

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>21/03/2017</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1241840</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>Wessex College</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Ward Goodman, 4 Cedar Park, Cobham Road, Ferndown Industrial Estate, Wimborne BH21 7SF</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Selina Wall</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Mark Rogers</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Clare Davies</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>21/03/2017</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

**1241840**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision requires improvement because:**

- This is a newly registered children's home. A high number of temporary staff have been employed either through a sessional contract or through an agency. These staffing arrangements negatively impact on the continuity of care for young people.
- A large number of temporary staff has led to inconsistent responses to behaviour management. The lack of boundaries and guidance for young people has resulted in incidents of disruptive behaviour, including assaults on staff and damage to property.
- The lack of regular staff meetings has failed to provide a regular forum for staff to discuss and agree care practices. Staff are not suitably trained in the prevention and management of self-harm.
- The children's guide is not fit for purpose and requires an urgent review.
- Records are not reliably completed or useful in helping leaders and managers to effectively monitor the quality of care practices and function of the home.

### **The children's home strengths**

- The staff team has become more stable over time, and there has been a significant reduction in the number of temporary staff. With the support available, the manager and the team are in a much better position to progress and work towards providing a good home.
- Young people are now making progress and involved in far fewer incidents of disruptive behaviour. A social worker commented that the staff 'are very positive about the young person and recognise and celebrate their achievements. They are committed to the young person and do not allow setbacks by the young person's behaviour to undermine their positive working relationship.'
- Young people are safer, and at significantly less risk of abuse and sexual exploitation, since living in this home. Staff are suitably trained and supported to safeguard young people in the home and when out in the community. Risk management documents are comprehensive and subject to regular review in discussion with young people.
- The manager and staff team advocate well for young people. This has led to an increase in their spending time with family members and the prevention of criminal proceedings, a police caution being issued instead. These actions have led to improved outcomes for young people.

## 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
<p>6: The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>(2) The quality and purpose of care standard requires the registered person to</p> <p>(b) ensure that staff</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>(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to</p> <p>(i) meet the needs of each child. In particular, the stairs and landing area should be redecorated.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard</p> <p>(2) The children's views, wishes and feelings standard requires the registered person to</p> <p>(c) keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document. In particular, the children's guide should be reviewed.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>(2) The positive relationship standard requires the registered person to ensure</p> <p>(a) that staff</p> <p>(iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>(2) The leadership and management standard requires the</p>	31/05/2017

<p>registered person to</p> <p>(b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p>	
<p>31: Staffing of children's homes</p> <p>(1) The registered person must ensure that the employment of any person on a temporary basis at the children's home does not prevent children from receiving such continuity of care as is reasonable to meet their needs.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>33: Employment of staff</p> <p>(4) The registered person must ensure that all employees</p> <p>(a) undertake appropriate continuing professional development, in particular training on the prevention and management of self-harm.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>35: Behaviour management policies and records</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>(iii) the date, time and location of the use 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</p> <p>(ii) has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.</p>	31/05/2017
<p>39: Complaints and representations</p> <p>(3) The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation.</p>	31/05/2017

## Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. In particular, ensure that fruit is available as a snack and not withheld in a locked office. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- Ensure that there is continuous development to eradicate the use of institutional language with young people in residential care. For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of the children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour, and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

## **Full report**

### **Information about this children's home**

This children's home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for four young people. Young people may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### **Recent inspection history**

This is the first inspection since the home was registered in August 2016.



## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>Lack of a stable staff team affects young people's ability to form meaningful, sustained relationships with the adults caring for them. To date, more than 48 members of staff have worked in this home. More recently, the number of agency and sessional staff has reduced. As the core team develops, young people are now able to identify trusted adults that they can talk to and share concerns with.</p> <p>When possible, the manager aims to visit young people, prior to their living in this home, to tell them about the house and what it has to offer. This has occurred for some young people, and they were shown photographs of the house and were able to talk about the home. During the registration process of this home, leaders and managers were advised that the children's guide was not suitable and required an extensive review. This has not yet occurred, and young people have not received a suitable guide to this home.</p> <p>Young people living in this home are now making progress after some initial difficulties settling in when they first arrived. Incidents of anti-social behaviour, bullying towards each other and some damage to the home were more apparent when temporary staff were present. More recently, the manager and core staff members have been effective in holding open discussions with young people to enable them to work towards respecting each other and their home.</p> <p>Young people are involved with their care planning and encouraged to contribute to their records. Good use is made of the 'wishes and feelings' document to capture the views of young people on a day-to-day basis or more specifically about a particular incident. A social worker recognises this as a strength of the home and reported, 'They ensure young person's views are heard and acted upon when appropriate, helping the young person to feel safe and secure.'</p> <p>The house is generally decorated and furnished to a good standard, creating a homely environment. Any damaged areas are repaired and replaced promptly. Young people are involved in the design and decoration of their bedrooms, to ensure that they are their personalised spaces. The stairs and landing area requires redecoration, due to the appearance of many marks and scrapes on the walls. A replaced bedroom door has yet to be painted.</p> <p>Young people attend their education placements well. They go to a local school, the provider's school or an alternative provision on a care farm that provides horse riding.</p> <p>Young people are supported well to receive the type and level of education that is appropriate for their individual needs.</p>	

Young people are supported well with regards to their medical needs. Reluctance to attend appointments is managed well by persistent staff encouraging young people to make informed choices. As a result, young people have received dental treatment, eye care and more specific healthcare when appropriate. The staff team has been less effective in supporting young people with daily personal care. Comments from other professionals about occasionally unkempt appearance indicate that some basic care skills are lacking. The high number of temporary staff members contributes to this lack of consistency in care.

