

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC470645
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Surecare Residential Limited
Registered provider address	Mey House, Bridport Road, Poundbury, Dorset, DT1 3QY

Responsible individual	Emma Barr
Registered manager	Kerry Faulkner
Inspector	Rosie Davie

Inspection date	24 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC470645

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- There is a newly formed staff team. Together they bring knowledge and an enthusiasm for taking the home forward.
- There is a new registered manager who is having a positive impact and is motivated to develop effective working relationships with partner agencies.
- The managers and leaders have introduced new checklists to ensure that recording reflects events more accurately.
- The staff members' approach to encourage children to attend education has improved and this improves attendance for some children.
- Children have the opportunity to receive time directly from a psychologist.
- Children represented feel comfortable, safe, and well cared for.
- Children who have left the home give good feedback about their experiences.
- Parents represented provide good feedback about their child's experience and communication from staff.
- Agencies represented say that communication is good.
- Children improve domestic skills in preparation for independence.
- Staff do not consistently engage the wider network of services when children need specialist help with alcohol, drugs, or social networking.
- Staff are not consistently helping children to understand about acceptable behaviour and are not meaningfully encouraging them to take responsibility for their responses to other children and some adults visiting the home.
- Some records of children going absent without permission are incorrect. The work undertaken by the home to follow through on return to home interviews following incidents of going missing is not clear.
- Archived information is not stored securely.
- Some staff moving between homes have not had an annual appraisal.
- Risk assessments do not show, in sufficient depth, the potential impact of each child's behaviour for others.

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>5:Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met:</p> <p>In order to meet the engaging with the wider system standard, with particular reference to children developing problems with alcohol, drugs and social networking, the registered person must and must ensure that staff seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs.</p>	29/07/2016
<p>11:The positive relationship standard:</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationship standard, with particular reference to expectations of behaviour in the home, the registered provider must ensure that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from relationships based on (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour and (c) positive responses to other children and adults.</p>	29/07/2016
<p>The registered person must implement the missing child policy, setting out the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of persons working in the home in relation to a child who is or has been absent, specifically recording all episodes of absent without permission and the responsible local authority response to the request for an independent return home interview.</p> <p>(Regulation 34 (4) (b))</p>	29/07/2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure that information required for all children's case records is stored securely, with specific reference to archived records ('Guide to the children's homes

regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3).

Ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care, with specific reference to staff moving across homes in the group ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5).

Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. With specific reference to the ongoing impact of new young people on the existing group ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to four children with emotional and or behavioural difficulties. It is one of a small group run by an independent provider. A psychologist offers direct psychological support to children alongside staff consultation. The provider also operates a school. Staff are available to support children to access this resource.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19 May 2015	Full	Requires improvement
23 July 2014	Full	Good
29 May 2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
<p>One child who left recently wrote to staff and said: 'You honestly will make a difference in someone's life like the amazing difference you made to mine.' Other children who have gone on to independence contact the home and seek advice and reassurance. This means that they reflect on the advice and support and can identify that they had good experiences while living in this home.</p> <p>New arrivals feel welcome, comfortable, and are well cared for. One child said: 'When I arrived I got a guide which told me about the home and I read it. Everything that the guide says, they do. When I told them that my goals were too easy they increased them and they have given me more to do in a week. I like that.' This means that staff offer individualised care, they listen to the children and encourage them to have their say about the design of their placement. This helps children to feel that they have influence in the care planning process.</p> <p>Registered with local health services and encouraged to attend appointments means embedding good routines for promoting general well-being. The children receive good emotional support. They are encouraged to talk about their feelings and to accept the direct services of the psychologist employed by the provider. For those who accept, this helps them to gain a better understanding of issues such as family relationships. However, some children do not feel able to accept the help offered. They forcefully push boundaries and reject support. In the process, they are verbally abusive and intimidating to other children, staff, and some visitors. In some records sampled, staff did not deal well with hostility. This means that on these occasions, staff avoided challenging them. As a result, staff miss opportunities to help the children to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviour and of how to respond positively towards others.</p> <p>Children receive clearer direction about the significance and role of education. For example, staff liaise with colleagues in education. They help with college applications and identify individualised educational resources to support learning. The staff now take more effective action when they see that education is problematic and, for some children, this results in periods of improvement in their attendance at school or engagement with tutors.</p> <p>Being supported and actively encouraged to practise skills such as budgeting, food organisation, cooking and domestic tasks means that the children learn to plan, prepare, and look ahead. This helps with developing skills towards independence.</p>	

