

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	10/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC423453
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Nicola Shade
Inspector	Fiona Littlefield

Inspection date	10/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judged that it has Declined effectiveness.</p> <p>The manager has addressed the requirements made following the last inspection. The statement of purpose has been amended to reflect the specific service that staff and managers deliver. All staff receive supervision which is recorded and organised in advance. Staff and managers are keeping records of monthly fire drills and ensure that any new young people are taken through the process. However, on occasion, some young people have not complied with these practice drills and managers have not followed these incidents up in a robust manner. Young people were not in danger but it is clear that they did not understand what staff expected from them and this could place their safety at risk. The registered manager is addressing this as a matter of urgency. Staff have improved recording on young people's case files and key worker sessions are more regular. Staff produce regular monthly reports but they lack reflection and an indication of what the key worker can do to contribute to help the young person achieve their goals. The management team acknowledge this and are taking action to improve the quality of recording.</p> <p>Some young people have left the home following placement breakdowns. Staff and managers worked hard to support young people through this process, reduce the trauma and maintain the relationship they had developed. Some young people remain on good terms with staff in the home and continue to contact them for advice and support. This means that young people feel valued and continue to benefit from successful relationships with staff.</p> <p>Many young people in the home have complex needs and challenging behaviours. The registered manager considers any new referrals carefully to ensure that their behaviour does not increase the risks within the existing group. The management team have strengthened their admission process, making comprehensive enquiries before accepting a referral. Consequently staff and managers are better prepared and can help young people feel welcome.</p> <p>Young people do make progress in developing social skills, better self-awareness and building relationships with staff. This enhances their self-esteem and improves</p>	

their life chances. However, some young people do not have a full time educational programme. This contributes to the fact that they are not reaching academic, social and behavioural milestones. Young people have positive interaction with staff who are attentive and do their best to maintain daily routines but young people lack focus and can express this in frustration and volatile behaviour. Lack of progress in this area is not the unique responsibility of the home. The management team agrees that this situation is not acceptable and are taking vigorous action with partner services to achieve a timely solution.

The management team along with senior colleagues from the provider company maintain an overview of the quality of care provided in the home. For example, they have reviewed staff roles and responsibilities and adjusted staff rota's so that more staff are more available for young people in the evening. Managers also consider reports on negative incidents including when young people going missing or episodes of restraint. They comment on quality of recording, any gaps and what action needs to be taken. For instance, some young people recently went missing from the home. When they returned staff and managers took immediate action to address the incident including addressing risky behaviour. Young people are protected by this proactive approach. Some new initiatives will take time to settle but they indicate a purposeful and committed response to improving the service.

Staff and managers value the relationships that young people have with their families and parents notice improvements. The mother of one young person said: 'He has made progress in every way. He has learnt some manners and treats me with more respect. They managed this by being consistent and supportive with both him and me.' Young people are positive about their relationships and this helps them plan their future with more confidence.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is situated in Colchester. It is registered to accommodate four young people of either gender between the ages of 10 and 18 years old. The home offers emergency, short and long term placements for young people who have who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/12/2015	Full	Good
24/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/01/2015	Full	Outstanding
25/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff help each child to understand how to manage their own safety, with particular reference to making sure that they understand the importance of fire drills and cooperate with them. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 43 paragraph 9.9)
- Ensure that where children placed in the home who are not participating in education, they are enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should be supported to regain their confidence in education and engaged in suitable structured activities. If no education place is identified by the placing authority, the registered person must challenge them to meet the child's needs under regulation 5. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 28 paragraph 5.15)
- Ensure that staff are clear about the need for careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that is helpful to the child. Records should be reflective, evaluate progress and specify what contributions staff will make to drive improvement for that child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62 paragraph 14.4)

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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