

1232657

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes 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 four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A private company owns and operates the home.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 August 2017

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

requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

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:

- The home does not currently have a registered manager in post responsible for the day-to-day management of the service.
- Managers and staff do not effectively challenge other partnership agencies when they fail in their responsibility to young people.
- Staff do not consistently encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions and behaviours or to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Staff do not devise detailed action plans to effectively manage and reduce young people's risk-taking behaviours.
- Staff do not make sure that physical restraint records include young people's views about what happened.
- The ratio of suitably qualified staff is low.

The children's home's strengths:

- Staff training programmes are varied, wide ranging and reflect young people's individual needs. Good training opportunities enable staff to gain the skills that they need to support young people.
- In-house psychology services mean that young people do not experience a delay in accessing the specialist emotional support that they may need.
- Staff support young people to keep in touch with their families.
- Young people are looked after by staff who are suitably vetted and checked. Recruitment procedures relating to both permanent and agency staff are thorough and effective. Safe recruitment practice protects young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
N/A		

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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must—</p> <p>if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))</p>	13/10/2017
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on an understanding about acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (1)(b)(2)(a)(iii))</p>	13/10/2017
<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 that staff—</p> <p>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 help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))</p>	13/10/2017
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to</p>	13/10/2017

meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(c))	
The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home; and the registered provider is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(a)(b)(iii))	13/10/2017
The registered person must ensure that 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") has spoken to the user about the measure; has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 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. (Regulation 35 (3)(b)(i)(ii)(c))	13/10/2017
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))	13/10/2017
The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so, if any of the following events take place or are expected by the registered person to take place; a person other than the registered person carries on or manages the children's home; and a person ceases to carry on or manage the home. (Regulation 49 (a)(b))	13/10/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour are 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)

Inspection judgements

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

Staff start the care planning process on young people's admission to the home. They use information provided by the placing authorities and other agencies. However, managers and staff do not make sure that this information is up to date or that young people's case files include all necessary and required documentation. This shortfall means that young people's care is not always personalised to reflect their individual needs.

Subsequently, young people's day-to-day experiences are not consistently positive. This is detrimental to their progress.

Relationships between staff and young people are mixed. Managers allocate named staff as young people's key workers, following their admission. The length of time that the young people have lived in the home is relatively short. This means that young people are still in the early stages of developing trusting and stable relationships with staff.

Staff work with other professionals to identify suitable education placements for young people and to assess their learning needs. Managers and staff recognise the need to continually challenge the placing authorities to prioritise young people's education. However, this challenge does not always bring about effective change. The potentially detrimental impact of this is reduced because of the summer school holiday. This affords staff the opportunity to address this shortfall prior to the start of a new school term.

The organisation provides young people with in-house psychological services, including emotional health assessments, when required. Consequently, if young people's behaviour, social presentation or demeanour indicate that they need additional therapeutic support, they can access these specialist services without delay. This promotes young people's emotional and psychological health and well-being. Staff work with local health services, such as primary health agencies and drug misuse and alcohol misuse specialists. This means that when young people require access to these services, staff have already formed useful professional relationships.

Staff encourage young people to attend regular residents' meetings. Staff and young people have recently reviewed and revised the format of these meetings. Subsequently, these meetings now reflect young people's views, thoughts and opinions regarding the ongoing development of the home. These meetings also highlight and celebrate young people's personal achievements. This promotes their self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, staff use these meetings to reiterate to young people the complaints procedure. Young people confirm that they know and understand how to make a complaint. They say that they are confident that staff will investigate and address any concerns that they raise.

Staff encourage young people to clean their own bedrooms, and assist with shopping and cooking. This gives young people a basis from which to start to develop their self-sufficiency skills.

Staff work with young people's families, when appropriate, to support relationships between the young people and those who are important to them. This means that young people are not isolated from their families.

