

1255744

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

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 five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home was first registered in April 2014. It was re-registered in May 2017. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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.

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Risk management is not yet sufficiently robust. This is in relation to documentation and staff actions to reduce unnecessary hazards.
- Children's care plans are not always individualised or in line with the local authorities' aims and objectives. Children's progress is not effectively measured.
- There are no systems in place to support children or staff when there is a delay in children receiving specialist services for their complex needs.
- There has been a sustained period of time during which there has been no lighting on one floor of the home. This is a health and safety hazard for children and staff.
- Records of physical restraint and missing from care do not detail discussions after an incident with children and staff. As a result, the registered manager is unable to fully evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken by staff.
- The registered manager is not challenging delays in social workers visiting children after they have been missing from care. This potentially compromises children's safety.
- Staff are not receiving mandatory training in risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being radicalised or sexually exploited. As a result, they do not have the skills required to meet the complex needs of children.
- Staff do not have a strong understanding of the risks that the internet may pose to children. They do not have well-developed strategies in place to keep children safe or to support them in learning how to keep themselves safe.
- The registered manager is not consulting with children, their parents, professionals and staff as part of his six-monthly internal quality assurance review.

The children's home's strengths:

- Children are positive about the relationships that they have with staff and the care and support that they receive.
- Children are fully involved in day-to-day decisions in the home. They contribute their views through regular discussions and communication with staff. This helps to ensure that they have ownership of the decisions made in the home.
- Some progress has been made in reducing police involvement to resolve incidents within the home and when children go missing.
- The management team ensures that staff are well supported through regular

supervision and annual appraisals.

- The relatively new staff group is gaining skills and experience as they develop as a diverse team. They show enthusiasm and energy for the job of residential care.
- The home's management team is fully aware of the service's strengths and weaknesses and is striving to drive positive change.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
Not applicable.		

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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that staff 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; and have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm</p> <p>that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12 (2) (a) (i) (iii) (d))</p>	31/12/2017
<p>The health and well-being standard is that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require. (Regulation 10 (2) (c))</p>	31/12/2017
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure-</p> <p>that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1) and (2) (c))</p>	31/07/2017
<p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, 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; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the</p>	31/07/2017

authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3) (b) (i) (ii) (c))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	31/12/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review"). The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (5) (a))	31/07/2017

Recommendations

- If there is a risk that a child may run away or go missing, staff should do their best to help them understand the risks and dangers involved and make them aware of how to seek help if they do run away. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.27)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that the registered person's specific responsibilities under regulation 34 are met. Specifically, prepare and implement policies setting out: arrangements for the safeguarding of children from abuse or neglect; clear procedures for referring child protection concerns to the placing authority or local authority where the home is situated if appropriate; and specific procedures to prevent children going missing and take action if they do. The policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to dealing with allegations involving staff in the home, e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children's progress is not yet consistent or always sustained. Some children are making good progress. However, others struggle. Their progress is affected by many factors, including new children moving into the home, peer pressure and external factors. This has resulted in children not engaging with staff or the aims and objectives of their placement, an increase in high-risk behaviours and a reduction in education attendance.

Children who move into the home have very complex needs that often require specialist services. These services are limited within the organisation to telephone consultancy for staff. There is often a long wait until they can be accessed locally, for example by child and adolescent mental health services. Staff do not always have the skills, knowledge or specialist support to provide an alternative service in the interim. The management team is currently working to address this. For example, the home's manager has commissioned level 2 training for all staff in understanding mental health and is looking at training courses in subjects such as attachment to further enhance the staff team's abilities.

Staff are proactively thinking about and discussing children's progress. Some strategies to support children to develop new skills are successful. For example, caring for a hamster, volunteering at a charity shop, participating in work experience, joining local clubs and sustaining membership, developing cooking skills and increasing independence skills. Overall, children receive personalised care and support from a committed and motivated staff team. Managers and staff continually promote and encourage children's achievements, and celebrate their successes. This praise builds children's self-esteem and confidence. Increasingly, creative direct work with children means that the help that staff give is better targeted to day-to-day issues, such as anger and violence, self-harm, thinking about the future and making sense of relationships. Children feel that they have good relationships with staff. Staff are acting as good role models, and they are increasingly able to positively influence children's actions.

The management team has given good focus to building a stable team of staff who have developed strong, resilient relationships with children. This was observed during the inspection when a former resident returned to visit. She was greeted with hugs by staff. She spoke positively with staff and children about her move on from the home. She clearly felt a strong connection with the home. She had returned to keep staff posted about her life.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Some children still struggle to stabilise, or to reduce high-risk behaviours at times of change or crisis. Some children take drugs; others are involved with youth offending services after having committed criminal offences. Some children struggle to control their anger, and become destructive in the house. Some children are vulnerable to manipulation.

Staff have a growing understanding of children's 'triggers', but risk assessments do not reflect this knowledge. For example, when a new child moves into the house, impact risk assessments do not sufficiently identify the known risks to existing children as well as to the new child. As a result, strategies to support the staff team and children are not yet effective enough to identify and stop predictable triggers or the resulting escalating behaviours.

