

Children's homes inspection – Full

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| Inspection date | 20/09/2016 |
| Unique reference number | SC379123 |
| Type of inspection | Full |
| Provision subtype | Children's home |
| Registered provider | Cove Care Residential Ltd |
| Registered provider address | Cove Care Residential Ltd, 16 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton WV1 4BL |

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| Responsible individual | Lee Smith |
| Registered manager | Moira Kennedy |
| Inspector | Dave Carrigan |

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| Inspection date | 20/09/2016 |
| 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 | Requires improvement |
| 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. | |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Requires improvement |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Requires improvement |

SC379123

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The manager has not ensured that the home's statement of purpose is up to date.
- The manager has not ensured that risk assessments are robust enough to address the changing needs of young people.
- The strategies in place to protect young people from a significant risk of being missing from care are ineffective.
- The managers' matching process for the admission of young people to the home is ineffective, potentially leaving others at risk.
- The manager has not put a process in place to ensure that young people have the opportunity to engage with independent return interviews following a missing from care episode.
- The manager has not ensured that the independent visitor's monitoring identifies shortfalls to support service development.
- The manager has not ensured that all staff have attained the relevant qualification for their role within regulatory timescales.

The children's home strengths

- Young people speak positively about the quality of their relationships with staff.
- Young people are involved in the running of the home and have good opportunities to have their wishes and views heard.
- All young people are supported to attend their education placement.
- Contact with significant family members are encouraged, supported and maintained well.
- Staff work collaboratively with other professionals to ensure that young people receive the best support and guidance.

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>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to risk assessments, the registered provider must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(2)(a)(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.</p> | 15/10/2016 |
| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to missing from care episodes, the registered provider must ensure—</p> <p>(2)(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> | 15/10/2016 |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person is required to—</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home with specific regard to missing from care return interviews.</p> | 15/10/2016 |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home with specific regard to matching processes.</p> | 15/10/2016 |

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| 13: The leadership and management standard In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. | 15/10/2016 |
| The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it, notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b)) | 15/10/2016 |

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that there is independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of four within this private organisation that offer placements for up to five young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium- to long-term care placements.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 26/01/2016 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 24/08/2015 | Full | Good |
| 09/03/2015 | Interim | Sustained effectiveness |
| 04/06/2014 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

| | Judgement grade |
|--|-----------------------------|
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are | Requires improvement |
| <p>The manager has not ensured the safe matching of young people in the home. Despite the manager being aware of the risks some young people pose, there has been no consideration of the needs and vulnerabilities of the young people already in placement. This has placed young people at risk of harm.</p> <p>Young people told the inspector that they have good relationships with staff. One young person reported, 'I like living here, it feels like home. I am comfortable with all the staff, I don't want to leave.' Professionals confirm that they have observed supportive interactions between young people and staff. One social worker reported, 'Overall the quality of care he receives during the day is very good, he is encouraged to attend meetings and due to the high staff ratios is encouraged to participate in a full programme in terms of his appointments and one to one education'. As a result, young people form strong attachments with staff, which helps to create trust.</p> <p>Young people have clear health plans and are registered with the relevant primary health care services. They understand the importance of good health and are supported by staff to attend physical and psychological health appointments. The organisation's therapist visits the home twice a month to provide clinical oversight to the staff, which provides them with opportunities to raise and discuss any particular issues they have in relation to the care of young people. Staff, in turn, are provided with strategies to support young people to address their emotional and psychological well-being.</p> <p>Medication is stored safely, and records are maintained on the administration of medication. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being. This ensures that young people receive their medication safely and in line with their prescription.</p> <p>Young people attend a variety of educational settings, dependent on their needs and abilities. Some young people maintain good school attendance. However, other young people have yet to engage in any meaningful education or training activities, despite staff giving them encouragement and different options such as home learning. As a result, some young people have made no academic progress.</p> <p>Young people make a positive contribution to the home. They are well engaged and encouraged to express their views and opinions to staff and the manager. Young people share their views and any complaints through their key-worker</p> | |

sessions, weekly house meetings and through monthly meetings with an independent advocate who visits the home. This gives young people the opportunity to have their voice heard and influence the running of the home

Young people are encouraged to maintain contact with their families and carers in accordance with their care plans. Staff clearly understand the importance of contact for the young people and, if required, support contact arrangements. This promotes young people's relationships outside of the home.

