

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17/01/2017
Unique reference number	1232650
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Friends Together Care Homes Ltd
Registered provider address	7 Tenter Lane, Warmsworth, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 9PP

Responsible individual	Thomas Worthington
Registered manager	Lynn Johnson
Inspector	Tina Ruffles

Inspection date	17/01/2017
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	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

1232650

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- The manager and staff do not understand children's and young people's individual needs and presenting risks.
- There are no behaviour management plans to inform, monitor and review the approaches taken by staff. The recording of restraints is not in line with the regulations, and responses to individual behaviours are inconsistent.
- The timing of children's and young people's admission to the home is not carefully considered. Recent admissions have been within quick succession, without due regard to the impact on the existing children and young people.
- The manager has not considered conducting impact risk assessments to help the staff to recognise any potential conflict between new admissions and the existing children and young people.
- Few children or young people have placement plans.
- The manager and staff are not sufficiently skilled or experienced to manage the complex needs of the children and young people in placement.
- Staff have insufficient knowledge and experience of the issue of child sexual exploitation. Children's and young people's access to the internet is unmonitored and places them at increased risk of harm.
- Leadership and management at the home are weak. The induction and training of staff are poor and do not meet the needs of the staff in caring for the current mix of children and young people.

The children's home strengths

- The staff team has developed some positive relationships with the children and young people.
- Children and young people benefit from good contact arrangements with their relatives, supported and facilitated effectively by the staff team.
- Most children and young people are engaging with education.
- The home has a comfortable and homely feel, and staff make efforts to ensure that it does not feel institutional.
- There has been a reduction in the number of missing from home episodes.

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>(2) In particular, the quality and purpose of care standard requires the registered person to:</p> <p>(iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background.</p> <p>(3) The conditions are:</p> <p>(b) that the care meets the child's needs;</p> <p>(c) that the care is delivered by a person who:</p> <p>(i) has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care.</p>	07/03/2017
<p>7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard, with particular reference to involving children and young people in their care plans and ensuring that prompt action is taken when young people convey their wishes and feelings about their care, the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(a) ensure that staff:</p> <p>(i) ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;</p> <p>(ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;</p> <p>(iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback about the quality of the home's care.</p>	07/03/2017
<p>* 12(1): The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, specifically in relation to promoting and monitoring children's safety and welfare effectively through providing safeguarding training to staff and ensuring that all risk assessments are completed, robust in clarity and detail, and are regularly reviewed, the registered person must ensure:</p>	07/03/2017

<p>(2)(a) that staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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; (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; <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; and</p> <p>(e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.</p>	
<p>* 13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(1): The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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; (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (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. 	07/03/2017
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>The care planning standard requires the registered person to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (2)(b) that arrangements are in place to: (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; 	07/03/2017

(c) that each child's relevant plans are followed.	
<p>The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16(5))</p> <p>Specifically, they must review it to ensure an accurate account of service delivery to children.</p>	07/03/2017
<p>A person may only manage a children's home if: having regard to the size of the home, its statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children: the person has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills to manage the home effectively and lead the care of children. (Regulation 28(1)(b)(i))</p>	07/03/2017
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.</p> <p>The registered person may only: employ an individual to work at the children's home; if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that: full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in schedule 2. (Regulation 32(1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(d))</p>	07/03/2017
<p>The registered person must: ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees: undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33(1)(a)(4)(a))</p>	07/03/2017
<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 the areas (i) to (viii); within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person'); has spoken to the user about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(b)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, amend the computer system to contain the relevant</p>	07/03/2017

headings within the regulations.	
<p>The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. <p>(Regulation 44(4)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the independent visitor must provide an accurate, rigorous and challenging report about care practices in the home and recommend any actions, and the registered person must consider whether to take those actions.</p>	07/03/2017
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every six months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review, the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of care provided for children; and the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1)(2)(a)(b)(5))</p>	07/03/2017

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a sole provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children or young people who have emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

