

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Unique reference number	1236540
Type of inspection	Full
Registered person	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Northgate House, Northgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 1UN
Provision subtype	Children's home

Responsible individual	Anne Tully
Registered manager	Guy Greenwood
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	11/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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

1236540

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Planning for the admission of some young people to the home has been poor. Some decision making has been crisis-led and, as a result, the advice of other professionals and previous assessments of suitability were disregarded.
- Decision making regarding admissions has led to increased staff stress, low staff morale and increased staff sickness. In addition, managers have been unable to offer formal supervision or undertake comprehensive monitoring of care.
- There have been times when the home has not been sufficiently staffed to accommodate the demands of the complex and competing needs that the young people have presented.
- Staff have not comprehensively assessed some behaviours that pose a risk to young people's welfare and safety. As a result, the impact that these behaviours present is not fully appreciated by staff.
- A high number of physical restraints have been required to ensure young people's safety. Difficult situations have not always been de-escalated quickly enough.

The children's home strengths

- The management team is fully aware of the shortfalls regarding previous decision making about admissions, and there is a plan in place to address them.
- Staff are committed and passionate about the welfare of the young people whom they care for. They are resourceful and highly reflective in their approach to improving the experiences of young people.
- Planned admissions to the home are of a high quality and are comprehensive in their approach.
- Staff and managers work well with other professionals in their approach to caring for young people. They are open to learning, and take the advice and guidance that are offered.
- Young people are beginning to make progress, and there are trusting relationships between young people and staff. Staff are attuned and respond appropriately to young people's emotional needs.
- Staff promote young people's interests and provide good support for young people to achieve in their chosen activities.

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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>In order to met the care planning standard, with particular reference to ensuring that full consideration is given of the impact of new admissions on young people already living at the home, the care planning standard is that children:</p> <p>14.—(1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>(b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(e) that the child's placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child's relevant plans is requested, if—</p> <p>(i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child's needs.</p>	30/11/2016
<p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to young people being protected from other young people's harmful behaviours, and risk assessments reflecting the impact of young people's presenting behaviour, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>12.—(2)(a) that staff—</p> <p>(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> <p>(iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>(vi) take effective action whenever there is serious concern about a child's welfare.</p>	30/11/2016
<p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring sufficiency of staffing, training that reflects young people's needs, and the use of monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvement, the registered person must:</p> <p>13.—(2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers outcomes, as set out in the</p>	31/12/2016

<p>home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;</p> <p>(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; and details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(ii)(iv)(v))</p>	14/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

This is with particular reference to staff recording and acknowledging young people's progress and achievements in a clear and transparent way.

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

This is with particular reference to the repair and redecoration of young people's rooms.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
<p>The home was first registered in June 2016 and became operational in July 2016. Some young people experienced well-planned admissions to the home. This planning was thorough in terms of consultation with other professionals and a full appreciation of children's needs. This ensured that children were carefully matched and their needs met by staff. However, this planning was disrupted by a crisis-led emergency admission. As a result, children's harmful behaviours increased, such as assaults upon staff, sexualised behaviours and self-harm. A total of 35 physical interventions were employed by staff in order to keep children safe.</p> <p>Professionals such as independent reviewing officers (IRO) and social workers described children's early experiences of living at the home as 'chaotic' and as being 'in crisis'. One IRO said: 'My concerns were that children with such high emotional needs were all placed together in such a short space of time. I feel that my young person was re-traumatised.' In addition, professionals considered that at this time staff did not clearly establish boundaries for the children. As a result, their progress since joining the home was disrupted and delayed. They are now beginning to settle, are making progress and learning to trust staff.</p> <p>Children have made successful transitions to new schools, with 100% attendance. Staff support children's learning both formally and informally, and there is liaison with schools to ensure that children are fully supported across both settings. With support from staff, children have embraced the opportunities that school has offered them in terms of extra-curricular activities. In addition, staff fully support each child's individual interests, such as football, kick-boxing, ballet and dance. This opens up new social opportunities for making friends and integrating into their community. In addition, it encourages a purposeful and rewarding use of leisure time.</p> <p>Staff offer high levels of attention and time to young people. They are attuned to children's emotional responses and the relationships that children develop with staff and each other. Of one young person, a social worker commented: 'Her</p>	

relationship with her key worker is better than in the previous placement, and she is now starting to engage at a closer level. She is starting to respond to the emotional warmth.'

Staff work hard at supporting children to negotiate, in a safe and positive way, any disagreements or differences of opinion. The boundaries that are now in place are consistent. This contributes to children feeling safe and understanding the consequences of unsafe or negative behaviours.

