

## Children's home – Interim inspection

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>21/02/2017</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC036304</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Interim</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>People Directorate, 9th Floor, Merton House, Stanley, Bootle, Merseyside L20 3JA</b>
<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Dwayne Johnson</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Sally-Ann Edwards</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Michelle Edge</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>21/02/2017</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<p><b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b></p> <p>This home was judged <b>good</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has <b>declined in effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>The home has declined in effectiveness since the last inspection because of shortfalls in the quality of care and leadership and management. The registered manager has failed to address four of the seven previous requirements and recommendations.</p> <p>Compatibility risk assessments and internal plans are not completed to a satisfactory standard for young people who have recently moved into the home. They contain a list of some known behaviours and risks associated with young people, but do not contain all of the information that is contained within the referral. There is also no consideration of the potential impact of these behaviours and risks on young people already living in the home. Ineffective evaluation of the suitability of each placement has a negative impact on the ability of the home to provide high-quality care and promote the welfare and safety of all young people.</p> <p>The recording of restraints and sanctions requires improvement. Although records clearly explain the reasons for physical interventions, on occasions, the technique used and the length of time are not included in the records. The home has two systems for recording physical interventions. This includes a restraint logbook as well as a significant incident report. Inconsistencies in the recording within the two systems are confusing and weaken the monitoring of staff practices.</p> <p>Similarly, an appropriate person does not consistently overview the effectiveness of behaviour management measures used. On more than one occasion, the staff member involved in the measure also reviewed its effectiveness. This was observed in both sanction and physical interventions records. This does not demonstrate independent scrutiny of all measures used within the home. Although there were no concerns identified around the use of physical intervention or staff practices, poor recording and monitoring of such incidents potentially undermines young people's safety.</p> <p>At the last inspection, a requirement was made about the home's environment. The manager has not taken sufficient steps to make the improvements highlighted. Flooring in parts of the home remains damaged and stained, and furniture that was damaged had not been repaired or replaced. This detracts from a welcoming,</p>	

nurturing environment where young people feel valued and well cared for. This requirement is repeated.

The recording of medication is not sufficiently robust. On occasion, staff failed to document all medication administered to young people. Times and dates were omitted from some records and not all medication that left the home was documented, for example when young people took controlled medication on family contact. This does not demonstrate that safe systems are in place to administer and monitor medication given to young people.

The staff keep daily records for young people living at the home. These records provide an understanding of individual young people's lives and planning for their futures. However, the written risk assessment and behaviour management plans are not consistently reviewed, or thoroughly updated. Despite this being highlighted at the last inspection, it continues to be an area for further improvement; for example, where young people have been missing from care, or when managers have been made aware that a young person may be using an illegal drug. Consequently, the plans do not include up-to-date information about assessed risks for individual young people, or take into account young people's progress and any changes in their circumstances. They do not detail the specific strategies that staff are currently using to support young people to manage risks on a day-to-day basis. In addition, staff are not signing and dating documents, or detailing who the author of the record is. This lack of clarity may impede the consistent use of effective protective measures to help young people and does not ensure that all staff are fully aware of all known risks.

There have been incidents of young people going missing from care and absent without permission. At the point young people go missing, staff act appropriately and in a timely manner. They notify the police, family members and the local authority so that action can be taken to find them. Any serious concerns are escalated to multi-disciplinary strategy meetings. This ensures that all safeguarding professionals are working together to assess and minimise risk. However, some records do not accurately reflect whether return-to-home interviews have been facilitated. The manager reported that they had always taken place; the visits were recorded in the visitors' book, but were not recorded in any other documentation. This was a recording issue that had not been identified by the managers, as part of their scrutiny of the home.

Furthermore, when there have been significant events involving young people living at the home, including requests for police assistance, there have been no notifications sent to Ofsted. This does not allow the regulator to have a clear overview of all safeguarding incidents and is in breach of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

At the last inspection, a requirement was made about staff members' professional supervision. Some staff were not having one-to-one supervision with a manager at least once a month, as set out in the statement of purpose and supervision policies. This requirement has not been addressed. The manager accepted that although

there are lots of 'informal discussions' taking place in the home, formal supervision is not routinely undertaken or documented. This does not provide all members of staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice or promote their professional development. This requirement has been repeated.

Internal and external monitoring systems are weak. This is because quality assurance systems in place are still not sufficiently robust to identify and act on shortfalls highlighted in today's inspection. Furthermore, there had been no recorded independent visits to the home since November 2016. The manager identified that a newly appointed person had completed one visit in January; however, there was no written record available. This affects the independent scrutiny of the service.

Despite these failings, several key strengths are identified. The home has a consistent and committed staff team whose members have worked at the home for several years. They are all clear about their roles and responsibilities and feel that the management team is 'very supportive'. Members of staff have built positive relationships with young people who reported that they feel 'happy' and 'safe' at the home and have staff that they can talk to if they are worried or upset.

Relationships with family members are valued and promoted. The registered manager and staff ensure that direct contact takes place regularly with family members and those people who are important to the young person, in accordance with plans. The manager and staff recognise the importance for young people in maintaining relationships with family members in a safe and positive manner. This helps to support young people to understand their identity, family origins and improve their self-esteem.

Partnership working with other agencies and professionals supports young people's progress. The registered manager and staff work well with social workers, health professionals and schools. The registered manager prioritises key meetings effectively, such as planning meetings, reviews of children looked after and strategy meetings. This supports agencies to share important information and coordinate plans that benefit young people. In addition, she has challenged social workers and other professionals effectively when decisions have been made that are not in the young person's best interests. This ensures that the views and wishes of young people are clearly represented and decision making is child-focused.

## Information about this children's home

- This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The primary task of the home is to provide short to medium-term care to prepare children to live in a foster family.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/06/2016	Full	Good
09/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
12/05/2015	Full	Good
04/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## 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:</p> <p>(2)(b)(vii) provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;</p> <p>(c)(i) ensure 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, the registered persons must ensure that the premises are decorated and furnished to a good standard and that they provide children with a comfortable and pleasant home environment.</p>	24/03/2017
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to ensuring that staff take action to protect children when they consider them to be at risk of child sexual exploitation, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(2)(a)(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>(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>	24/03/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered persons must:</p> <p>(2) (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous</p>	24/03/2017

improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	
The registered person must ensure to make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1)(2)(c) (3)(b))	24/03/2017
The registered persons must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience, and in particular, that supervision for every member of staff takes place at least monthly as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	24/03/2017
<p>The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out—</p> <p>(3) The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>(a) 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—</p> <p>(i) the name of the child;</p> <p>(ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>(iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>(iv) a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>(v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>(vi) the name of the person who used the measure ('the user'), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>(vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>(viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>(b) 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')—</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 five 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>(Regulation 35 (3)(a)(b)(c))</p>	24/03/2017
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child, which include the information and documents listed in	24/03/2017

Schedule 3 in relation to each child: are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c))	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to: sexual exploitation; or when an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b))	24/03/2017
The registered persons must help the independent person carrying out the visit to interview in private children's parents, relatives and persons working at the home. In addition, the independent person's report about the visit must set out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded, and whether the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44(2)(a)(4)(a)(b))	24/03/2017

## Recommendation

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

- Ensure that children's risk reduction and behaviour management plans are routinely reviewed and revised to include up-to-date information about assessed risks for individual children; and clear and comprehensive details of the specific steps the staff will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.6)



## **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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