

1255747

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 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: This is the first inspection of this home.

Overall judgement at last inspection: Not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

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

- The progress of children and young people is not consistently good. Some children and young people are achieving well from their starting points. Other placements have been ended in response to events. While decisions to end placements were made for safeguarding reasons, this has the potential to feel

like a rejection for the children or young people involved.

- Placement planning for individual needs is not always effective. This is because key areas of need are not always incorporated into plans. Additionally, the lack of awareness of individual needs among some senior staff raises the potential for ineffective placement planning.
- Responses from staff do not always safeguard children and young people. As a result, children and young people have been left vulnerable during incidents and a child has experienced actual harm.
- The inspection identified that not all staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding arrangements.
- The manager has not always responded promptly to make improvements when it is evident that there are weaknesses in care arrangements.

The children's home's strengths:

- Children and young people consistently speak positively about their experiences in this home. Staff are said to be the best thing about the home. One young person said: 'Staff are amazing. I love every single one of them.'
- The safety of children and young people is improving. Incidents of absence from the home, missing events and aggressive behaviours are reducing.
- Regardless of two placements ending abruptly, the service has also shown commitment in the way it has worked tirelessly to advocate for another young person as he approached adulthood. This means that he has been able to stay in this home until his transition plan was finalised.
- The staff team is now made up of consistent, permanent staff members. They respect and value each other and strive to promote positive outcomes for each child and young person.

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>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, this is to ensure that each area of identified individual need is included in the child's placement plan and that all senior staff understand each area of placement planning.</p> <p>(Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p>	10/11/2017
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (2) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;</p> <p>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person.</p> <p>(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(ii)(iv)(v))</p>	10/11/2017
<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 (2) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p>	10/11/2017

<p>In particular, this relates to ensuring that waking night staff can quickly and easily contact the member of staff who is sleeping in the home on the occasions that they need assistance.</p>	
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(Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))

Inspection judgements

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

Weaknesses found during this inspection show that planning for children and young people's individual needs is not consistently effective. A lack of guidance for staff within plans has the potential to lead to situations which exacerbate one young person's anxiety levels. This is of concern, as consistency is key regarding this particular young person's care.

Weaknesses in safeguarding practice have led to some children having a negative experience, regardless of them not recognising this as such. For example, a child was left with bruising and had their hair pulled out due to poor supervision and inappropriate care decisions.

Staff advocate to ensure that children and young people's educational needs are met from the point of referral. Most children and young people are settled in school or college placements; however, one child has not attended school this term. While not ideal, staff link this to the fact that the child is moving to a new placement shortly. The team has challenged the placing authority about delays in finalising a formal education plan. In this period, staff have introduced learning opportunities and set core skills work for the child.

Children and young people are generally in good health. They attend routine health appointments and access mental health support when required. Staff are monitoring the dietary intake of one young person and are liaising with primary healthcare professionals to clarify medical needs. This demonstrates that staff support individual health needs.

Children and young people are consistently very positive about their placements in this home. Comments include:

- 'I have done more activities here than I have ever done before in my life.'
- 'This place has changed my life.'
- 'It's good here; the best thing here is the staff.'

Children and young people develop independent living skills. Targeted work is undertaken to teach new skills at an age-appropriate level. For some, this is managing a budget, shopping and cooking for themselves. For others, this is keeping bedrooms tidy and helping staff to keep the home in good order.

Staff seek children's views and take these into account when making decisions about the home and individual care. Children have a high regard for staff; they feel listened to, and consequently, feel valued. One young person said: 'They always know when there is something wrong with me.' This demonstrates that staff are in tune with the well-being of individuals.

Children and young people are able to maintain relationships with friends and family. Visits with family members are risk-assessed and restrictions are only implemented when agreed with placing authorities. Distance from the home is not a barrier, with good support provided for contact arrangements. Some young people mix socially with friends from school or college; others are encouraged to develop social relationships. While there have been episodes of conflict between the children and young people, it is evident that the current group enjoy spending time together and seem to genuinely care about each other.

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

Behaviour at the time of the inspection was mostly settled, and children and young people each say that they feel safe. However, this has not been a consistent theme of care outcomes over recent months. Some children and young people have previously highlighted that they felt unsafe. This was due to feeling bullied, and because of the behaviour of others. Risky and aggressive behaviours, which have put children and young people at risk of harm, coincided with changes to core staff. Also, a new admission to the home changed the peer group dynamics. Behaviours have not always been well managed, resulting in actual harm to a child on at least one occasion. It is evident that staff did not understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the incident. Additionally, arrangements in the home meant that staff on duty overnight were not easily able to gain support from the member of staff sleeping in the home. As a result, one child was injured during an incident.