The home was registered in July 2016. This is the first inspection.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
<p>The home is judged inadequate for help and protection, and for leadership and management. This means that the overall experiences of children and young people are also inadequate.</p> <p>Children's and young people's admissions to the home have been within quick succession of each other. This leaves them no time to settle before the next admission, and staff do not come to know their individual needs and behaviours. This leads to incompatible matchings. One young person who is unhappy with the behaviour of younger residents at the home said, 'I am going to tell my social worker that I want to move.'</p> <p>The manager's lack of matching prior to admission has led to placement disruption, with unplanned endings for two young people. This results in instability and further reduces the opportunity for children and young people to develop permanent, secure attachments.</p> <p>Not all children and young people have a placement care plan. This has led to staff being unable to provide individualised care, as the full extent of children's and young people's backgrounds, needs and aims at the placement are unknown. This is in direct conflict with the home's statement of purpose, which states: 'We thoroughly assess the needs of each individual young person at the point of referral and continue to assess throughout their placement to ensure the young person's needs are met at all times.'</p> <p>Children and young people are not involved in their care planning, and staff do not take prompt action when they express their views. For some, there has been a delay in the decoration of their bedrooms. One young person said, 'I've got to wait for the manager to decorate my bedroom, even though I have the wallpaper.'</p> <p>Most of the children and young people engage with their various education providers, although their attendance is not consistent. Children and young people have developed good relationships with staff, enabling them to talk about sensitive issues. One young person is in the early stages of engaging with therapy, while others are reluctant to attend. Staff provide children and young people with practical support to attend medical appointments, and facilitate regular contact with family members. The home has a comfortable and homely feel, and staff endeavour to make sure that it does not feel institutional. Meals are healthy, home cooked and planned on a daily basis, and children, young people and staff eat together.</p>	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
<p>There are serious failings and weaknesses in the home's safeguarding practice. Children and young people do not have individualised risk assessments. Consequently, staff do not understand the potential dangers or risks that children and young people face. Staff keep records of incidents of concern, but there is no monitoring or evaluation to recognise any changes in children's and young people's behaviour. Risk management is poor, with no guidance for staff in relation to what action or strategies to take to manage or reduce the risk. As a result, staff are unable to safeguard children and young people effectively.</p> <p>The manager and staff do not have a clear understanding about child sexual exploitation. They do not recognise the risks of online grooming. The home's safeguarding policy outlines that it has 'A clear commitment to develop and implement systems that enable children and young people to use online and mobile technology safely and reduce the risks of potentially harmful behaviours.' These systems are not in place with young people who, although are at risk of sexual exploitation, have unmonitored access to the internet. Staff have not received training on the issue of child sexual exploitation. They are therefore unable to recognise and respond to concerns appropriately.</p> <p>Missing from home plans are generic, rather than individualised to those living at the home. This has led to staff not knowing how to respond to individual risks and this does not support staff to capture full and detailed information to share with the police and safeguarding agencies. Not all children and young people receive independent return home interviews to determine the reasons for their absence. This is a missed opportunity to understand the reasons for why the young person is going missing and reduces the ability to take appropriate action to prevent this from happening again.</p> <p>There are no behaviour management plans. This leads to an inconsistent approach from staff in managing children's and young people's behaviour. Physical intervention is not safely or effectively managed. This includes staff carrying out restraint without necessary training and calling the police to intervene to manage children's behaviour. The request for police intervention is disproportionate and serves to criminalise children and young people unnecessarily.</p> <p>The recording of restraints is not in line with the regulations, and lacks detail in respect of the child's or young person's behaviour leading to the use of the measure. There are no debriefings between the manager and the staff involved. The lack of reflection by staff following an incident makes it difficult to measure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the intervention. Although staff have</p>	

reflective discussions with the children and young people, these are not recorded fully, leaving gaps in their care history that would cause confusion should they seek access to their personal file in the future.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
<p>The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in August 2017. She has the relevant qualification and experience for the role. However, she has not demonstrated the skills or knowledge to manage the home effectively.</p> <p>The registered manager presents as having a lack of understanding of issues relating to child sexual exploitation. Within a few months of living at the home, she downgraded young people's levels of risk. This was on the basis that the episodes of missing from care had decreased, failing to recognise the other risk factors present.</p> <p>The manager prioritises spending time with children and young people. She does not focus on the management of the home or areas that need improvement. Monitoring of the quality of care and practice at the home is ineffective. There is no system to consult children, parents, placing authorities or staff. This makes it difficult for the manager to review and evaluate the quality of care provided and track young people's progress. The independent visitor does not provide robust scrutiny of the home and this hinders the ability to develop a clear plan for improvement.</p> <p>Recruitment processes are not sufficiently robust. Staff have not received an effective induction or had access to any training. There is no workforce development plan and staff are not supervised regularly or appraised of their performance. Staff feel unsupported and they do not receive appropriate guidance or opportunities to reflect on their practice. This means that they are unable to recognise if the care that they offer to children and young people is appropriate. Staff have been working long shifts and have lost confidence in the manager.</p>	

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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