At these times, serious incidents, missing from care incidents and police involvement increase. The staff team's ability to manage these situations has improved. There are now sufficient numbers of staff on duty to enable them to go looking for children immediately, and to enable more group activities to prevent boredom that may lead to children leaving. However, staff do not consistently apply the skills to respond proactively to address new risks. For example, they did not seek on-call or medical advice when they knew that a child had taken an unknown tablet and was worried about the effect. This potentially placed themselves, as well as the child, at risk.

The staff team is still developing the knowledge and experience that it requires to consistently meet the complex needs of children. However, training, procedure and practice in key areas is not yet fully in place to support them. The management team has been working to develop the staff team's knowledge. It has run team days, sessions in team meetings, accessed online training and brought in external courses. It has also sent individual staff members on specific training and plans to cascade this down through the team. This has meant an increase in the staff team's confidence and skills in managing children's complex high-risk behaviours and, consequently, a reduction in incidents for some children. For example, there were no missing from home incidents in March 2017, and only one in April 2017, though this has recently changed again.

The use of physical intervention within the home is low, and this is only used as a last resort. After incidents of physical intervention and missing from home incidents, both staff and children are spoken to. Records of these conversations are not detailed, are not always signed, and do not reflect the good practice or detailed discussions that take place to promote safe practice. The registered manager is proactive in chasing social workers to ensure that they meet with children after any missing from care incidents. However, there is often a time delay before they meet with the child to ensure that they are safe and well. The registered manager has not consistently or robustly challenged social workers about these delays.

The management team is working effectively in partnership with the police and missing

person's co-ordinator to continue to reduce incidents involving the police. The police have said that they feel that the number of incidents is still too high for the area, despite an overall reduction. The management team attend monthly meetings, share weekly briefings, and the police community support officer attends events led by children within the home. Staff are using key-worker sessions to raise children's awareness of, and strategies for, reducing risk. They are also working proactively with partner agencies, such as youth offending teams.

Staff complete regular fire checks and health and safety checks. However, the registered person has identified a faulty wiring circuit which is causing a persistent fault with lighting on one floor of the home. This is a potential health and safety hazard. Repairs are normally quickly completed and, apart from recent damage, the home is homely and welcoming.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Ofsted re-registered the home in May 2017 after a change in ownership. There has been no change to the home's statement of purpose, staff team or the management structure. This is the first inspection of the service since the re-registration.

The registered manager and the responsible individual are experienced and appropriately qualified. They, and the deputy manager, are working to a clear strategic plan to raise standards within the home. Their hard work is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of care delivered by staff and outcomes for some children. Although this is not yet consistent, the direction of travel is clear in this improving service.

The management team has prioritised children's needs to make sure that these are central to the routines in the home. They continually reiterate this ethos to staff and other professionals. They have an improving overview of children's behaviours, risks, individual progress and achievements.

Admission decision-making and documentation does not fully assess the likely impact on vulnerable children of children who have more challenging behaviour. Nor does it consider the ability of staff to meet the child's needs at the point of admission, or the placing authorities' requests for careful consideration of the specific needs of children already in placement.

Internal care plans do not always reflect children's individual care and support needs, or the local authority's aims for the placement. Some reporting successfully captures when children make progress, but not all. For example, the use of percentages in review reports does not reliably convey progress without a fully realised explanation as to what the percentages mean. Some documentation of children's aims and needs is not sufficiently individualised. Managers have not picked this up.

The mandatory programme of staff training provided by the organisation does not

ensure that risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being radicalised or sexually exploited are known and understood by the staff who look after them. In addition, staff are not trained in internet safety and there is no strategic approach to ensuring children's safe access to the internet, apart from informal means. These gaps in service planning and provision do not support the specific delivery of care for children who have emotional and/or behavioural needs.

The management team has given good focus to developing a staff team that is now stable and providing children with consistent relationships. The team members are enthusiastic about their roles and said that they feel well supported by their managers. They reported clear and much stronger management that recognises the emotional impact of the work that they do with children and encourages their initiative.

All staff have either completed, or are in the progress of completing, their level 3 qualification. The management team has now ensured that those staff who were struggling to complete this training and were out of timescale have successfully passed. They have also helped the night staff to achieve a formal qualification. As well as completing the organisation's mandatory training, the management team has sourced additional training for the team. For example, all staff have completed online training about understanding mental health, and training on attachment is planned. This work is beginning to empower staff to more effectively support children.

Partnership working arrangements between the service, the placing authorities and other external agencies, are positive. A social worker stated in regard to one young person, 'I rate the service highly due to the tailored support afforded the young person. The staff are very responsive to his needs and promote the development of his independence. They challenge the young person appropriately with his behaviours and emerging positive behaviours are evidenced, i.e. respect for staff and fewer anger outbursts. The young person feels safe and secure at the home. He is valued by staff, hence the confidence he has developed in the staff team.'

The management team has taken action to address the requirements from the last inspection. They understand the home's strengths and areas for development in order to improve the care provided to children. The independent visitor provides oversight of the running of the home and makes clear reference to areas of practice that need to improve for the benefit and safety of children. The registered manager's last internal review of the home did not include formalised consultations with children, their parents, professionals or staff. This meant that they were unable to influence the progress of the home and the quality of care provided. However, the manager is in the process of gathering views to feed into the next report, which is due at the end of June 2017.

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: 1255744

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Registered provider address: c/o G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Limited,
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Responsible individual: Noel Beaumont

Registered manager: Lee Houghton

Inspector

Dawn Bennett, social care inspector

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