Young people are supported to develop independence and life skills that are, relevant to their age, level of understanding and ability. Those who are eligible have pathway plans in place, and young people are supported in working towards their individual goals. This means that young people are better equipped for their transition to adulthood.

Young people are offered a good range of constructive leisure activities within the local community, which strengthens their sense of belonging. Individual interests and talents are actively encouraged and supported, which increases confidence. Examples include trips to the cinema and going to the local gym.

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| | Judgement grade |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | Requires improvement |
| <p>The manager has not ensured that risk assessments are robust and take into account previous and current behaviours. For example, a young person who was identified as presenting a high risk to himself and others, was scored as a presenting a low risk in all the risk factors that were assessed. Inaccurate assessments of young people's risk leads to the incorrect arrangements for care and supervision of young people, while potentially compromising the safety and well-being of others.</p> <p>Incidents of missing from care remain high for some young people. This behaviour exposes them to significant levels of risk, such as child sexual exploitation, alcohol and substance misuse and offending behaviour. Staff make robust efforts to keep in contact with missing young people and encourage their safe return. Links with the local police are in place and communication between professionals is good. However, the home has been ineffective in engaging the young people and reducing this significant risk-taking behaviour. There is no process in place to ensure that young people have the opportunity to engage with independent return interviews following their absence. This is a missed opportunity to enable young people to discuss their reasons for going missing and for the home to capture any learning.</p> | |

The manager ensures that staff are trained and have a clear understanding of behaviour management techniques that are appropriate and may be used to support young people in avoiding harm to themselves or others. Such intervention is only ever used when it is essential and in accordance with the young person's individual care plan. Records of such incidents are completed routinely by staff after any such event. They provide good detail of the event and the level of intervention and support that was required. Young people's views are included in the records, this supports monitoring of the records and contributes to identifying any patterns or trends in young people's behaviour

Young people live in a home that is physically safe and secure. Regular environmental safety checks are undertaken and staff and young people regularly practise evacuating the home in an emergency.

Young people are protected by the organisation's robust recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. This helps to prevent unsuitable adults working with young people.

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| | Judgement grade |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Requires improvement |
| <p>The home has an appropriately qualified registered manager in place. The manager has been in post since March 2014 and holds a level 4 national vocational qualification in leadership, health and social care.</p> <p>Staff spoken with during the inspection confirm that they feel well supported by their manager and receive regular supervision and annual appraisals where they can discuss their own training and development needs as well as the care of young people. Staff receive mandatory training which ensures that their practice is up to date and relevant. Some of the staff who have worked for the organisation for over two years have yet to complete their level 3 diploma in residential childcare. This means that some staff are now outside the regulatory timescales for achieving their qualification. This means that staff who do not hold the relevant qualification are caring for young people.</p> <p>The manager ensures that the statement of purpose is a comprehensive document that sets out what services the home has to offer. However, it does not cover all the requirements of the regulation, in particular, details of staffing and the home's approach to education. The children's guide provides clear written information that is also supplemented by pictorial information, enabling young people to know about the home they live in.</p> | |

The manager ensures that monitoring visits from someone independent of the home take place each month. The reports resulting from these visits lack scrutiny and analysis, and does not ensure that there are fully effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided to young people. This does not support the home's development or the managers monitoring of the home.

The manager ensures that communication between agencies is effective in ensuring that all parties are kept well informed of young people's progress. One social worker reported, 'The communication with staff has been excellent and I receive a weekly update as requested. This keeps our service informed of his events and his activities. I also receive incident reports the day after the episodes'. These arrangements ensure that clear lines of communication have been established.

At the last inspection, one requirement was made pertaining to the premises. The graffiti that was on a wall has been removed and the wall freshly repainted. This means that young people live in a home with no historic damage that is now more welcoming to 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 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 that 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 whom 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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