

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	16/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC013402
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Action for Children
Registered person address	Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard, Ascot Road, WATFORD, WD18 8AG

Responsible individual	Shelagh Frankcom
Registered manager	Gaynor Wicks
Inspector	Angus Mackay

Inspection date	16/03/2016
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 judge that it has Sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>Management of the home has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The parent organisation has replaced two registered managers with the registered manager of a sister home. This manager has been in post since September 2015 and has completed her application to Ofsted to register as manager of this setting. She has quickly established her competence and credibility with staff, young people and parents. One parent described her as lovely and a member of staff said, 'She has reinvigorated the home. She listens, she engages with staff and children and is always there for us. She puts a lot of faith in her staff and has communicated a clear vision for the home.' The manager has a good inspection history and extensive relevant experience of working with children. However, the current arrangement does not provide adequate succession planning or appropriate cover for emergencies and absences. The manager has personally covered gaps in staffing. This detracts from her ability to consistently address her management responsibilities, in particular the development of the service.</p> <p>Unsafe staffing levels have been addressed through a comprehensive recruitment drive. Young people enhanced the robustness of the recruitment process through their active involvement in the recruitment process including the appointment of the current manager. This experience empowered the young people and improving their ownership of the setting.</p> <p>The home previously had insufficient permanent staff available to cover all shifts. Senior staff covered gaps along with high levels of agency staff, sometimes in excess of half of the team. The registered manager sought to minimise the potential for inconsistency in care for the young people by creating a team of regularly used agency staff. Seniors provided this team with supervision and engaged them in team meetings to improve their knowledge of the young people and increase their effectiveness as team members. The registered manager has informed all agencies that care staff must have, or be studying for, an appropriate level 3 qualification, ensuring they have suitable knowledge and competency for their role. However, senior staff have not provided agency staff training in</p>	

whistleblowing and safeguarding as agreed as an outcome from a previous incident. This weakens the safeguards for children and staff.

The registered manager makes good use of the very detailed, well-structured and comprehensive independent person's reports. These reports provide a good insight into the conduct of the home and how staff ensure that they appropriately safeguard young people. The reports benefit from detailed recording of interactions with young people and contact with social workers and family members. The reports are appropriately challenging and set targets for the home to improve the care provided.

The manager has a development plan for the home, which she is enhancing with six monthly updates in her monitoring of the care provided in the home. She has established individual development plans in the two houses which the teams maintain. The plans are realistic and show a good understanding of the areas for development. In the long stay setting, there is a strong focus on improving the environment to make it more homely and welcoming. In addition, the thorough independent visitor's reports have highlighted some ongoing issues such as the repair of hoists, which the management team have prioritised to make it a safe environment for young people.

The manager has improved care plans, risk assessments and behaviour support plans in the long stay setting. These now contain clear attainable targets for young people. Keyworkers frequently agree common targets with the young person's school to improve consistency in approach and reinforce progress. Young people show progress in diverse areas including: interpersonal relationships; self-help skills; eating patterns; toileting; ability to interact appropriately in social situations; use of transport; and communication. Keyworkers diligently maintain these plans in the short break setting but not all plans are up to date in the long stay setting. The staff team were collectively updating these during the inspection, providing a shared understanding of targets and an accurate record of young people's progress.

The registered manager has commenced a comprehensive audit of training conducted to ensure an effective and accurate updating of the workforce development plan. From the initial audit, she already has a range of new courses and refreshers planned for the coming year. New staff are engaged in a structured induction course and one said, 'Support has been excellent, 5 out of 5. They are always giving me stuff to read and will always show me how things are done. They engage me without me having to ask.' However, senior staff have not consistently supplied training supervision and appraisal to all staff due to the previous staffing difficulties. This is gradually improving as posts are filled, enhancing staff's competency and ability to provide consistent good care to young people.

The previous managers revised the statement of purpose but did not send a completed version to HMCI. The registered manager is working with staff to

complete a further review of this document and the young people's guide, to make them more user friendly and accessible to the young people. The home is developing separate statements for each setting to improve the clarity of information and understanding of the individual approaches. Staff are aware of the content of the statement of purpose and apply this in their practice. A new member of staff explained how this was part of her induction and in particular the ethos of the home and the ways of working with young people.

Keyworkers maintain detailed and effective behaviour support plans for the young people. The plans benefit from a restraint reduction plan, which gives excellent guidance to staff on how to intervene appropriately in a range of scenarios specific to each young person. The plans give good guidance to staff on actions at all stages in an incident. They provide a graded response to incidents. This encourages a proactive approach reducing the risk of escalation of an incident whilst minimising the level of physical interventions. Positive behaviour in young people is improving with these thorough and well-planned behaviour intervention guides.

The home provides care to young people in two settings. Ofsted have registered one setting to provide care and accommodation for no more than five young people to live there permanently. The other setting may only provide care and accommodation for up to 6 young people under short break arrangements. However, the short break setting has not always remained within its registration and is not universally providing care in line with the statement of purpose. The occasions where this has occurred have aided in the safe care of the young people and have not compromised the provision of good care to other young people. The home is in discussion with Ofsted about changing their registration to allow more flexibility in the provision of care.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a registered charity in partnership with a local authority. Care and accommodation is provided in 2 separate and distinct houses. The home may provide care and accommodation for no more than 6 children under short break arrangements in one house and for no more than 5 children to live permanently in the other house. Children may have a learning disability and/or a physical disability. The long stay residential part of the home specialises in work with children with autistic spectrum disorder.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/06/2015	Full	Good
21/02/2015	Interim	Declined in Effectiveness
21/10/2014	Full	Good
18/02/2014	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
Ensure that no single placement in the short breaks home is intended to last for more than 17 days and the short breaks to date do not exceed 75 days in total in any twelve month period. (Regulation 52(b) (i) (iii))	31/05/2016
The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction, a period of probation, undertakes continuing professional development, receives practice based supervision and has their performance and fitness to perform their role appraised at least once a year.(Regulation 33(1)(a)(b)(4)(a)(b)(c))	31/05/2016

Recommendations

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

- Complete the review of the statement of purpose ensuring it indicates how the home provides care to meet the Quality Standards for children in your care. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the homes policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful objective and clear recording. In particular, that care plans targets and desired outcomes are consistently completed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Ensure that all staff including agency staff are familiar with the homes internal whistleblowing procedures through the induction procedure. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.9)
- Ensure that the home have suitably trained staff (including someone in a management role) on duty to meet the assessed needs of all children in the home. The registered person must demonstrate every effort to achieve

continuity of staffing so that children's attachments are not overly disrupted, in particular, that management arrangements provide time and resources for the development of good practice. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page51, paragraph 10.1)

- Complete repairs and schemes of redecoration to provide a homely domestic environment which complies with relevant health and safety legislation. In particular, repair hoists and complete planned redecoration of the long stay setting. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page15, paragraph 3.9)

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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