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

Staff work with other agencies, including allocated social workers and local specialist child sexual exploitation police teams, to identify young people's individual risks. These

relate to young people's own safety and the potential impact of their actions or behaviours on others. However, managers and staff do not devise effective strategies to manage and reduce these risks. Risk assessments lack sufficient detail to guide staff on what to do to promote young people's safety. For example, when young people are missing from the home, staff do not always seek to locate them before contacting the police. This is a missed opportunity to encourage young people to return to the home. Furthermore, staff do not consistently complete detailed one-to-one sessions with young people following these episodes. Staff do not help young people to understand how to keep themselves safe, and they do not put suitable plans in place to try to prevent young people going missing from home.

Staff do not support young people to recognise and understand their own risks, take responsibility for their actions or reflect on their behaviours. Although staff endeavour to engage young people in one-to-one sessions to discuss their complex and unacceptable behaviours, these sessions are not wholly effective. Young people do not take responsibility for their actions because staff do not use these sessions to challenge young people's behaviour. For example, when it is necessary for staff to request police support to manage young people's behaviours, staff do not discuss this with young people after the event. As a result, staff do not always encourage young people to see the consequences of their behaviours.

Staff complete training in the use of physical restraint and only use this measure of control as a last resort to maintain young people's safety. When such incidents occur, staff do not complete records of these events in sufficient detail. For example, records do not consistently include young people's views and comments or indicate that senior staff and managers scrutinise these reports. This compromises young people's safety because records may not provide an accurate account of the restraint. Furthermore, when staff sanction young people following incidents of unacceptable behaviour, these sanctions are rarely restorative in nature. This is a missed opportunity to encourage young people to reflect on their actions and recognise the impact of their behaviour on other people.

Staff receive training on child protection, the management of allegations, around child sexual exploitation, self-harm and radicalisation. This collection of courses equips staff with the information and knowledge that they need to recognise when young people may be at risk of harm.

The responsible individual and senior staff implement detailed recruitment procedures. All staff, including agency staff, are subject to a range of employee assessments. This professional and effective approach means that young people work with safe adults.

Staff complete regular health and safety checks in the home. Any required repairs are quickly completed and the home is well maintained. This ensures that the environment is safe.

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

Ofsted registered this service in February 2017. This is the first inspection since registration. The registered manager resigned his position in July 2017. The organisation failed to inform Ofsted of the interim management arrangements for the operation of the home, and did not notify Ofsted of the registered manager's resignation within required timescales. The organisation has yet to appoint a suitable person to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the home. This is detrimental to the development of the service, the stability and consistency of the staff and young people's progress.

Partnership working arrangements between the service and external agencies, including placing authorities, are in their infancy. Feedback from other agencies is mixed. For example, some professionals praise the commitment of staff and young people's positive progress and others note poor communication and poor quality reports. When other agencies fail in their responsibilities to young people, managers and staff do not effectively challenge these failures. Subsequently, young people are unable to consistently access the services and support that they need, when they need it. This hinders their personal development and progress.

Staff are supported in their role and they praise the commitment of the senior member of staff in the home. This individual provides staff with regular practice-related supervision. One member of staff said, 'I find my supervisions really good. They help me to look at my practice and how I'm working and developing.' Staff training programmes are a strength of the service. In addition to mandatory courses, such as promoting equality and diversity, fire safety and first aid, staff complete bespoke accredited courses relating to young people's emotional development, personal circumstances and specific needs. This training enables staff to begin to gain the skills and knowledge that they need to support young people. Very few members of staff hold the required diploma level qualifications and they do not have suitable experience of children's residential care when they are first appointed. This means that there is not a good balance of qualified and experienced staff.

Senior staff and the responsible individual continue to develop monitoring systems to assess and evaluate the quality of care provided by the service. At this time, the home has been operational for less than six months. The responsible individual and regional service manager are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service, and the impact that these have on young people's progress. Internal improvement plans identify actions to ensure that young people's day-to-day experiences improve and that the care that they receive consistently meets their individual needs.

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: 1232657

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jo Stephenson: social care inspector

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