

SC403789

Registered provider: Cove Care Residential Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home offers care for up to four young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs. The home is part of a private organisation.

Inspection dates: 8 to 9 August 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: 12 October 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

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

- There are an insufficient number of staff to provide young people with consistent care.
- The extent to which young people are able to develop meaningful relationships with staff is variable.
- Staff are inconsistent in how they manage young people's behaviour.
- Staff have been unsuccessful in establishing and maintaining effective relationships with some partner agencies.
- Young people do not always receive the support that they need to develop the skills to stay safe online and in the community.
- Young people do not receive effective support to help them to overcome the barriers to learning.
- Case records do not always reflect the personalised care that young people require.
- The manager does not effectively review how well the staff prepare young people for independence.
- The manager has not utilised staff supervision to address poor staff performance.

The children's home's strengths

- The new manager is motivated to implement change.
- Young people are able to identify at least one adult whom they feel able to trust and confide in.
- Young people make some progress in respect of their emotional and behavioural development.
- The home provides young people with a pleasant and homely environment to live in.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/10/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
29/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24/11/2015	Full	Good

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, and must ensure that staff—</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; and</p> <p>seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(c)(d))</p> <p>In particular, staff need to use escalation procedures to improve the services that young people receive from their placing authority.</p>	30/10/2017
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(iii)(ix))</p>	30/10/2017
<p>The positive relationship standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p>	30/10/2017

<p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviours, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c (2)(a)(i)(iii))</p>	
<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. (Requirement 12(1)(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, staff need to ensure that they have access to all relevant information when they are assessing risk and reviewing the appropriateness of measures to keep young people safe.</p>	30/10/2017
<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 helps children aspire to fulfil their potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; and ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered provider must ensure that there is sufficient staff to promote consistently positive relationships and good care.</p>	30/10/2017
<p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least</p>	30/10/2017

<p>once every 6 months.</p> <p>The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45(1)(4)(a))</p>	
<p>The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).</p> <p>When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of each relevant person. (Regulation 46 (1) (2))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered provider must ensure that they consult the local authority designated officer and the police, as well as any other relevant services when considering the suitability of the home's location.</p>	<p>30/10/2017</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure that the registered person maintains good employment practice. They must ensure that supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)
- Ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Case records must be kept up to date. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Inspection judgements

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

The extent to which young people are able to develop meaningful relationships with staff is variable. This is because staff turnover impacts on the continuity of care afforded to young people. Furthermore, staff predominantly work with young people who are the same gender as themselves. This means that young people do not get the opportunity to develop trusting relationships with all the adults caring for them.

Young people develop positive relationships with some staff. They can each identify at least one adult whom they feel able to open up to and trust. A recent disclosure by a young person shows that young people feel safe enough to talk to staff about sensitive topics. Another young person told the inspector how much they had grown in confidence and self-esteem because of the help and support they receive from staff. The young person said, 'You know there is always someone there to look after you'.

Core staff understand young people's physical and emotional health needs well. They support young people to attend health appointments. Young people access specialist services, such as the child and adolescent mental health services. Good links between staff and the provider's psychotherapist support the development and delivery of a therapeutic model of care. As a result, staff recognise that spending time with young people, playing board games with them and being nurturing towards them, can be as beneficial to young people's emotional health as one-to-one counselling sessions. Staff shortages and the use of bank and agency staff detract from this work because it limits the amount of time that young people spend with consistent members of staff, and staff who know them well.

Young people's education outcomes vary. One young person, who is new to the home, is making some good progress. Staff support the young person to complete work sent home by school. They have also identified an alternative education provision that he is keen to engage with. Another young person does not access full-time education, training or employment. Staff have made efforts to motivate and encourage the young person, but these efforts have been unsuccessful. The young person has been out of education for some time, and this lack of engagement may affect his future life chances.

Staff recognise the importance of young people having contact with their loved ones. Staff support young people to see and speak to people who are important to them. However, they do not have all the relevant information to ensure that contact arrangements are safe and appropriate. As a result, some young people occasionally face potentially risky situations.

An annex to the main house acts as a flat for young people to use to develop their independence skills and build their confidence. As a result, staff have some good resources to help young people. However, they do not use them enough. One professional has been critical of the extent to which a young person has progressed over

a 12-month period. Similarly, the manager does not fully understand what progress young people make in this aspect of their development. This does not fully promote young people's preparation and readiness for adulthood.

Young people experience a pleasant and homely environment. Staff take swift action to carry out necessary repairs and improvements. Young people enjoy the space that the home affords them. One young person said, 'The house is really good, the rooms are really big. I have a big bedroom and it is kind of like my own flat.' The physical environment of the home is safe and welcoming. This contributes to young people developing a sense of belonging.

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

For those young people who have a history of self-harming, core staff understand their needs and vulnerability. Staff are vigilant, and they support and supervise young people well. This reduces the risk of young people engaging in this type of harmful behaviour. Staff think creatively, providing young people with alternative strategies. For example, young people use kinetic sand and fiddle boxes to distract themselves at times of stress and anxiety. Staff take the necessary action to keep safe the young people who self-harm. This promotes young people's welfare.

