

## Children's homes – Interim inspection

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>08/11/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC038719</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Interim</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Secure Unit</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>John Stacey</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Paul Scott</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>08/11/2016</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 effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b>	
<p>This home was judged <b>good</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has <b>sustained effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>This is a well-run home where young people benefit from the individual care and support that they receive from the increasingly experienced staff team. Care planning and care practice are based on good assessment, monitoring and review. Good links with a range of education, health and safeguarding professionals ensure that each young person's individual and diverse needs are met.</p> <p>The majority of young people are very positive about their experiences at the home. They are given good support to help them to address the behaviours and concerns, which resulted in them being placed in this secure setting. One young person said, 'Staff have really helped me, and having that extra time here has made a real difference to me. They try really hard, and if you want help, it is there for you. Some people choose not to accept this and that is their loss.'</p> <p>Young people's safety continues to be given a high priority. Staff know young people well and demonstrate a detailed understanding of their behaviours, risks and vulnerabilities. They use well-thought-out and professionally informed strategies to help young people to keep safe and ensure that risky behaviour such as self-harm is managed effectively and safely.</p> <p>The local authority, managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to driving an improvement agenda. They are aspirational in their efforts to develop the service and are in the process of developing a number of initiatives designed to improve the services and support available for young people. For example, the manager is working closely with mental health professionals to develop a trauma-based therapeutic model of intervention, which promotes the resilience of young people and staff. The recent appointment of a specialist child sexual exploitation worker has further strengthened the support available to young people.</p> <p>Ofsted has received three notifications pertaining to breaches in security. In all cases, staff followed procedures and matters were addressed quickly. The manager has taken the appropriate steps to ensure that the integrity of the secure environment has improved and that the opportunities for future incidents are minimised.</p> <p>Four of the six requirements and all recommendations raised at the previous inspection have been suitably addressed. The procedures for searching have been improved. Staff have undertaken basic training in this respect, and the manager is</p>	

currently in the process of sourcing more formal training through the police. Managers are using closed-circuit television (CCTV) to quality assure staff practice. This has resulted in an improved awareness and accountability of staff and led to a more consistent and rigorous approach to searching activity.

Records pertaining to allegations are now well organised, fully complete and up to date. There have been four allegations since the last inspection. Records confirm that these have been appropriately managed in the best interest of young people, including referral to and involvement of external safeguarding professionals.

A number of new staff have been recruited as the home continues to build its staff team. A detailed register is now maintained in the home and accurately reflects the comprehensive information retained at the local authority's head office. The in-house record was found to be up to date and confirmed that all new starters have been suitably vetted prior to starting work in the home.

The manager continues to maintain a high level of strategic scrutiny and oversight. This is clearly evidenced in his most recent regulation 45 report, which is comprehensively detailed, highly evaluative and focuses on the continued development of the service. Day-to-day monitoring activity has improved. Processes such as daily briefings and monthly quality assurance checks are now being used effectively. This means that any shortfalls are being identified and suitably addressed in a timely manner.

Positive changes have been made to the format of the independent visitor's report. It has been individually tailored to the secure setting and is much more purposeful and relevant in its content. This has provided more focus for the independent visitor and offers a greater depth of scrutiny of the home's performance. This means that when shortfalls are identified they can be addressed by the manager. There has been an improvement in capturing the views of young people, but this is not evident at all visits. Furthermore, there is an absence of consultation with parents, and the visitor still does not always make clear their opinion about how effectively young people are safeguarded.

Staff are becoming more confident in managing young people's behaviour and more skilled in their use of de-escalation techniques. They make good use of their positive relationships with young people when managing challenging behaviour. Despite their best efforts, it has at times been necessary to use physical restraint. On these occasions, it has been done caringly, with the minimum of force and, in the majority of cases, for a relatively short period. Young people confirm that staff talk to them following any incident of restraint. However, these discussions are still not consistently captured in the physical intervention records, although there is a notable improvement in this respect in relation to records of single separation and consequences.

Staff are being well supported to develop a better understanding of restorative practice. Good links have been established with a charity, which is in the process of delivering training for all staff with a view to embedding this philosophy into the culture of the home. Staff are clearly embracing this and are striking an improved balance between restorative responses and sanctions when addressing negative

behaviour. This approach is providing young people with better opportunities to reflect on and develop an understanding of their behaviour and put right what they have done wrong.

Managers and staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure that each young person's care is well planned from the point of admission to when they leave. Records are now maintained of the actions that staff have taken to advocate on young people's behalf, when their placing authority does not provide the services and support that they are entitled to. This has included challenging the local authority on decisions relating to future secure orders and has, on occasions, included the use of professional advocacy services. However, there continues to be a frustration about some placing authority responses to staff requests. This includes young people arriving without the relevant information and placements not being sourced in a timely manner for when young people leave. During the inspection, one young person spoke to the inspector about the delay in their social worker providing staff with an approved contact list. This young person had been in placement for over five weeks. He recognised that staff had chased the information and had ensured that contact with his family could be maintained. However, because there is no formal time scaled process to escalate concerns, this matter has been allowed to drift, causing immense frustration for the young person.

Staff listen to young people and make every effort to address their concerns. When complaints are made, they are taken seriously and fully investigated, ensuring that young people are kept informed and are satisfied with the outcome. Young people are confident in expressing their views. This was evident throughout the inspection when both inspectors received numerous complaints about the quality of the food. Managers are aware of young people's dissatisfaction and have tried a number of things in an attempt to make improvements. However, their efforts have proven unsuccessful, and the food sampled during the inspection was found to be bland and lacking in taste, which supported young people's views.

The current practice for administering and recording medication is an area of concern. Gaps in some medication records fail to demonstrate that young people are being consistently given medication in line with their prescriptions. Care staff are not always taking action when they realise that medication has not been administered. For example, they do not always inform the nurse or seek guidance in relation to the potential impact on the young person. While this has not compromised the safety and well-being of young people, there is clearly a potential for this to happen.

## Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. As well as the living accommodation, education is provided on site in dedicated facilities. The children's home can accommodate up to 16 young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Young people are the subject of section 25 of the Children Act 1989 and placed by local authorities. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989, who is under 13 years of age, requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/05/2016	Full	Good
20/10/2015	Full	Good
27/05/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/12/2014	Full	Good

## 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
The registered person must ensure that, following the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made and that 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. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(c))	13/12/2016
The registered person should ensure that the independent person, if they consent, interviews in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home, and that the independent person produces a report about the visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 44(2)(a)(4)(a))	13/12/2016
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))	13/12/2016

### Recommendations

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

- Formalise the procedure for challenging the placing authority or any other relevant person when they do not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- Ensure that all children are provided with varied and nutritious food, which they enjoy, and that this is of a consistently good quality. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.3)

## **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 whom 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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