Regardless of this turbulent period, most children and young people have made positive progress in relation to individual risks. One young person told the inspector how his anger management has improved. The young person recognises that his relationships with other children have improved because he no longer takes his anger out on them. He has started to recognise his escalating mood and he follows an agreed plan to take time out from the home. A young person who had previously felt bullied in the home says that he now feels safe. Another young person spoke about how her social worker had apparently told her that she was previously her most concerning young person and now is her least concerning young person. The young person spoke about how she has been able to move away from using class A drugs, with the help of staff. She is evidently very proud of her progress. She knows that she is safer since moving to this home and feels ready to continue making positive choices.

Children and young people are taught about the risks they may face when out on their

own. They are offered time to reflect on potentially risky situations, in order to learn for the future. As a result, children and young people are knowledgeable about internet safety, and the dangers of drug and alcohol use. The organisation has well-developed procedures guiding good practice when children are found to be missing from the home. Reporting is undertaken in line with multi-agency agreed protocols, triggering external support to track the whereabouts of missing children and young people. While there have been absences without consent, incidents of being missing from care are relatively low.

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

The home is managed by a recently registered, appropriately qualified and experienced manager. It is evident from comments made by staff that they feel supported in their role. This includes through what has been a difficult summer period in the home, when there were additional pressures due to staff shortages.

Individual placement plans are produced promptly at the time of admission, and kept under review as needs change. However, plans sometimes fail to ensure that each area of individual need will be met. For example, one plan failed to identify a key area of need in relation to health and well-being. This means that staff may not receive appropriate direction and guidance in relation to care planning. Not all senior staff working in the home are fully aware of the current plans and historical information about individual needs. This raises the potential that placement planning will be ineffective.

Leaders and managers do not always take immediate action to strengthen safeguarding arrangements following an incident. While it had become evident that the arrangements for the waking-night staff to contact the sleeping-in staff were inadequate, no improvement in arrangements had been made a month later when the inspection took place. This raises the potential for a similar incident to have occurred. Immediate steps were taken during the inspection to resolve this.

Overall recording of sanctions meets the requirements of children's homes regulations. However, some entries are in alternative documents to the home's sanction log. This meant that information was difficult to track during the inspection. Additionally, while it was apparent from discussions that the registered manager had looked closely at the specific holds used during one physical intervention, her evaluation and comments were not evident on the record. Such comments would improve the audit trail of management oversight. The registered manager accepted these two areas as points for service development.

The registered manager works collaboratively with external agencies and with families to promote positive outcomes for children and young people. Two placements have been ended due to concerns about the impact of behaviours on others, and the ability of the service to keep the individuals safe. Senior managers from the organisation and the registered manager have identified areas of learning for the service, which will be implemented in future practice.

A placing social worker for a child being moved on said: 'They did everything they could

to preserve the placement; however, he got himself into a negative peer group.' Joint working is noted as a strength of the home. Comments from external professionals include: 'The manager is excellent; I can't fault her, a good communicator and she will pick up the phone to discuss issues arising.'

The registered manager is well respected within the team and by other professionals. One social worker reported: 'I can't speak highly enough of the registered manager.' A consistent message from all stakeholders was that staff at the home work collaboratively and ensure excellent communication with key partners. Other key professionals commented that they felt that progress was evident for most children and young people in the home.

Staff are appropriately qualified, or are working towards the required qualification. Staff report that there are positive training opportunities within the organisation. A member of staff said that managers always consider the emotional well-being of staff. It is apparent that previous staff shortages have been resolved and that there is now a consistent staff team.

There is evidence of positive one-to-one work taking place. When one young person's placement was at risk, leaders and managers arranged for the young person to have a break away from the home. This was planned to allow one-to-one support and time for reflection on the impact of behaviours. This demonstrates that the service promotes improved tolerance of others. Staff shared examples of using role-play scenarios to assist the young person to consider events and how things could have been different. Key workers demonstrate passion and commitment for securing positive outcomes for children and young people in their care.

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: 1255747

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Homes2inspire Limited

Registered provider address: Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley BR1 1LT

Responsible individual: John Parker

Registered manager: Rebecca Smith

Inspector

Mary Timms, social care inspector

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