

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Unique reference number	1183494
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Slough Children's Services Trust Limited (09487106)
Registered provider address	Slough Children's Services Trust Limited, 1 Glass Wharf, Bristol, BS2 0ZX

Responsible individual	Jackie Pape
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Joy Howick

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has declined in effectiveness.</p> <p>Since the full inspection, the registered manager has left the home. The interim management arrangements are that an agency manager commenced on 12 December 2016 and received a handover from the previous manager.</p> <p>Recent notifications made to Ofsted raised concerns about an increase in difficult behaviours and how these were being managed by the staff at the home.</p> <p>There has been an unsettled period during which the number of going missing incidents rose significantly in December 2016. In the previous 10 months, the average number of going missing incidents was four or fewer incidents each month, with the return home interviews that were seen being completed in a timely manner. In December 2016, there were 15 going missing incidents but return home interviews were not consistently completed within 72 hours, as required by the Department for Education's statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. Some return home interviews had not been completed until 10 days after the missing incident. This means that the best time for a vulnerable young person to share difficult information with an independent person was missed. Subsequently, staff were not able to put in place the most effective plans immediately, including updated risk assessments, to best support and care for the young people.</p> <p>The supervision of the staff is inconsistent and the quality of supervision records is poor in some cases. The monitoring systems in place for the supervision sessions are ineffective and do not ensure that supervision is either occurring or is of the required quality. Some of the supervision records inspected contained no evidence of reflective practice following significant incidents. In these circumstances, there is insufficient evidence of supervisors providing guidance and support or challenging poor practice.</p> <p>Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that a consistent team of suitably qualified, skilled and experienced staff is appointed to meet the needs of the young people placed in the home. Permanent recruitment to posts has been frozen since the end of 2015, so there is a reliance on agency staff combined with the use of</p>	

overtime by the staff group to cover all the shifts in the home. The full establishment of staff for the home is nine full-time residential social workers. There are four permanent full-time residential social workers and two full- and one half-time agency staff members working in the home. This has resulted in the assistant managers having to neglect managerial duties. This long-term reliance on the more experienced staff has resulted in the core team becoming stretched and unable to undertake key management tasks.

The staff in the home have engaged young people effectively and delivered a good quality of care in the circumstances. Young people report that they feel safe and like the staff in the home. The staff are providing a high level of emotional support, and skilfully support young people to attend their school or college. The staff have good relationships with the young people. The variety of activities offered and these positive relationships result in the behaviour of the young people being managed effectively. The requirement made at the previous inspection regarding restraint has been met. Young people benefit from staying in the home but it is unlikely that this can be sustained without addressing the shortage of experienced staff.

The quality of the environment is poor and some of the recommendations from the previous inspection have not been successfully addressed. Repairs and improvements have not taken place to the house or the gardens since the last inspection. This means that the home still has no properly appointed bathroom for the young people to use. In one bathroom there is no mirror; the broken one had been removed but not replaced. In the single shower, there is dirty grouting with tiles and paint peeling off the walls. There is also evidence of water leaking and ingress. One bathroom has a shower that is faulty, resulting in poor water flow and inconsistent temperature, although a temperature limiter is fitted so there is no risk of scalding. Neither of the upstairs bathrooms has a functioning or effective fan, resulting in unpleasant smells. One young person spoken to talked about how difficult they find it to manage in this environment, in particular because of the unpleasant smelling bathrooms. The main rooms, such as the TV lounge, have curtains hanging off inadequate rails. The education room is untidy and cluttered, with no functioning internet connection.

All the young people's rooms seen are very untidy, with the floor covered with containers of clothes or clothes lying directly on the floor. In one bedroom replacement curtain hooks are required, and one young person reported that their window curtains are too small to be fully closed and drawn across. Also the curtain material does not block out the light. Some rooms are poorly appointed and in need of decorating, and some plastic mirrors over the sink are scratched and need replacing. The storage space is inadequate to accommodate all of the young people's clothing. The bed has storage underneath but it is unusable as the bed is too heavy to lift up. There is no space for a desk for a young person to use for study. A suitable lockable cabinet has been installed at the bottom of the built-in wardrobe.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the building is homely, comfortable or provides a supportive environment for young people to reach their educational potential. There are no designated facilities for completing coursework or school homework on time using the internet, nor a suitable desk to sit and work at. It was reported by one young person that they cannot do college coursework effectively, as there is no wi-fi in many parts of the building plus they do not have a desk or space where they can comfortably study. This has had a direct impact on the young people being able to complete coursework on time. This issue has been ongoing for many months without resolution.

Addressing these shortfalls has been made a requirement at this inspection due to the significant delays in addressing the recommendations made previously.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that young people have access to all parts of the building and that decisions to limit areas are based on a rigorous risk assessment. This was a requirement of the last inspection. It was reported to the inspector that the larder remains locked at all times, and that the downstairs living rooms are locked once everyone is in bed and they are opened up in the morning. This is despite the fact that the home has a waking staff member on duty at night. The locking of internal doors at night time and the locking of the larder during the day is not recorded in the log of areas of restriction and does not have an assessment as to the appropriateness of these restrictions. This institutionalised practice further detracts from the homeliness of the environment.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. These may be aged between seven and 11 years on admission. It is a purpose-built local authority children's home that opened in 2005 but transferred to a trust established in October 2015.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/05/2016	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) 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 ensure:</p> <p>(2)(c)(i) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child.</p> <p>In particular, address all of the environmental shortfalls referred to in this report.</p>	31/03/2017
<p>8: The education standard</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard, with particular reference to providing effective internet access for the young people, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>8 (1) that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>(a) That each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.</p>	28/02/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.</p>	31/03/2017
<p>21: Privacy and access</p> <p>21 (1) The registered person must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p> <p>(b) children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and</p> <p>(c) any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises:</p>	17/02/2017

<p>(i) is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home;</p> <p>(ii) is necessary and proportionate;</p> <p>(iii) is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and</p> <p>(iv) allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. In particular, ensure that young people have access to all areas of the home. (Regulation 21 (1) (a) to (c))</p>	
<p>33 (4) The registered person must ensure that all employees:</p> <p>(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> <p>In particular, ensure that quality supervision occurs on a regular basis to promote staff development. (Regulation 33 (4) (a), (b) and (c))</p>	<p>31/03/2017</p>

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. This should be an in-depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (i.e. someone not involved in caring for the child) who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow up any actions that emerge. (Department for Education: 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care', P.14, paragraph 32, January 2014)

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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