Young people are achieving in their personal development and are attending a local gym, developing independence and life skills, and settling into this home with an increased sense of belonging. The manager and staff advocate well for young people and strive to ensure that they are able to maintain contact with family and friends who are important to them.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<p>Behaviour management is improving over time as a core staff team develops. Stability in staffing enables young people to receive consistent responses from the adults and clarity on boundaries. There was a period of escalating behaviours from young people, resulting in physical assaults on staff, damage to the home and smoking inside the house. These behaviours led to some use of physical intervention on five occasions.</p> <p>All staff, including agency staff, are trained in de-escalation techniques. The records demonstrate that short interventions have been effective, preventing injury to young people and staff. Although the practice has been appropriate, the record-keeping is poor and fails to capture all the information required by regulations. For example, the time and location of the intervention are not always recorded, and staff involved have failed to sign the records. The last intervention occurred on 24 February 2017 and, at the time of this inspection, there was no evidence that the manager has reviewed this record. When the manager has reviewed records, he has rightly captured the feedback from young people. When he explored the reasons why a difficult incident in January required the use of physical intervention, a young person said it was because she 'didn't know the adults that were working'.</p> <p>Young people do not always receive a measured response to negative behaviours.</p>	

Not all abusive and destructive behaviours are met with a sanction. Young people are not always supported to take responsibility for their behaviour and to consider their impact on others. When there is a consequence to negative behaviours, this routinely involves restrictions on young people's access to money and transport. The manager and staff lack a creative approach to helping young people to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour.

In response to food being thrown around the home and wasted, the fruit bowl and other food items are stored in the locked office. The consequence to this behaviour should be restorative in nature, not simply to lock food away. Young people have minimal access to fresh fruit without asking staff. This practice detracts from creating a home where young people can freely help themselves to a nutritious snack.

Incidents of young people going missing are minimal, and there have been only two incidents during the past five months. Records confirm that staff respond well to safeguard young people, contacting all necessary professionals and family members in a timely way. Young people are welcomed back to the home and given the opportunity to speak with a social care professional, independent of the home. The manager has ensured that these return home interviews have taken place each time. Young people are safer since living in this home. Incidents of placing themselves at risk have significantly reduced.

Risk assessments are good documents that reflect historical risks and current risks with clear evidence of regular review. For example, a risk of aerosol abuse noted in a referral document has been reviewed with a young person to agree that this is no longer a risk and therefore aerosols for toiletries can now be purchased. This level of discussion enables young people to make safe, informed choices.

All staff, including agency and sessional staff, receive training in safeguarding and regular updates on child protection procedures. This organisation has a robust response to managing allegations against staff and works effectively with the local authority designated officer, social workers, the police and key professionals involved with young people.

There are sound recruitment practices, demonstrating that all the necessary checks have been made before a member of staff starts work. Routine checks ensure that this environment is safe by adhering to health and safety and fire safety policies.

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## leaders and managers

The leadership and management of this home require improvement. Since the home became operational, there have been difficulties in establishing a core staff team, and this has had a detrimental effect on the quality of care provided to young people.

The number of temporary staff has significantly reduced each month, and now the manager is establishing the core staff team. To assist with the stability of staffing for young people, the senior leaders in the organisation have placed the manager of this home on the staff rota for a short period, while further recruitment occurs.

The impact of the manager providing day-to-day care has led to some management tasks not being completed, as seen in this inspection. This is the first time that the manager has managed a children's home and he is working towards a qualification in leadership and management.

Staff reported that they receive suitable support and training. They acknowledged that there have been some difficulties with additional temporary staff and unsettled behaviour by young people. However, the staff reported that they enjoy working here and can see how, in recent weeks, the young people are settling into the home and making progress with their personal development. Records confirm that staff supervision has occurred at suitable intervals and training opportunities are provided. One area of training lacking is that on the prevention and management of self-harming behaviour. The manager has plans to address this through access to the clinical psychiatrist and experienced staff in the organisation.

The frequency of staff meetings is insufficient to provide an effective forum for the staff team. Three meetings in five months have not enabled staff to discuss and agree practice. Communication among the team members is primarily through written records. This delivers a consistent message but fails to generate discussion among the staff team members.

Young people know how to raise a complaint and have done so. The manager responds well to young people's concerns and uses the wishes and feelings form to record the issues that matter to them. Importantly, young people are listened to, and action is taken in response to their concerns. However, the records fail to conclude with the outcome of the complaint and the level of satisfaction of the young person. Without these complete records, the manager is unable to effectively monitor and review the complaints procedure. Monitoring of records requires improvement as evidenced by the gaps noted in records of physical intervention and sanctions.

This organisation is keen to promote the use of appropriate language and to avoid the stigma for young people being looked after in a children's home. Staff are mindful to refer to the home and avoid the description, 'unit'. However, this is an area of practice for continuous review and discussion. Frequent use of the words 'shift', 'money in hand' and 'reps' should cease.

## 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 children looked after 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 that 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 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 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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