

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	24/03/2017
Unique reference number	1228522
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Wood Grove (Childcare) Ltd
Registered provider address	C/O Kedleston Group Limited, Office Suite No. 1, Ansell Gardens, Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth, Middlesex UB7 0AE

Responsible individual	Paul Brosnan
Registered manager	Clare Cartwright
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll

Inspection date	24/03/2017
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 judges that it has declined in effectiveness.</p> <p>The two requirements raised at the last inspection have not been addressed in full.</p> <p>Out of the four independent monitoring visits undertaken since the last inspection, none of the reports evidence consultations with parents or relatives. Also, the views of care staff were only ascertained on two occasions. That said, Ofsted acknowledges that, in aiming to address this regulatory shortfall, the company has just secured a new external provider to undertake these monthly visits.</p> <p>There have been two manager's review reports on the quality of care provided in the home since the last inspection. These are accurate, comprehensive and analytical documents clearly identifying the strengths of the service and areas requiring further improvements. One was informed and enriched with the views of young people, their parents and placing authorities. However, it did not explicitly include the views of staff. The second three-monthly report received by Ofsted does not include any feedback from relatives or staff. The home has recognised a weakness in ensuring frequent consultation opportunities for all stakeholders. To this end, a questionnaire was sent out in January to inform the next internal review report.</p> <p>One recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that impact risk assessments are undertaken prior to every new admission. These are now in place. However, this home does not insist that all legal documentation is provided by placing authorities prior to admission. This means that it does not always have all the information available about a young person to ensure that it can meet their unique needs and, in particular, their health and education needs.</p> <p>Furthermore, the lack of some key information about known risks and vulnerabilities means that staff may not be able to keep the individual young person safe and the other young people already living in the home. The lack of this information has recently had far-reaching consequences in that the home was unaware of the extent of one young person's involvement in drugs, which put the safety of other young people in jeopardy. As a direct result, notice was served on two young people.</p> <p>In spite of some significant criminal damage by a small number of individuals, this home is always maintained at a good standard. Young people are actively involved</p>	

in choosing the decor and furnishings in the home and together with the staff have created a particularly homely ambience. They have also personalised their bedrooms and are clearly proud of their surroundings. One young person said, 'I really like my bedroom. As soon as I arrived, staff took me shopping to make it feel like mine. I got new curtains, cushions, photo frames and a new duvet.'

This service excels at providing a warm, nurturing, homely environment, and staff quickly establish open and honest relationships with the young people. The staff also have a proven ability to secure and maintain constructive contact with family and friends. This all means that new admissions soon settle and feel safe.

Comments from young people are extremely positive. Examples include: 'This is one of the best places I've been. The staff are so welcoming so I settled straight away. They are all nice, helpful and fair. I get on all right with the other young people too and I definitely feel safe here. The food is gorgeous,' 'I like it here and I feel safe. It's like one big family. On Sundays staff make a full roast dinner and then we watch films together. It's a lovely family day,' 'Things are all okay in the home and at college where I have made some new friends who I meet outside of college too.'

The home maintains appropriate staffing ratios at all times. Any gaps in the rota are filled by regular bank staff who are well known and liked by the young people. One bank worker said, 'This is a really nice place to work. I am well supported in my role and receive ongoing training and frequent supervision. I don't have set shifts but usually do at least two shifts a week. When I first started I purposely did lots of shifts together so I could get to know all the young people and, although I'm not a key worker, I still do individual sessions with them.'

There are marked differences in the experiences, progress and outcomes for young people since the last inspection.

Five young people have been discharged since the last inspection. For two of them, this was a positive planned move into independence and specialist foster care. However, in sharp contrast, notice has been served on three young people in this same period as the staff are unable to keep them safe due to their frequently going missing and drug and alcohol misuse. They were also particularly disruptive at night and caused significant damage in the home, which impacted negatively on the experiences of the other young people living in the home. One particularly serious incident over a sustained period of time involving assaults and criminal damage and resulting in a police arrest and a placement disruption was not reported to Ofsted.

This home effectively de-escalates some extremely challenging behaviours without resorting to physical interventions and/or police assistance. In fact, all of the relatively few restraints since the last inspection relate to the same young person. Good management scrutiny of patterns and trends shows that these incidents and his episodes of going missing from home are a reaction to the breakdown in family relationships and his wish for reconciliation.

Although there was a marked improvement in the behaviour of one young person

when another young person was discharged, he is not investing in this placement. He refuses to engage with home tuition or any structured educational activities with the staff and to attend required health appointments. He said, 'I like it at this home but I don't want to be here all the time. I keep myself safe and don't commit offences. I just want to spend time with my girlfriend and my mates from school. There is nothing the manager or staff can do because I will stay out when I feel like it.' As they are not meeting his needs, notice has been served.

