

1247144

Registered provider: Acorn Children's Home Group

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: None

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young people benefit from good relationships with staff. This has helped them make progress from difficult starting points.
- The environment is homely, clean and suitably furnished throughout. The young

people have made the environment personal for them. Their wishes and feelings are respected.

- The help and support that young people need to become safer is provided. Young people who were going missing from care have stopped this behaviour. All young people have been given the specialist help and care that they need.
- Staff have undertaken effective training in safeguarding, and their application of this training is good. The staff understand what actions to take should they have any concerns about the safety or well-being of young people.
- The home has a new manager who understands the needs of young people and advocates strongly on their behalf.
- Staff feel well supported through regular professional supervision. They have regular opportunities for training and development.

The children's home's areas for development:

- One young person at the home is suffering from mental health problems. Not all staff have received training and development in caring for young people who have mental health difficulties. This specific training would help staff in providing effective care and support.
- An error in dispensing medication has occurred. Managers acknowledge that this should not happen and have recently strengthened their systems.
- Staff members should be provided with equipment and training to help them respond robustly to self-harm incidents.
- The manager does not yet have a workforce development plan.
- The manager and senior staff are not routinely reviewing behaviour management practices to ensure that they are appropriate.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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>13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of children. (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(c))</p> | 27/07/2017 |
| <p>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23(1))</p> | 27/07/2017 |

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home 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 9.5)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:
 - Detail the necessary management and staffing structure (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training;
 - Detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);

- Detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
 - Detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.
- The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. Each home must have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.20)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the home's first inspection. The young people have developed good relationships with staff. One young person reported feeling well supported in all areas of her life, and feeling safe. She said, 'Love it here, it is really good. The staff make it good. There is always someone to talk to.' Consequently, young people have become settled and started making progress in a relatively short period of time.

The manager and staff understand the crucial importance of education. The young people have experienced significant educational disruption. This has resulted in some of them becoming resistant to education. One young person, before coming to the home, had very poor school attendance, at only 11%. The staff have persevered and ensured that both young people now have education plans. One young person is attending school and another has plans to attend college. The young people are benefiting from a positive culture and ethos around educational achievement.

Young people's health needs are met. The young people are registered with doctors and dentists. They are supported to attend health appointments by staff. One young person has experienced a deterioration in their mental health and recently needed a prolonged period in hospital. The manager and staff work collaboratively with key health professionals and the mental health crisis intervention team. The staff are highly alert to changes in the young person, including her presentation. The young person is able to communicate openly about her emotional and mental health state. This means that staff can notify key specialist agencies immediately, who are able to provide the care the young person needs.

Young people benefit from a comfortable and well-maintained environment. The house is homely and inviting, with a warm atmosphere. Young people choose their bedrooms and decorate them in accordance with their tastes. This means that young people can enjoy living in a home that they can be proud of.

The rights and entitlements of young people are respected. Young people know how to make complaints if they are unhappy. They have access to organisations such as the Children's Commissioner and Ofsted. Young people have weekly meetings with staff in which they agree activities and menus, and have the opportunity to express any concerns they may have. External professionals, such as social workers and independent reviewing officers, regularly visit young people. These measures ensure that the home has a culture of transparency and accountability.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff manage the behaviour of young people effectively. Staff reward good behaviour from young people, and celebrate their achievements. The staff have developed 'memories and moments books'. These are a very good way of helping young people to have fond memories of their time at the home. Positive relationships between young people and staff, together with constant reinforcement of good behaviour, have replaced the need for more punitive forms of discipline. However, when sanctions are given, the manager has not always carefully reviewed them to ensure that they are proportionate and appropriate.

The manager and staff understand the dangers to young people when they go missing from care. Effective action is taken and key organisations are informed immediately. The staff search for the young person and contact their friends and family. When young people return, they receive a warm welcome. The managers developed a strategy for one young person, who was going missing regularly, which stopped them going missing. They are now much safer.

The staff are employed in accordance with safer recruitment practices. Any gaps in employment are accounted for, and a criminal records check completed. This means that the likelihood of young people being harmed by those caring for them is minimised. All staff undertake training in safeguarding and child protection. They understand what action they should take if concerned for the safety of a young person. Further development work is required in relation to managing the risk associated with young people who self-harm. Additionally, equipment for use in emergencies, such as ligature cutters, is required.

The manager and staff carry out health and safety checks. There is a detailed fire risk assessment. The staff undertake regular fire evacuation drills with young people to help and prepare them in the event of an emergency.

The medication administration system has not been robust because a young person was provided with an incorrect dose of medication. When the mistake was realised, medical advice was taken immediately. The responsible individual conducted a review of procedures and implemented a new system to safeguard against future mistakes.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been some changes to the leadership of this home since registration. The registered manager left the home and the organisation. A new manager has been appointed and has now submitted her application for registration with Ofsted. She has experience of management in children's residential care and has the required qualification to manage a children's home. She is enthusiastic and ambitious to achieve progress for young people.

The manager prioritises the needs of young people and advocates strongly on their behalf. She understands the need to work in partnership with other agencies, but she will challenge agencies if she believes they are not providing the help and services needed by young people. Information provided by social workers demonstrates that the manager and staff are effective in working with other agencies and ensuring that the needs of young people are met. One social worker stated, 'My young person has spoken positively about staff and the staff have worked hard with professionals to support the young person.'

The staff team are still relatively new. In addition, new staff have recently been employed. A new deputy manager comes to the home with a good level of previous experience. New staff receive a structured induction that helps them become familiar with the young people and the policies and procedures of the organisation. Not all staff have received training in caring for a young person with mental health difficulties. This training would help the staff to better understand and respond to a young person's needs.

Staff members report that they receive regular and good quality supervision. Supervision takes place monthly and focuses on the care of young people and the development of the worker. Supervision sets out any actions required of the worker, and areas for improvement, which may influence young people's development. The manager has not yet developed a clear workforce development plan.

An independent visitor undertakes regular monitoring of the service. This monitoring highlights the strengths of the service and any areas requiring improvement. In addition to monthly monitoring, the manager has completed a comprehensive review of the service. This benefits young people as they live in a home restless to improve.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1247144

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Children's Home Group

Registered provider address: Suite 29, Anglesey Business Centre, Anglesey Road, Branston, Burton On Trent DE14 3NT

Responsible individual: Rachel Dyche

Registered manager:

Inspector(s)

Phillip Morris, social care inspector

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