</p> <p>(Regulation 7(2)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>(Regulation 44 (1))</p>	15/10/2015
<p>9 The enjoyment and achievement standard</p> <p>In order to meet the enjoyment and achievement standard the registered person is required to ensure:</p> <p>9(2)(a) that staff help each child to—</p> <p>(i) develop the child's interests and hobbies;</p> <p>(ii) participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences.</p> <p>(Regulation 9(2)(a))</p>	15/10/2015

## Recommendations

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

- Where a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, such as frequently being absent from the home to meet with inappropriate adults, the registered person, in consultation with the child's placing authority, should convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the young person. The strategy should be agreed with the child's placing authority, the local authority where the home is located and the local police.

(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 9.32)

- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis, in particular by having the current care plan available in the home.

(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 11.19)

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice.

(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46, paragraph 10.24)

- Demonstrate how staff encourage the young person to continue their education or training and support them to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the option they choose.

(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28, paragraph 5.16)

- Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards, in particular ensure risk assessments to support young people self-medicating are robust.

(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 35, paragraph 7.15)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

- The service is a four bedded children's home registered for male adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The home is one of a group of homes owned and operated by a private, specialist organisation working with adolescent males who have experienced significant

adversity in their lives and have gone on to display harmful sexual behaviour towards others.

- The organisation also provides education and therapeutic intervention.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement	
This is the first inspection of this service since registration.			



## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The changes in the management of the home have not been conducive to providing young people with a wholly stable environment. Despite this a small core group of staff are building good relationships with the young people living in the home. The young people who have been with the organisation for a while also know the staff from the other homes who work in this house occasionally. Young people who are new are getting to know them. Young people describe an unsettled start but, at the time of this visit, were appreciative of a much calmer atmosphere. This provides them with many more opportunities for engagement with staff both on a one-to-one basis and as a group so as to further develop relationships.</p> <p>Staff actively promote the participation of young people in decision-making. This is threaded through the culture and takes place in practice, in day-to-day living and in personal development. A social worker commented 'the level of engagement is crucial to successful outcomes'. Where young people struggle to engage and invest in the placement their plan is reviewed to determine next steps, with the views of the young person taken into account. This can be a verbal contribution but also may be on the basis of observations of their behaviour and interactions with others.</p> <p>Young people move to this home with the understanding that they will be talking about difficult and very personal events, particularly in a therapeutic context, so as to enable them to move forward. One young person observed, 'I can look back on myself see the massive difference, putting myself out there and getting interviews. I wouldn't have done anything like that last year.' It is unclear how concerns raised by a young person in one strand of the organisation are shared and managed as a complaint. Young people say that complaints are now being addressed, including those made some time ago, and they can see some changes being made.</p> <p>All young people have places in further education provision beginning in September 2015. For some this will be the second year of a course, for others the first. Most young people positively engage in education, with good attendance. A parent was delighted to talk about the educational opportunities and choices that are now open to her child through this placement. Others would prefer an alternative, such as an apprenticeship. They receive support in this search but do not feel that it is fully sustained during the summer holidays, as there has been no success to date, despite a significant number of applications.</p>	

All individual and group social activities occur within a risk assessed framework. This is determined by the independence steps the young person has achieved. Those who have successfully worked through the therapy programme lead active social lives, and this includes the opportunity to bring friends to the home. One young person talked positively about how he has reduced the time he spends on the computer, a personal key target. For those just starting the programme staff have lacked creativity in stimulating interest in a wider range of activities, including those recommended in the young person's pathway plan.

Young people have developed or are developing the skills they need to achieve the next steps in their lives. Some are engaged in part-time work, others are managing their own food budget, shopping and cooking. They have a good understanding of the next stage and what they and others need to do to achieve this. Staff are actively engaged with placing authorities to move these plans forward.

Staff actively and effectively promote the health of young people. Young people understand what a healthy diet and lifestyle should look like, although they do not always adhere to this. Young people receive the routine and specialist health support they need. Since moving to the home young people have been supported to stop smoking and no longer engage in substance misuse. There is variation in the quality of record keeping in relation to the administration of medication. Some are comprehensive, others do not routinely show that medication has been given and a risk assessment for self-medication does not state what the medication is.

Young people moving in to and moving on from the home have varying experiences. Some moving within the organisation have experienced poorer quality transitions than those new to the organisation, who describe the moving process as helpful and feel they were fully involved. The management have recognised this and are involving young people in developing a new transitions policy.

Young people and their families benefit from well-defined and clearly understood contact arrangements that are supported in line with the plans for each individual. A parent said, 'they always keep me informed about what is happening so that I can be prepared for the visits.'

