

## **Children's homes - interim inspection**

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>15/02/2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC441080</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Interim</b>         |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Darren Edwards</b>  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Julian Mason</b>    |

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| <b>Inspection date</b>   | <b>15/02/2016</b> |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>   | <b>Good</b>       |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>  | <b>None</b>       |
| <b>This inspection</b>   |                   |
| <b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b>   |                   |
| <p>This home was judged <b>Good</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness.</p>   |                   |
| <p>There have been some changes to the resident group of young people since the last inspection. Currently, the progress being made and the outcomes being achieved by each young person is mixed in comparison to previous circumstances. The home's staffing arrangements are also very different with many in-house temporary staff being used to work in the home.</p> <p>Young people have experienced an increasing number of different carers working in the house because of staff shortages. This has resulted in them being looked after by a greater number of carers who are not part of the home's permanent team. This has significantly contributed to young people's attachments and relationships not being consistent or beneficial with those who look after them. Staff have not been able to break cycles of escalating and risky behaviour or help some young people move forward constructively.</p> <p>Positive and constructive relationships are encouraged within the home. Young people's behaviour can be difficult and challenging but staff work hard to ensure a balanced and fair approach is taken. While reasonable boundaries and expectations have been promoted, young people's behaviour has still been inconsistent and risky at times. On a number of occasions recently, staff have been assaulted and the police have been called to the home for assistance and support.</p> <p>Staff work in a way that supports and encourages appropriate interactions and relationships. Unacceptable behaviours and attitudes are challenged, staff use their skills and experience to set clear and reasonable boundaries. Some young people are responding well to this and they are able to earn rewards for behaving well. Physical restraint is not used often and formal sanctions are only applied in circumstances where less formal interventions have not worked. The staff team have struggled to positively influence some young people's behaviour, which continues to be challenging, risky and very disruptive.</p> <p>Some young people have struggled to engage with staff positively despite the supportive and patient approaches from both the registered manager and team.</p> |                   |

Where young people have made choices that are potentially harmful or behave in ways that are risky, staff have tried to work in a way to lessen the impact of these circumstances. At present, two of the three young people are not really engaging with their carers in any meaningful or sustained way.

Some young people have significant histories of absconding behaviour or being missing from care. Young people are discouraged from behaving in this way but sometimes they still leave the home without permission. When this happens, staff follow young people and try to persuade them to return home, but they are not always successful. Some young people who are vulnerable to exploitation have continued to go missing. When this happens, staff use individual risk assessments to guide their practice especially when working with other agencies such as the police. However, young people who are placed some distance from their home locations are still able to make their way back to areas that have been previously identified as risky. Staff have been unable to break negative peer influences that perpetuate this kind of behaviour. Because of these circumstances, the home is unable to consistently keep all young people safe.

Young people's attendance and engagement in education varies. Difficult and disruptive behaviours have hindered young people's progress. For some, their reluctance to consistently engage in their individual educational timetables has affected their learning. In these circumstances, young people experience positive support and encouragement in an attempt to help them overcome their difficulties. For one young person, this is working well with good attendance and engagement at school. However, the potential the team has to positively influence all young people in sustaining improvements in attendance and attainment is minimal.

The registered manager closely monitors staffing levels and adjusts these where necessary to ensure that young people receive the support they need. Recently, this has meant increasing staffing ratios in an attempt to help everyone through a difficult period. However, a combination of events has necessitated the use of an increasing number of staff from other homes from within the company. Although individual shifts are still led by experienced members of staff, the opportunities young people have had recently to develop relationships with all their carers has been limited. Consequently, the registered manager has not been able to secure continuity or consistency of care for young people.

Young people are provided with safe and comfortable accommodation which is relatively clean and tidy. New furniture has been purchased for communal areas and young people's bedrooms and the home's driveway has had some temporary repairs completed. However, some of the home's décor and floor coverings are a little scruffy and worn such as the paintwork and carpets in communal areas. Currently, young people's comfort is not fully promoted through the overall standards of accommodation provided.

The two requirements made at the last inspection have been addressed by the registered manager and provider organisation. New arrangements are now in place

that ensures monthly monitoring visits are carried out by an independent person. Quality assurance and monitoring systems have been reviewed and updated with the introduction of a new reporting format. The last quality assurance report produced by the registered manager which covered a more settled period reflects some positive feedback from young people and stakeholders. In particular, the registered manager had clearly reflected young people's feedback about the service and the actions taken to improve and develop what is provided.

The registered manager and responsible individual have already started to take steps to address the current difficulties within the home. A placing authority has been given 7-days' notice on one placement and another placement is currently under review. Also, until continuity and consistency of staffing can be achieved, no new admissions to the home will be made.

## Information about this children's home

This home is registered for three children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is owned and managed by a private company.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 15/06/2015      | CH - Full       | Good                   |
| 05/03/2015      | CH - Interim    | Improved effectiveness |
| 01/07/2014      | CH - Full       | Good                   |
| 17/07/2013      | CH - Interim    | Satisfactory progress  |

## 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>11. The positive relationships standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on</p> <p>(1)(a)<br/>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff:</p> <p>(2)(a)<br/>(iv) help each child to develop and practice skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;<br/>(viii) strive to gain each child's respect and trust;<br/>(xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p>  | 31/03/2016 |
| <p>12. The protection of children standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2)(a)</p> <p>In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff:</p> <p>(iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other, (this is in relation to young people influencing each other to go missing from care);<br/>(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;<br/>(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health, (this is in relation</p> | 31/03/2016 |

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| some of the home's décor and floor coverings).  |            |
| <p>13. The leadership and management standard.</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires registered person to:</p> <p>(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child.</p> | 31/03/2016 |
| The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on temporary bases in the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs. (Regulation 31)  | 31/03/2016 |

## **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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