Another young person in his final school year has been permanently excluded from school since February 2017. Staff immediately ensured that he can still take his GCSEs. However, he is frustrated and disillusioned that agreed arrangements are still not in place to continue his studies for his art and photography GCSEs in the home. Another young person has 10 hours a week English and maths tuition and has examinations booked in these subjects. However, she is also supposed to work with staff in developing her independence skills for the remaining 15 hours, but there is limited documentary evidence that this is consistently taking place. This could negatively affect her future education because, although the staff have secured her a place at college in September, this is on the proviso that she can demonstrate her commitment to study.

This home has established good partnership working with a local college. This effectively ensures that the majority of young people can begin studying soon after admission. Two young people attend regularly and are making good progress. They are also gradually increasing their subjects to extend their future employment opportunities. For example, one young person commenced a hairdressing course in September plus key academic skills and has already moved up a set in maths and English. By December 2016, she added a psychology course to her timetable and from January this year is now also studying science. One young person said, 'I would advise other kids who might be going into care to embrace it. I'd been out of school more than I'd been in school until I came here and now I've got good attendance and I'm determined to do well in my GCSEs.'

Two young people with a prolific history of going missing and at high risk of exploitation have only gone missing from this home once. Moreover, they rang staff to be picked up. This is significant progress. Comments from young people include: 'This is the only place where I have felt safe. Before I came here I made some bad choices and I lied a lot. I was a crack head and felt vulnerable and suicidal. Since I moved here I have a more mature mindset. I am happier and feel stronger and have opened up to staff and I go to college,' 'People used to say I would never learn from my mistakes. Well, I have learned about controlling myself and not doing things that put me at risk. I used to think that I couldn't change, but I have changed' and 'I am happy here and I like all the staff. I am actually relieved to be somewhere that feels like home and I can feel safe because I'm not missing.'

This young person's social worker is highly satisfied with the quality of care provided at this home and her progress. She confirmed, 'This is the longest placement she has been in. She has built up positive relationships and is not displaying high-risk behaviours. This home were proactive in finding her education

and getting her involved in lots of activities. It is a really good placement and the staff are doing a great job.'

In sharp contrast, another young person went missing on the day of his admission and persistently thereafter. During this time he was known to have taken drugs and alcohol and committed offences. This resulted in his placement being disrupted as the home could not keep him safe. This was particularly unfortunate because he had specifically asked to be re-admitted having previously made good progress at this home. However, the pull to be with his family and former negative associates proved too great.

To address the fact that placing authorities are not undertaking independent return interviews, the home has commissioned an independent provider. This has successfully ensured timely interviews. One young person said that she ran because she just wanted to see her family. In response, regular contact arrangements were put in place, which she is really pleased about, and she has not gone missing since. This is an excellent outcome. However, some of the other young people have refused to engage in this process so the reports provided to the home are not always helpful in reviewing risks and putting new strategies in place to try to prevent a re-occurrence.

In response to a pattern of young people returning to the home under the influence of illegal substances, the home has recently commissioned a specialist drugs worker to support staff in trying to reverse this increasing trend. The effectiveness of this is yet to be evaluated by the home.

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and young people who may be experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

It is part of a wider organisation that also provides a school locally where some of the young people attend.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/08/2016	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) meet(s) the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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>44: Independent person: visits and reports</p> <p>Demonstrate that independent monitoring reports are informed by the views of young people's parents and relatives and persons working at the home when reaching an opinion about the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting children's well-being. (Regulation 44(2)(a) and (4)(a)and(b))</p>	31/05/2017
<p>45: Review of quality of care</p> <p>Ensure that the internal review of the quality of care provided in the home includes an evaluation of consultations with parents and staff during that period, and that a copy of the report is forwarded to Ofsted within 28 days of its completion. (Regulation 45(4)(a) and (5))</p>	31/08/2017
<p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe and in particular: the home must ensure that they have all available information about a child's risks and vulnerabilities prior to admission to assess whether a child is at risk to themselves and/or others. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(i))</p>	30/04/2017
<p>40: Notification of a serious event</p> <p>The registered person must notify Ofsted without delay of any serious incident requiring police involvement. (Regulation 40(4)(b))</p>	30/04/2017
<p>8: The education standard</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential. In particular, staff must: help them to complete independent study; and promote opportunities for them to learn</p>	30/05/2017

informally; help children of compulsory school age that are not attending school to access educational and training support throughout this period and to return to school as soon as possible; and help each child who is above school age to participate in further education, training or employment. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(ii)(v)(viii) and (ix))	
<p>36: Children's case records</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that children's files include all the required information and in particular: any plan prepared by the child's placing authority; annual medical reports and personal educational plans. (Regulation 36, Schedule 3(19)(17) and (24))</p>	31/05/2017

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Demonstrate that the staff take a proactive role in looking after children's day-to-day health and well-being, including supporting them to stop smoking tobacco and taking illicit drugs and alcohol and organising and ensuring each child's attendance at all required health appointments and treatments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 34, paragraphs 7.10 and 7.11)
- The home should enable all the children to develop independence skills within a supportive environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.25)
- Ensure that independent return interviews provide a meaningful process to enable the home to reassess risks and put in new strategies to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017