

Children's homes - interim inspection

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| Inspection date | 14/03/2016 |
| Unique reference number | SC431806 |
| Type of inspection | Interim |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |
| Registered person | SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited |
| Registered person address | c/o, 591 London Road, SUTTON, Surrey, SM3 9AG |

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| Responsible individual | Gerard Berry |
| Registered manager | Awaiting registration |
| Inspector | Chris Peel |

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| Inspection date | 14/03/2016 |
| Previous inspection judgement | Outstanding |
| 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 Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>The provider has recently appointed a new manager, who is currently making an application to be registered with Ofsted and undertaking training to convert her existing qualification to a level 5 diploma. She has brought new ideas and practice that are being introduced to the home, including emotional behavioural response plans for young people. These have replaced behaviour management plans and are aimed at identifying underlying causes for behaviour and providing strategies for staff to address them. This helps young people to regulate their responses and move quickly to a less heightened state of arousal. The document is designed to be concise and focused, allowing staff to remember the strategies and for young people to be more engaged in drawing it up. Placement plans remain detailed, with a shorter 'child-friendly' version worked through with young people.</p> <p>Work is continuing on the location risk assessment, which does not yet address opportunities afforded by where the home is situated, and on the workforce plan, which does not include processes for managing and improving poor performance beyond supervision and appraisal (currently detailed elsewhere).</p> <p>The regularity of supervision for staff, including managers has improved since the last inspection, as has the frequency of key work sessions with young people. Sampled documentation for the latter demonstrates excellent recording practice, with the principles of 'Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy', used by the organisation, clearly evident. The record includes actions to be followed up and other matters to keep in mind for continuing work. Thus, young people benefit from a consistent approach to address their needs, and from staff who actively consider the issues and actions required to meet them.</p> <p>No young person currently living at the home has had a sanction, physical restraint or gone missing since the last inspection. Incidents are dealt with by discussion of events; why they have not been acceptable, what led up to them happening and how they could be avoided in future. This has led to some useful conversations and insight, although inappropriate coping mechanisms do remain difficult to alter. A revised log enables the record to show that regulatory requirements, such as timescales, have been met.</p> | |

Generally, young people enjoy the experience of living in the home and have good relationships with most staff members. They get on with each other and recounted having fun together and with staff, whether playing football or on a trip out. One thought there had been less support available to him when there was no manager, but that it had started to pick up again. He believes staff should treat him and the other residents as young adults, allowing them more spontaneity than they currently do. However, young people do benefit from appropriate organisation such as homework nights and arranging activities and their ideas are sought about what they would like to eat, for example, opting for a takeaway rather than what might be on the menu if that is opportune.

Young people report they have good support to achieve in education and therapy. Key workers liaise well with colleagues in both disciplines and have a close knowledge of children's progress.

Young people have good experiences of transitioning in and out of the home; visits before moving in, written information and a warm welcome from staff and young people all help admissions. However, one young person did express disappointment that staff from his previous home, within the same organisation, did not come to work shifts soon after his move as had been agreed. Impact risk assessments are included in pre-admission assessments but lack clear identification of potential difficulties and strategies to address them. Staff therefore are not as prepared to manage risks as they might be.

There is evidence of very good practice in helping young people move on from the home, including advocating on their behalf about the timing of transitions, helping them with the emotional and practical aspects and continuing contact and support after leaving too.

Young people's views are taken into account when deciding on new admissions, the recruitment of staff and on progression of new staff through their probation.

The fabric and décor of the home are being improved with a shower room having recently been refurbished, the kitchen flooring being renewed on the day of the inspection and a bathroom awaiting attention. One young person told me he was excited to be moving into a bedroom that is being currently being redecorated and newly furnished for him.

Young people can ask for valuables to be stored for them or have a cashbox for valuables, however, they should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers for personal items, including documents.

The manager and staff handle concerns expressed by young people well, taking action proportionate to the complaint. The provider has responded appropriately to disclosures, including the amendment of safeguarding policies and induction training. Staff should be further assisted to manage the nature of the work by training at induction on dealing with infatuation or inappropriate advances by

young people.

Staff spoken to were confident of being able to raise practice issues with managers throughout the organisation, using whistleblowing procedures if necessary. One commented the organisation 'is so based on openness and honesty' that she would have no concerns about doing so and was confident of being supported.

The team, including the manager, demonstrate that they are developing a cohesive approach. Although relatively recently in post the manager is regarded positively by staff and young people spoken to, with one of the former commenting that, 'she is pushing us to be the best we can be.'

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate four young males with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is privately owned and is one of six run by the service provider. All young people have access to the organisation's specialist therapeutic service and to their school.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 13/10/2015 | CH - Full | Outstanding |
| 16/03/2015 | CH - Interim | improved effectiveness |
| 23/10/2014 | CH - Full | Good |
| 11/02/2014 | CH - 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):

- Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 3.19 page 16)
- Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home, in particular that heavy items are not stored above head height. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 9.9 page 43)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 11.4 page 56)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice and must ensure this safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. In particular, this should include training for staff during induction on handling infatuation or inappropriate advances from young people. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 13.1 page 61)

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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