

## **Children's homes inspection – Full**

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26/07/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC039213</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Abubakaar Sesay</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Jacqueline Graves</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26/07/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
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.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## SC039213

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision requires improvement because:**

- Some new admissions have had a negative effect on existing residents.
- Some challenging behaviour has caused some children to not feel safe in the home at times.
- Not all children are in healthy routines.
- Not all areas of the building are homely or well maintained.
- Staff recruitment is not robust for all staff.

#### **The children's home strengths**

- Staff show commitment to the children in their care.
- Education is important. Staff challenge professionals to secure school places for children.
- Staff enjoy arranging activities and trips to suit children's interests.
- There is a stable staff team, with no changes since the last full inspection.
- Staff report that communication between the team and with management is improved.

## 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must—</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—(i) meet the needs of each child. With particular reference to ensuring that the home seeks as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. In relation to this, reviewing: door numbering, lack of lightshades, decor and cleanliness in the bathroom, the content of the young people's noticeboard, damage to the computer desk, the stability of wardrobes, maintenance of the front and rear garden, if lights have sufficient light bulbs, that the kitchen floor is in good condition, the safety of a broken fire door closer, damage to the stair carpet and the lack of soft furnishings and decoration in the computer room.</p>	31/08/2016
<p>7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>(2)(c) keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document. With specific reference to ensuring that this guide does not refer to another children's home, that the language is child-friendly, that sufficient information is included to help children understand what staff will do if they have unauthorised absence and to include information on missing children procedures.</p>	31/08/2016
<p>10: The health and well-being standard</p> <p>In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>(1)(c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles. With specific</p>	31/08/16

reference to further helping establish regular day and night routines and sleeping and eating patterns.	
<p>(3) The registered person must—</p> <p>(a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>(b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. In relation to: ensuring that the complaints policy makes clear that a complainant may approach someone outside of the home directly, that all sentences are clear to the reader, that information about the home's independent visitor is clear and that their role is not an independent reviewing officer and that the missing children policy includes that children should be interviewed by someone independent of the home on their return and the information shared to reduce risk. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	31/08/2016
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>(2) The registered person may only—</p> <p>(a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or</p> <p>(b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>(3) The requirements are that—</p> <p>(a) the individual is of integrity and good character;</p> <p>(b) the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;</p> <p>(c) the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and</p> <p>(d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d))</p>	31/08/2016
<p>(4) The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>(b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>(e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the</p>	31/08/2016

registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(e))	
--	--

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. With reference to challenging placing authorities to provide independent return interviews ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.30, page 45).
- Devise a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of Regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
  - detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's statement of purpose;
  - detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
  - detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
  - detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see Regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager. This is also with reference to ensuring staff training in radicalisation and refresher training in safeguarding ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 10.8, page 53).

- Ensure that the registered person only accepts placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 11.4, page 56).

- Make sure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.38, page 46). Ensure that the behaviour management policy in children's homes includes understanding each child's behaviour to allow their needs, aspirations, experiences and strengths to be recognised and their quality of life to be enhanced. With specific reference to linking these to individual targets for rewards and discussing these in key work sessions ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', paragraph 9.35, page 46).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to six young people, irrespective of gender, who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/16	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/05/2015	Full	Good
24/11/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18/06/2014	Full	Adequate



## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>Children's overall experience and progress varies. Some children have lived in the home for over a year, so have experienced a stable placement. Other children have moved in only recently. During the year, there have been a high number of placements. Some new admissions were not matched well to existing residents. Because of the impact of their behaviour on other children, there was termination of some children's placements. This results in yet another move for children looked after, which is not a good outcome.</p> <p>Children have experienced an unstable period when some children's behaviour had a negative effect on them. This includes bullying and assaults and children entering others' bedrooms. There was damage to the home and staff have experienced racist comments. Although staff dealt with this, it is not a good experience for them or the children.</p> <p>A few children have improved their safety by going missing or absent less often. Some continue to go missing or absent from the home and sometimes from school. Staff work to strategies on children's plans to minimise risk. The missing person coordinator with the police advises that the staff report absences appropriately. Although staff and police talk to children when they return, not all children are receiving interviews from someone independent of the home. There is insufficient challenge from staff to placing authorities to bring this about. For some children at risk of child sexual exploitation, the risk has reduced, assisted by engagement with child sexual exploitation workers.</p> <p>Some children have started to work with professionals and are considering trying to break entrenched habits, such as alcohol and drug misuse. A few children are reducing drug use, which improves their health outcomes. Some children continue with involvement in drug misuse, refusing staff support to attend professional services for counselling. Some children have had a negative effect on other children, further involving them in drug use, drug dealing and the criminal justice system.</p> <p>Educational attendance and punctuality are variable, but are very positive for some children considering their starting points. Educational attendance is better for most children, if not yet good. For example, one child has improved attendance from 24.91% to 64.86%. Staff and management have greater success in engaging with educational professionals, such as the virtual school headteacher, to secure school places. In some cases, children are attending fairly regularly after a previous history of school refusal, which is significant progress. One child says that they are grateful for the support that they received from staff to return to education. A few</p>	

children can now focus on completing their education and achieving qualifications so that they have some choice about their future career.