Children are now developing trusting relationships with staff and are beginning to talk about things that they find difficult in their lives. Staff work hard at understanding each child's views, ensuring that these are heard and understood by other professionals. Of one young person, a social worker commented: 'She has shown that she is settling in. She is also prepared to take on activities and go out with the other child, and she feels that she can talk to staff. Previously, it has been difficult for her to engage with me, but it was lovely to see when I visited that she actually wanted to speak with me.'

The home is well maintained, on the whole, and offers children a good space to play and engage in separate activities. However, due to damage caused, some children's bedrooms require repair and redecoration.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
<p>Children's backgrounds and previous life experiences are understood well by the staff. The age of the children and high levels of supervision ensure that risks associated with missing from home incidents or drug and alcohol misuse are not a feature of their lives. Although staff understand children's histories, complex behaviours and vulnerabilities, this understanding has not resulted in the comprehensive assessment of risk. As a result, plans to keep children safe from sexual exploitation have not been developed. This does not anticipate children's vulnerabilities in settings outside of the home, nor does it result in plans to minimise these risks.</p> <p>Through a reduction in the number of children who live at the home, children are becoming increasingly safe. However, their early experiences within the home exposed them to the harmful behaviours of other children, an increase in incidents and the need for physical intervention. The recording of the build-up to these incidents is not always clear and on some occasions, staff have used physical intervention to defuse situations rather than to ensure the safety of young people.</p> <p>Children are learning to manage their negative responses and behaviours at an earlier stage. Through staff's support, they are beginning to reflect upon their</p>	

actions and the effects that their behaviours have on others. The staff infrequently use sanctions. However, when they are imposed, it is not clear how they relate to the behaviour, nor what learning for the child has resulted.

Investigations into allegations of harm are shared appropriately with other agencies and managed in an open and transparent way. Managers have ensured that serious incidents have been notified to Ofsted in a timely and appropriate manner. This ensures that there is oversight by other agencies with regard to the safety and welfare of children.

There are clear processes in place that are adhered to with regard to the recruitment of staff. This ensures that young people are not exposed to adults who may pose a risk to their safety and welfare.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
<p>The manager has been registered to manage the home since June 2016. He has many years' experience of the care and accommodation of children and young people. He is suitably qualified and passionate about his ambition to provide good services to children.</p> <p>The manager has a strong presence within the home and understands both the strengths and areas for development in order continually to improve the care that is offered. In response to previous decision making and its effects upon young people, the statement of purpose has been amended to prevent any further emergency admissions. In addition, no further admissions will be accepted for a period of time in order to consolidate learning and give young people at the home a period of stability.</p> <p>Management decisions regarding an emergency admission had far-reaching effects upon both the welfare of children and the management's capacity to oversee the home effectively. Previously completed impact risk assessments and the advice of other professionals were disregarded in order to respond to a crisis-led admission. At times, there was insufficient staffing within the home to meet the demands and complexities of the presenting behaviours of children. This led to staff working long hours, increased staff sickness and a lowering of staff morale. During this time, formal supervision did not take place as laid out in the organisation's policies. The demands upon managers and staff at this time were such that time could not be created effectively for supervision to take place. In addition, whole-team therapeutic consultations that support the model of care adopted by the home could not be accommodated.</p> <p>There are currently no systems in place to ensure that regular management</p>	

monitoring of the home takes place. Although there is a good verbal awareness of key areas of monitoring, managers are unable to provide an evaluative analysis of incidents or individual areas of progress as set against children's plans. Staff and managers are aware of the progress that children are making. However, delays to management oversight of staff records have resulted in some areas of children's progress not being fully evaluated. This limits thorough management oversight of the quality of care that is being offered to children.

The management team provides good levels of informal support to the staff and formal supervision is now taking place appropriately. Members of staff described their managers as being open, honest and approachable. One member staff said: 'I'm not a number: I'm a person. It is lovely to work here.' The strong management presence ensures that staff have easy access to advice at the times when they require it.

Other professionals have confidence in staff's abilities and skills to meet children's needs. One therapeutic advanced practitioner described the staff and management in the face of increased demands within the home as: 'Outstanding in their dedication, nurturing and professionalism' and 'Excellent in terms of their capabilities in what they could do and what, strategically, was not in their control.'

Although staff are trained in the model of care that the home has adopted, some members of staff have not received up-to-date training in safeguarding. In addition, the backgrounds of the children are such that meeting their needs would be enhanced by staff training in attachment issues.

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 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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