

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	02/11/2016
Unique reference number	1185768
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	South West Mental Health Ltd
Registered provider address	Victoria Hayward, Crossmoor Meadows House, Spaxton Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2PB

Responsible individual	Keri Eagle
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Sharron Escott

Inspection date	02/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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>The home was judged as requires improvement at the full inspection in June 2016. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has declined in effectiveness.</p> <p>Since the previous inspection, the registered manager has resigned. In August 2016, a new manager was appointed and she is processing her application to register with Ofsted. Since her appointment, the new manager has audited the home's records, liaised with placing authorities and reviewed the care needs of the two young people living in the home.</p> <p>Despite the new manager's endeavours to improve the quality of care, the overall effectiveness of the home has declined since the full inspection. Oversight by the responsible individual and senior leaders to manage the home in the intervening period has been ineffective. As a result, the safety and overall experiences for the young people have declined. The four requirements and three quality standards raised at the last inspection have not been met.</p> <p>Young people are not safeguarded from harm as a result of weaknesses in the recruitment, vetting and training of new staff. The responsible individual has failed to ensure that all necessary vetting checks are completed. This includes a failure to thoroughly explore gaps in employment history and to obtain sufficient references from previous employers.</p> <p>The responsible individual is also accountable for managing child protection concerns. She has failed to follow safeguarding policies effectively in response to concerns about four incidents that have happened since the last inspection. Weaknesses include a failure to notify all required agencies, as required, and poorly maintained records.</p> <p>The management of difficult behaviour displayed by young people remains poor. Staff members use restraint in response to high-risk behaviours and on three occasions the police have been called by the staff or the young people. The use of restraint has increased for one young person. Her views about the incidents and interventions used are not always sought by staff. As a result, learning from the young person's experiences is limited.</p> <p>Sanctions used by staff in response to unwanted behaviour are not well considered as they are not always proportionate and/or restorative. For example, young people are prevented from joining in activities. This approach fails to recognise that</p>	

activities help the young people to develop their self-esteem. Since the appointment of the new manager, there has been an increased focus on restorative consequences, and she is guiding staff to consider conflict resolution meetings instead of sanctions.

The responsible individual has not ensured that staff working directly with the young people are suitably trained and experienced to meet their individual needs. For example, one young person is frequently looked after by staff who are either in their probation period and/or who do not hold a British sign language (BSL) qualification, as required. BSL is this young person's first language. The responsible individual has not assessed the risks associated with not being able to communicate effectively with the young person.

Only three out of thirteen care staff have obtained the BSL qualification at level 1. In addition, not all staff receive regular, good-quality, reflective supervision. Some staff have not received formal supervision since April 2016. The new manager has identified this weakness and said that she has provided staff with supervision since her appointment. This action could not be verified as the manager's written notes were not available to view during this inspection.

The responsible individual and senior leaders have failed to ensure that suitable education arrangements were swiftly put in place for all the young people. The responsible individual has failed to effectively challenge the placing authorities and, as a result, progress to address this need has been slow. Since her appointment, the new manager has been successful in liaising with one young person's placing authority to explore viable education options.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have mental health disorders.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
6/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement

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) meet(s) 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>5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met</p> <p>(c) If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, they must challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans.</p> <p>Specifically, the registered person must ensure that there is effective collaboration to ensure that young people receive formal education.</p>	16/12/2016
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>(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>(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>(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>	16/12/2016
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the</p>	16/12/2016

<p>registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the 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>(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;</p> <p>(g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on</p> <p>(ii) feedback on the experiences of children; and</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>32: Fitness of workers:</p> <p>(1) 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 if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>(3) The requirements are that</p> <p>(d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.</p>	16/12/2016
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees</p> <p>(4)(a) undertake appropriate continuing professional development;</p> <p>(b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and</p> <p>(c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.</p>	16/12/2016
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</p>	16/12/2016

<p>The registered person must ensure that</p> <p>(3)(b) within 48 hours of using a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, the registered person or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so</p> <p>(i) has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>(ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>(c) within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure.</p>	
<p>40: Notification of a serious event</p> <p>In order to meet this requirement, the registered person must</p> <p>(4) notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if</p> <p>(e) there is any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious.</p>	<p>16/12/2016</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the principles as set out in 9.5 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)
- The registered person should ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policy on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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 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 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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