Some children try to go to bed at a reasonable time and make efforts to get up for school in the morning. However, not all children are in healthy routines, despite staff encouragement. For example, some are tired in the morning on school days and reluctant to get out of bed because they are awake into the early hours. In the school holidays, children have a 'lie in' but sometimes this is into the afternoon. They are missing out on much of the day and not eating and drinking regularly, which can impact on their mood. They are then awake at night.

Children experience positive relationships with staff. One child said, 'They're alright. They're all nice to me.' Children like to do activities with staff, such as trips to the shops, going out for a meal or go karting. They are looking forward to a holiday with the staff later this summer. Some children experience improved relationships with family members, which helps their emotional well-being.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>Children have not felt safe all of the time. There have been assaults and bullying. Although staff have dealt with each incident, in one case, the child moved on from the home as a result of their experience, which is not a good outcome.</p> <p>The registered manager advises that they do assess the likely impact new admissions may have on existing residents, including seeking advice from their consultant. Staff 'do not like children having their placements ending' and 'like to give children a chance'. Staff and the manager believe in giving children the opportunity for a fresh start in the home. Nevertheless, some admissions have had a detrimental effect on life in the home and changed the dynamics. No written impact assessment is available to evidence how management makes the decision to admit each child while considering any likely effect on existing residents.</p> <p>Staff know the children's needs well. They talk to children about their behaviour and risks to their safety. They challenge unacceptable behaviour. Key workers meet their key children regularly. However, records do not show that key workers regularly discuss children's risky behaviour with them in key work sessions in all cases; discussions are more general.</p> <p>Children can achieve financial rewards by meeting any of 13 generic targets each day. Some enjoy working towards these, for example, by cleaning their rooms. As targets do not link to individual behaviours, an opportunity for improvement in relation to these specific behaviours is lost. Sanctions are largely financial. The home's independent visitor suggests that the staff consider alternative sanctions. Sanctions are used to address poor behaviour. However, these are not consistently restorative in nature, so children are not given the opportunity to make amends.</p>	

Staff recruitment is inconsistent. For example, one recruitment file shows all the checks required by regulation. The service has only obtained a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a cleaner. Another file shows all checks on a staff member but the DBS check is standard rather than enhanced. These shortfalls mean that not all staff receive the same checks to ascertain their suitability to work in the home.

Management does not notify Ofsted of all serious events. Therefore, the regulator is not aware of what is happening in the home between inspections and unable to take potential regulatory action.

Arrangements to support children's general health are sound. For example, staff register children for services and encourage them to go to health appointments, rebooking when children are not confident enough to attend. Medication storage and administration is safe.

The staff conduct regular checks to ensure the safety of the building. For example, with checks of portable appliances. Visitors are advised of fire evacuation procedures and children helped to understand these through fire drills. The home's assessment of the local area confirms that the premises are in a suitable location for a children's home, which is relatively safe.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding. They are confident about whistleblowing and how to refer any concerns or allegations of abuse in order to keep children safe. The staff have not made any child protection referrals during this period.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>It is commendable that all but one member of staff have achieved the minimum level 3 qualification and that a member of staff is working towards achieving level 5. Staff have received some training to update their skills for example in female genital mutilation, first aid and food hygiene. The home does not have a workforce plan. This makes it difficult to identify when refresher training is due, for example, in safeguarding. Staff have not yet received training in radicalisation. However, they do not consider that any child has been at risk of radicalisation.</p> <p>The manager has improved the service by meeting the two requirements made at the last inspection. The importance of an education placement so that children can make progress and achieve, is recognised. The independent visitor now comments on children's safety and well-being to meet regulation.</p> <p>The manager has not met the two recommendations to meet quality standards made at the last inspection. When they return after being missing, not all children are offered independent interviews. The recommendation is repeated. Aspects of the home are still institutional and do not provide a homely atmosphere for</p>	

children. This is now a requirement in this report, including additional shortfalls in the premises.

The home's statement of purpose contains some incorrect information. The children's guide includes quite complex language which children may not understand. It also makes reference to another home, which is confusing for children.

Staff have replaced or repaired damaged items and repainting of the building has commenced. Some areas of the home require improvement. For example, the computer room is stark, the computer table and floor damaged and the young persons' noticeboard appears institutional. Children like their bedrooms and are pleased with the décor, which is personal to them. One recently occupied bedroom contains a wardrobe which is unstable and the bed is not suitable.

The registered manager has a suitable level 5 qualification and relevant experience. He has been the registered manager for a year. The manager reviews the service and provides their reports to Ofsted. An independent visitor also monitors what goes on and makes recommendations to improve the service that children receive.

Staff receive support in their work. Staff meetings, appraisals and supervision help them in their role. They describe managers as supportive. They appreciate being able to approach the independent consultant.

Staff appear motivated and wanting to do a good job with children. One member of staff said, 'We really care about the children and are experienced.' They bring a range of experience and skills from diverse backgrounds, which benefit the children.

## 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 that 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016