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The understanding of risk and its management are key facets of the ethos of the organisation. However the documentation in the house does not support the sound understanding of risk management and strategies to reduce risk as outlined by staff on duty. The placement of one young person proved a significant challenge and a lack of consistent management oversight was a contributory factor in not reducing the risks sufficiently. For example staff reported the action that had been taken in one instance, the purchase of plastic beakers, but there was no evaluation of this as a risk reduction strategy or evidence as to whether or not the action was successful.</p> <p>The young people currently living in the home feel safe and all say that there is someone they can talk to. They feel that recent changes in management have made a difference and they are confident that they are listened to and report getting a response. This has not always been the case.</p> <p>Staff are trained in and demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge of safeguarding matters. Any allegations or suspicions of harm are managed well, with effective liaison with external professionals. Some young people, who are always supervised by staff when in the community, as required by their placement plan, struggle with this. This has contributed to a young person leaving the house without permission and being reported missing. Due to staff concerns about the level of risk associated with the absence, child sexual exploitation in particular, this may be within 30 minutes of the young person being out of sight. Responses within the home did not achieve any significant change in the behaviour of the young person. There has been very little liaison with other professionals about this. The Head of Residential services for the organisation is beginning to establish links with relevant groups, for example the local safeguarding board. Her attendance at a recent child sexual exploitation board highlighted risks associated with a location near to the home. The Runaway and Missing From Home and Care policy has been approved by the local police. Placing authorities have not routinely offered return interviews. Senior management have made arrangements for someone not employed in the home to conduct an interview for an overnight missing episode. The young person responded well to this.</p> <p>Young people, who enjoy an increased level of independence, have gained this based on a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk, led by each young person themselves. As they progress through the steps they demonstrate an understanding of risks they may encounter and how to use the strategies and protective factors they have learned to keep themselves and others safe. The process involves young people, in consultation with others, making decisions about their readiness to take age-appropriate risks, including the use of the internet and social media. However, as part of their developing adolescence, they may still test</p>	

boundaries.

The combination of changing management and lack of a consistent staff team in the home has meant that there has been limited learning from the behaviour of young people. As a result patterns of behaviour became entrenched and repeated. This has been recognised, the compatibility of the group reviewed and changes implemented. The current group are appreciative of the difference this has made. A new format for considering the impact of a proposed placement has just been introduced. That used previously was broad brush and lacked detail, for example it referred to 'minor specific causes for concern' but did not identify what these were or how they were to be managed.

Behaviour management has not been consistent. Staff have used rewards and sanctions infrequently. When staff have issued sanctions these have not been routinely applied or followed up, with some young people seeing this as unfair. A new sanctions record book was introduced at the beginning of this month. The previous record was insufficiently detailed and lacked clarity. There has been a lack of routine evaluation of incidents by management to try and identify triggers for behaviour. The organisation operates no restraint policy. Staff are trained in breakaway techniques and understand the circumstances in which these may be used. Such instances are rare. The organisation has developed an 'appropriate touch' policy, based on research. Therapists undertake a semi-structured interview with young people to consider how touch may be viewed in different contexts. This enables young people to understand safe touch and have their say in the type of touch they would accept as supportive. Young people's responses to this have been positive.

There is a well-understood policy for searching young people's rooms. This is rarely used, and only with the young people's consent and a clear rationale for the decision.

The lack of consistent management has had an impact on the implementation of robust health and safety tests and monitoring. For example fire tests have not been recorded weekly and fire service records are not on site. Where a fault has been identified the record does not show the action taken. Risk assessments are variable. This has been recognised and action is underway to address this.

Recruitment is not sufficiently robust. There is no evidence that all gaps in employment are explored and not all recruitment files contain copies of relevant qualifications.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>The previous Registered Manager was also the Head of Residential Services and had delegated the day-to-day running of the home. This was not successful, and both have left the organisation. These changes in management have had a significant impact in the home. At the time of this inspection the organisation had recently appointed a new manager. She is in the process of applying for registration. There is also a new Head of Residential Services and a quality assurance officer in post, the latter a new role within the organisation. These appointments are already beginning to make a positive difference.</p> <p>There has been a small core of permanent staff since the home opened, who have established good relationships with the young people. Staffing shortfalls have been addressed by the deployment of staff from other homes within the organisation. This does not provide young people with consistent staff in the home and mitigates against effective team work. The relatively inexperienced team have not been well served by the previous management. Staff described supervision as 'infrequent and not useful'. Team meetings are held regularly. These have been task focused with very limited opportunity for reflection. Staff are confident that the new manager is addressing this, describing her as pro-active and knowledgeable. There is a sound induction programme to policies and procedures and the ethos of the organisation, underpinned by relevant training. The changes in management and team composition have meant that the induction in the home has not fully met the needs of new staff. There is a strong training programme scheduled for September to December 2015.</p> <p>As a consequence of management change, monitoring has been inconsistent. Learning from complaints and feedback is not well evidenced. There has been no independent visit in July. Some young people have expressed concerns to professionals within the organisation that have not been formally identified as complaints and managed as such. The new management team have recognised the deficits. Some actions have been implemented quickly, alongside an action plan with an improvement agenda.</p> <p>For each young person there is a detailed care plan, which reflects their range of needs and how these are to be addressed in care, education and therapy. Young people are actively involved in this process. However these have not routinely been used to inform practice in the residential setting. The plan held in the house is not the current version in every case, so failing to show how young people's voices are acted upon. Where a young person fails to settle in the home action is taken to review the placement. A structured plan is implemented, where possible, to achieve a positive transition to another placement within the organisation.</p> <p>Some young people do not feel that their social workers are challenged effectively,</p>	

as progress towards objectives feels very slow. However there are good examples of staff working in partnership with social workers to move things forward for the young people at a steady pace. A social worker spoke enthusiastically about the difference the placement has made to a young person, describing it as 'very positive'.

Recruitment is on-going, with new staff due to start at the beginning of September 2015. Young people are actively involved in the recruitment process and their views are taken into account.

The statement of purpose has been updated to reflect changes; this is not the case for the young people's guide. A parent described the home as 'clean, tidy and well looked after, it feels homely'. A recently vacated bedroom is scheduled for redecoration.

Case recording for young people has been variable. There are some detailed records that outline what is happening for the young people. Others make reference to specific incidents but do not give the detail required. A member of staff said that recent changes have enabled staff to keep up with recording and this is evident.

## 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 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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