Families, friends, and those who are important to the child are welcome and can visit the home as reflected in care planning. One parent said: 'I went to look around the home and met all of the staff. I am really quite pleased.' This means that the setting reflects a homely environment.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Police call outs had increased since the last inspection. However, they have been decreasing in recent months. Some children from the home who have been arrested had been destructive and had threatened staff. External managers ensure that staff access additional external support and that damages are repaired quickly. This helps children new to the home to experience a pleasant environment and a refreshed staff team.</p> <p>Managers complete a number of risk assessments to help to draw out the likely key and presenting issues known about children at the point of placement. Assessments are updated. However, they fall short because the recorded information does not show the likely impact and influence on others of each child's behaviour. This has resulted in arguments between children and, on more than one occasion, in disruptive behaviour into the early hours of the morning.</p> <p>Incidents of going missing continue. Recently, the frequency and length of time away have increased. However, this escalation also reflects patterns of behaviours already known to other agencies. Records show excellent examples of practice where recent, well recorded chronologies pinpoint the proactive action that leaders take. They robustly engage and liaise with the police and placing authorities to assist with locating new children. They persevere and continue to attempt to reach them. This helps children to see that the adults will work together to ensure their safety. However, records also show that historically staff have failed to log all episodes of absent without permission. In addition, records do not show the action taken on each occasion of missing to ensure that the placing local authority has provided opportunity for an independent return to home interview. This shortfall represents a failure to implement fully the home's missing policy.</p> <p>Some children who have now moved on had developing difficulties with alcohol, drugs, and social networking. Staff are aware of this and encouraged the children to talk about the associated issues. Managers also met with the children, giving advice, and acting as responsible parents might. However, they did not coordinate their work well enough and as a result did not engage robustly with other statutory</p>	

or voluntary agencies. This means that they missed opportunities to secure the input of other services towards helping these children with emerging problems.

Children represented say that they 'definitely' feel safe. They say that the number of staff working in the home means that there are always lots of adults around. Physical intervention is rare and used appropriately.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>Newly registered with Ofsted, the home's manager brings transferable skills because she has worked in social care for many years. Appropriately qualified, she is organised, methodical, and motivated to bring change. She has introduced new systems to improve monitoring of the internal practices to enable her to have a clearer overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. She is actively seeking feedback from stakeholders to help her to identify where further improvements can be made. Staff describe her as approachable and dependable. This means that she has their support. One member of the team said, 'The new manager has a lot of patience and she is warm. This is a happy house.'</p> <p>Since the last full inspection, the staff group has changed dramatically. This means that the team is forming. A new deputy working with two experienced senior project workers brings strength and more than 80% of staff have the required level 3 qualification or have now enrolled on the course. This means that, collectively, they have a strong knowledge base. Many have the skills to advocate at external meetings for children, including those living a long way from home, as well as the confidence to liaise with parents and professionals. This helps to ensure that placements remain purposeful.</p> <p>External managers have ensured that recommendations made at the interim inspection have been met. For example, through training, group meetings, and peer supervision the managers have helped the team to explore the behaviour management policy. The newly formed team are looking at how they can work more consistently with children towards effecting lasting change. For example, goal agreements have a positive impact on improving some challenging behaviours from some children.</p> <p>The arrangements for the filing and storing of information in the office have improved. However, the organisation of archived files compromises confidentiality because the information is not secure and therefore potentially accessible to any</p>	

child.

Managers take incidents of poor practice seriously. They make thorough investigation towards identifying where improvement is necessary. Induction processes are clear. Reviews of progress help staff to identify areas for professional development. Staff benefit from regular supervision and are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and incidents in the home. Staff have annual appraisals. However, of the staff files sampled, some appraisals had been missed, specifically for those staff moving across from other homes in the group. This has minimal impact because all of the staff represented say that they feel well equipped to do their job effectively. They recognise that with new children coming in, and with a new manager, there is an opportunity to learn and take the home from strength to strength. One member of staff said, 'All of our children benefit in some way. We give them a solid foundation and access to lots of adults who support 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 children 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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