

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Unique reference number	1159682
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Position Vacant
Inspector	Bridget Goddard

Inspection date	12/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
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.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

1159682

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- The home is not being run in line with its statement of purpose, notably young people out of education are not spending their time purposefully
- There have not always been sufficient staff on duty to meet young people's complex needs
- Young people do not always receive a consistent approach to their daily care
- Some staff have not yet received essential, core training
- On occasion, there is a significant level of conflict between young people
- Arrangements are not firmly in place for young people to access the psychological services they may need
- There is no robust system for consultation with young people.

The children's home strengths

- A new, temporary manager is running the home, staff, and commissioners report significant improvements.
- Generally, staff have good relationships with young people which form the basis for some productive work
- Safeguarding processes are sufficiently robust and timely
- The home is well-kept and homely, and is located in a pleasant and accessible area
- Effective scrutiny of the home's activities by the Regulation 44 visitor, external commissioners and most recently an advocacy service is now firmly in place.

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
The registered person must ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. This relates to a number of areas, particularly ensuring that young people who are not in education spend their day purposefully. (Regulation 16 (5))	01/05/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure that :(2) (d) each child receives care from a stable and sufficient workforce that is well supported and provides a consistent approach to care.	01/05/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to both core training and staff skills following child's disclosures, the registered person must ensure that :(2) (c) staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child in the home.	01/05/2016
11: The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standards with particular reference to relationships between the children in the home, the registered person must ensure that staff :(2) (1v) support each child to develop and practise skills to: build and maintain positive relationships with others; and resolve conflicts positively and without harm to herself or other parties.	01/05/2016
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard with particular reference to children having their psychological needs met, the registered person must ensure that: (1) (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being.	01/05/2016
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's wishes and feelings standard the	01/05/2016

registered person should ensure that : (2) (2) staff regularly consult children and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care.	
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Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff support children to be aware of and manage their own safety particularly in relation to social media. (The Guide to the Quality Standards , page 43 paragraph 9.9)
- Ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 31 paragraph 6.5)
- Ensure that the management review of the quality of care focuses on the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.2)
- Ensure that a record of supervision is kept for all staff including the manager. (The Guide to Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a charitable company. It offers up to five places for young women with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties who may be at risk in the community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
<p>This home has been open since autumn 2015, but the Registered Manager left her post at Christmas 2015, following a period of sickness. The organisation has swiftly placed a temporary manager in post, and she has already made significant changes to the running of the home. This has had a positive impact on the amount of staff time available for young people and on staff morale. This means that the quality of young people's experiences in the home has recently improved.</p> <p>Staff are interested in young people, and go out of their way to greet and interact with them. They are committed to their success and are quick to praise any progress. Staff want young people to be safe, and encourage them to talk about risky behaviour, without judging. Young people respond to this warmth and interest and gradually trust is being built. A local authority colleague comments, 'She has said things to X (staff member) we have suspected but haven't been able to prove. Now we can take action'. Generally, there is a good level of individualised care offered, demonstrated not only by personalised assessments but also by staff knowledge of each young person.</p> <p>Although young people are encouraged to express their views about their care, they are not systematically involved in the development of the home and service. This is a missed opportunity to respond to their views and ideas. However, young people are confident about using the complaints system. The lack of alternative educational provision in, or organised by the home, is a significant shortfall, which</p>	

coupled with the lack of psychological support and activities results in young people being under-occupied.

Overall, young people's progress has been mixed. There is significant conflict in the home between young people on occasion, risky missing behaviour is still apparent and most young people are not yet in education or training. However, there are encouraging signs of young people building trusting relationships with staff, confiding in them and beginning to keep themselves safer. External agencies feel that the home is overall offering a positive service and making progress with some very complex young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>The home's statement of purpose sets out clearly the extreme circumstances under which staff can restrict the liberty of a young person. This can only be done for short periods of time when there is an immediate risk. Staff have used this option sparingly and in appropriate circumstances. Staff are also dealing with a significant number of high-risk incidents on a very regular basis, and are involving other agencies and making notifications appropriately.</p> <p>Staff have a good understanding of what makes each young person particularly vulnerable. This is underpinned by a comprehensive, individual risk plan, which details the level of risks and measures to mitigate these. This plan is regularly updated particularly following incidents, although there is some variance on the clarity and timeliness of staff updating.</p> <p>Young people are generally beginning to demonstrate a reduction in risk taking behaviour, notably missing from home. However, some young people are still going missing overnight and so are still putting themselves at significant risk. There are very early signs that the frequency of this behaviour is diminishing. Staff competently follow missing from home processes and procedures, and other key agencies describe their responses as 'professional'. They have, on occasion, successfully followed young people who have left the house without permission, and persuaded them to return. However, there have also been a small number of occasions when staffing limitations have meant young people cannot be followed. These inconsistent responses do not fully promote young people's safety.</p> <p>Although most young people feel safe in the home most of the time with some saying that they feel 'the safest I have ever felt', there are occasions when young people do not feel safe. There have been some significant episodes of serious</p>	

