

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	04/02/2016
Unique reference number	1183479
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Karen Ehret
Inspector	Chris Peel

Inspection date	04/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home has not yet had a full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The manager and staff have addressed most of the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection successfully. As a result the home has a more appealing environment and children's movement within it is not unduly restricted. It is a well maintained, comfortable building with lots of facilities for young people. The manager has a set of actions arising out of a helpful Regulation 45 report that she is gradually working through that include maintenance, practice and training issues.</p> <p>A bespoke display board featuring symbols facilitating complaints and similar portable devices allowing children and young people to, for example, point to where they have pains or to help them through the process of washing hands have been introduced. The latter has particularly been put to good use.</p> <p>Despite the manager and staff facilitating the making of complaints there is no record of a child having done so. As noted in the previous inspection report the complaints procedure does not cover those made by children and young people and this probably has a material effect. At least one grievance from a young person (about his photograph being taken and displayed without his agreement) was missed. Although the manager responded well when it was raised, not identifying it as a complaint was a hindrance to wider lessons being learned. There is also no guidance about what constitutes a complaint from a young person who is not verbal or does not use symbols.</p> <p>The manager has introduced a new impact risk assessment that has been well formatted to record and help evaluate the appropriateness of referrals.</p> <p>Three new versions of the children's guide have been produced, to match the range of communication abilities of young people. This is a commendable endeavour, however, not all include the elements laid down in statutory guidance.</p> <p>Staff have begun making visits to schools to liaise with education providers and then feedback to team meetings. A description is written up and put on children's files but outcomes are missing so it is hard to demonstrate that education is being supported and achievement maximised.</p>	

Children and young people are making progress but it is difficult to see to this of how targets set by staff contribute to this. There is significant evidence that the process currently in place is not sufficiently embedded in practice to have the impact it could: targets are sometimes written in the negative, are often intermittently recorded and are occasionally not the actual behaviour being worked on. The manager has not implemented a clear review process so that progress against the targets is difficult to make out. Information provided at meetings is frequently not related to what is found in records.

Evidence of the progress children and young people make is, however, seen in child in need review reports, copies of certificates given for achievements made and displays of work. These include improved sleep patterns, teeth cleaning, and toileting. The meeting minutes show that professionals and families are appreciative of this. A card sent by a parent after her son had moved on showed the family was particularly appreciative of the care staff had provided.

During the inspection observations were made of staff showing attentive and considerate care of children and young people. A 'line' was held with one who pestered for a DVD to be played before dinner; another was shown how to work a toy and was delighted with the sensory stimulation given.

There has been a steady reduction in the recorded rates of sanctions since the last inspection, indicating that strategies being used by staff with a group of children that they know well are becoming increasingly effective. This is illustrated by the rewards given to one young person for not disturbing others when he wakes at night. He is keen to earn them and so the improvement has been quite dramatic.

Sanctions and physical interventions that have taken place have not always been recorded as fully as should be the case. For example, where incidents have taken place is not always specific and there is limited space to describe antecedents and actions to de-escalate. It is often not clear if a staff debrief has taken place and an occasional signature is missing. The current recording format does not prompt for all the information required to show compliance with regulatory requirements.

The missing persons policy does not reference the need for independent return to care interviews; although there have been no instances of children and young people absconding the manager should ensure staff are aware of current statutory guidance.

The manager and staff have coped well in a time of uncertainty over the future of the home in the transition to the Children's Services Trust. Staff vacancies have been high over this time but managed within the team. The only 'casualty' has been postponing the construction of a sensory garden. The Workforce Plan remains a 'work in progress' with a comprehensive record of training and qualifications drawn up but all the elements described in statutory guidance have yet to be drawn together.

Information about this children's home

This service offers residential short breaks for children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. It transferred from the control of the borough council to a recently established Children's Services Trust and this was the first inspection under the new registration.

Previous inspection reports for Breakaway can be found under the Unique Reference Number SC031537.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not applicable		

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
To comply with the children's views, wishes and feelings standard: the registered person must keep the children's guide, incorporating the elements given in Regulation 2 (d), under review. (Regulation 7 (2)(c))	08/03/2016
To comply with the leadership and management standard: the registered person must understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child, with particular regard to the setting and reviewing of personal targets. (Regulation 13 (2)(f))	08/03/2016
The registered person must ensure that a record is made within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control or discipline; within 48 hours that the user has been spoken to about the measure; and signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days an addition is made to the record that the child has been spoken to about the measure; in particular, records must show that these timescales have been adhered to. (Regulation 35 (3)(a-c))	08/03/2016
The registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by children and must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation. (Regulation 39 (1) and (3))	08/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- the manager should include relevant aspects of statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing in the home's missing persons policy, in particular to request an independent return home interview. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 9.25, page 45)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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