Staff overestimate young people's progress and do not recognise that some young people remain vulnerable to child sexual exploitation both online and in the community. In addition, they do not understand the degree to which one young person's substance misuse is affecting their well-being and safety. As such, in some instances staff do not fully understand young people's potential exposure to risk. Consequently, staff do not do enough to support young people to develop the resilience, knowledge and skills that they need to keep themselves safe. This means that although young people make some progress in some aspects of their behaviour, staff could do more to help young people to keep safe.

Staff shortages have led to the use of agency and bank staff. This has contributed to the development of a culture in the home whereby young people dictate which staff they will engage with and which they will not. This manifests itself in young people withdrawing themselves until the staff they like become available. Young people will sometimes become aggressive towards staff and threaten to self-harm as a means to get the attention of the staff they want. One member of staff told the inspector, 'It is sometimes just easier to give in and go with it.' This does not provide young people with consistency. Furthermore, it does not help children to develop positive and respectful relationships with staff or help them to make positive choices about their behaviour.

Staff reported that they are inconsistent in their response to young people's behaviours. Staff told the inspector that when staff give young people sanctions to address their behaviour, they do not always follow these through. As a result, young people do not experience consistent rules and boundaries and staff have mixed success in managing

young people's behaviour.

Despite this, staff do de-escalate challenging situations well and physical intervention is not a feature of behaviour management. Furthermore, young people rarely go missing from home. Personalised rewards help young people to learn to modify aspects of their behaviour. For example, one young person receives protein chocolate bars as a reward for his good behaviour. This works effectively, as the young person values these rewards and likes the positive praise that he receives. Staff explain things to young people when they have done something wrong. This helps young people to begin to think about the impact of their behaviour on themselves and other people. A young person told the inspector, '[The staff member] just tells me straight when I do something wrong and really makes me think about what I have done, and that is helping me to change. I do think I have changed.' Staff have mixed success in managing young people's behaviour.

Staff do not take into consideration the input of key stakeholders, such as the police and local authority, when considering any local or geographical risk to young people. A requirement is raised to ensure that the manager liaises with all relevant parties when reviewing the suitability of the home's location.

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

The home has a new manager who has recently taken on the role, having worked at the home since April 2016 as a deputy manager. Consequently, the new manager understands the home and the young people. She has also benefited from a lengthy handover period. The manager has made an application to register with Ofsted and is currently completing the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

The manager is child focused, motivated and committed. The manager has implemented a number of changes in an effort to improve the quality of care that young people receive. However, these changes have not been sufficient to ensure that young people always receive personalised care. This limits the progress that young people make in some areas of their development and does not fully promote their safety and welfare. As a result, young people do not receive a level of care in keeping with that which is outlined in the statement of purpose.

There is no deputy manager, and the manager relies on two team leaders to support her. Although they are enthusiastic, they are new and lack experience. This means that the manager is unable to delegate basic tasks, such as staff supervision, or rely on the team leaders to work autonomously. This is affecting the manager's ability to monitor effectively and improve the care that young people receive.

Staff shortages have limited the capacity of the home to improve. There is an over-reliance on the use of bank and agency staff. The manager attempts to keep the number of temporary staff used to a minimum. However, young people find staffing changes unsettling and this causes them anxiety. This affects their experience of living in the

home.

Staff keep up to date with training to refresh their knowledge and skills. The manager does not supervise staff regularly. As a result, staff do not have the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Furthermore, it means that managers do not rectify performance issues quickly. Managers are taking some steps to address this. For example, senior managers have attended team meetings and completed one-to-one interviews with staff. This is beginning to help staff to take ownership of their work, share good-practice examples and promote a more consistent approach. More time is needed to embed these developments into practice.

Staff have been unsuccessful in forging positive working relationships with placing authorities. When placing authorities do not provide a good service to young people, the staff do not do enough to escalate their concerns. For example, they have not escalated their concerns about young people having frequent changes in social workers and the impact that this has upon them. As a result, young people do not always benefit from well-coordinated support to meet their needs. Furthermore, staff have not been proactive in developing and maintaining relationships with the local police. This means that there are missed opportunities for staff to work effectively with partner agencies to manage risk.

The registered manager has implemented monitoring systems to review the care that young people receive. However, these are not wholly effective. For example, through monitoring activity the manager has not identified that the quality of record keeping varies. Staff do not always capture the progress that young people make from their starting points. The manager does not use monitoring activity to inform the home's development plan. This limits the capacity of the home to improve. Furthermore, the registered manager does not forward quality of care review reports to Ofsted within the 28 days set out in regulation.

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: SC403789

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cove Care Residential Ltd

Registered provider address: 16 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton WV1 4BL

Responsible individual: Lee Smith

Registered manager: Post vacant/Heidi Pierce

Inspector

Paul Robinson, social care inspector

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