conflict between young people. These episodes were successfully de-escalated by staff, and for most of the time young people live together peaceably. However, insufficient attention has been paid to working with young people as a group, and ensuring they are routinely consulted about life in the home.

External colleagues are positive about how young people are sharing information with staff about risk taking behaviours. They say that young people are sharing information they have never shared before, and this enables staff to share strategic information about possible perpetrators, and to successfully promote individual sexual health solutions. This means that not only are individual young people kept safer, but the wider professional network is also able to benefit from young people's intelligence and thereby keep the community safer.

Staff are adept at following appropriate safeguarding procedures following disclosures. However, not all staff are yet skilled in working with young people following such events and young people do not have access to a range of a psychological options. This means that their emotional health is insufficiently promoted.

Generally, staff have positive relationships with young people. Local authority colleagues note the 'warm and friendly approach' staff have to young people, and this means that they are usually able to successfully use humour and persuasion to encourage young people either not to leave the home, or to keep in close touch when going out of the home. Most recently, the home has successfully made use of clear behavioural boundaries such as grounding young people who are late home.

However, young people comment that the staff want them in the home but once there, there is little to do. Activity options are few, and although most young people are not in external education, alternative education options are not in place. This does not assist young people to develop new skills and prepare for an adult life.

The home itself is well maintained and comfortable. Environmental risks are appropriately managed. There have been ongoing issues with finding window restrictors, which keep young people sufficiently safe, but cannot be overridden by young people. In these situations, the home has taken necessary steps to keep young people safe, and maintenance has been prompt.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

The home is currently managed by a temporary manager who is a regional manager within the organisation. She will be acting as the day-to-day manager of the home, and is a qualified social worker with advanced management qualifications. She has previously both managed children's homes and been responsible for their oversight. Although only in post a short time, the temporary manager has already proved herself to be highly effective in making significant improvements to the running of the home for example, promoting everyday behaviour management, simplifying recording practice and filling vacant posts. Recruitment to the vacant Registered Manager post is proceeding promptly.

For a variety of reasons, the home has lost care staff since its opening, and has been operating with reduced deputy cover and insufficient ancillary staff. Gaps have been covered with agency workers, but this has limited the ability of the staff team to agree consistent practice and to work effectively with each other's strengths and development areas. Young people make adverse comment on staff's different approaches both to them and to the daily routine. This does not promote a sense of security in young people. Vacant posts are now being permanently recruited to.

Many of the core staff team are keen, quick to learn but inexperienced both in children's homes and with this particular client group. They have all had focused training on the particular issues these young people face, and are strongly benefiting from ongoing specialist consultancy. This package is invaluable in offering them both understanding and time to reflect, but until very recently there were insufficient experienced staff on site to offer guidance and support. In addition a small minority of staff have not received all their basic training for example, CALM training. These shortfalls are compounded by infrequent recording of 1-2-1 supervision. Not recording regular sessions misses opportunities to action individual's particular development needs.

Management monitoring of the quality of care provided is at a very early stage. This is partly because the home has not been open long and partly because of the changes in management. However, monitoring processes are in place and aim to look at both individual progress and trends. Recording practice is variable in both quality and timeliness, and an acceptable baseline is still to be established. The independent visitor is now well established, and offers useful independent scrutiny of all events in the home. Notifications of significant events are effectively and promptly completed. There are effective working relationships with the police and local commissioners who provide valuable additional scrutiny and advice to the home.

The statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the current service. There are shortfalls in relation to the admission process, education provision, access to professional therapies and the provision of activities. The temporary manager is highly conscious of these significant shortfalls and has already begun to remedy them.

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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