

# SC481040

Registered provider: SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The service is a four-bedded children's home registered for male adolescents who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that specialises in the assessment and treatment of male adolescents who have experienced abuse. The organisation also provides education and therapeutic intervention.

**Inspection dates:** 18 to 19 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:** 11 August 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

**Enforcement action since last inspection:**

None

## Key findings from this inspection

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

- In one case, the response to an allegation made against a member of staff was poor and ineffective.
- The assessment and management of risk does not always ensure that there are effective strategies in place to minimise the potential for young people to come to harm.
- Staffing levels have occasionally meant that young people have not been adequately supervised and that staff were not able to follow a young person who was leaving the home without permission.
- The admission process does not always ensure that full consideration is given to the likely impact that new admissions will have on the established group of young people.
- Staff have not consistently followed the organisation's policy in relation to the use of personal mobile telephones while at work.
- Staff are not trained to use physical holds to manage young people's unsafe behaviours, although there is an acceptance that in some circumstances staff will need to deploy physical interventions.
- The systems for monitoring the quality of care being provided have not consistently identified weaknesses in the provision.
- On one occasion, managers failed to notify Ofsted that a serious incident had taken place in the home.

The children's home's strengths:

- A highly developed assessment process ensures that the needs of young people are clearly identified.
- Care planning is thorough; young people's individual care and placement plans identify clear strategies for staff to follow.
- Young people's progress is closely monitored. Care plans are updated to reflect the level of progress that young people are making, and clear targets are set.
- Young people engage in a well-established therapeutic programme and they have access to a range of professionals to support their progress.
- The staff provide sensitive, nurturing care which is focused on meeting the individual needs of young people.
- School attendance and achievement is prioritised, and most young people respond positively to the support that they are given.

- There are detailed plans for de-escalating conflict and supporting young people to reduce negative or unsafe behaviours.
- Young people develop age-appropriate independence skills and, in most cases, they are well prepared for moving on from the home.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/08/2016	Full	Requires improvement
21/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement

## 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>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>(2)(a)(i) that staff –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>(2)(a)(vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</li> </ul> <p>(2)(b) 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> <p>This is with specific reference to the assessment and management of risk, ensuring that staff follow the home's policy in relation to staff using their personal mobile telephones and ensuring that waking night staff can effectively monitor children's whereabouts during the night.</p>	04/12/2017
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1)(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</li> <li>(b) promotes their welfare;</li> </ul> <p>(2)(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;</p> <p>(2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to: undertaking assessments of the likely impact that new admissions to the home will have; ensuring there are sufficient staff on duty to manage challenging situations; and using monitoring systems to identify weaknesses in the provision of care.</p>	04/12/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake	04/12/2017

appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, ensure that staff who physically hold children as part of the 'positive physical intervention' strategy have been trained to do so.	
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which provides for the prompt referral of an allegation about ongoing abuse or neglect in relation to a child to the placing authority and, if different, the local authority in whose area the home is located. (Regulation 34 (2)(b)) Specifically, ensure that the local authority designated officer is informed of any allegations that children make against staff.	04/12/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	04/12/2017

## Inspection judgements

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

The inspectors identified shortfalls in the standard of practice relating to safeguarding young people, and the actions taken by leaders and managers to identify these weaknesses and take steps to improve standards. Therefore, an overall judgement of requires improvement has been made. However, these shortfalls have not resulted in young people coming to significant harm, and many aspects of day-to-day life at the home ensure that young people generally have a positive experience.

Young people build trusting relationships with staff. They develop the confidence to explore their unsafe behaviours and discuss sensitive issues. Over time, the majority of young people settle at the home and experience an increased sense of security and stability. Young people feel listened to, and they are encouraged to express their views on the standard of care that they are receiving. Young people know how to access the home's complaints procedure. A complaint made by one young person, about the behaviour of a member of staff, did not trigger a referral to the local authority designated officer.

All young people have a place at the organisation's school, and attendance is good. This is a significant achievement for some young people, particularly those who have previously had negative experiences in school. Communication between care staff and teaching staff is good. As a result, care staff are able to assist young people to understand and work with the strategies being implemented in school, to keep them safe and help them achieve academically.

The healthcare needs of young people are met well. Staff take a sensitive, pragmatic

approach to ensuring that young people receive the treatment that they need. They have been particularly successful in supporting one young person to overcome his fear of dental treatment. A strength of the organisation is the provision of specialist psychiatric and psychological treatment to assist young people to address harmful behaviours and improve their emotional well-being. Most young people engage positively in a highly developed therapeutic programme of work. Young people are supported to reflect on the strategies that they learn in counselling and put these to practical use in their everyday lives. The organisation's therapy team includes family members in its work with young people where it is assessed that this will have a positive impact on the young person's psychological well-being.

Staff take a proactive approach to meeting young people's needs. For example, they have provided young people with sensory items to help them contain their anxieties and manage feelings of anger. Young people are encouraged to write down their thoughts and feelings so that these can be explored further during therapeutic work. Staff liaise well with placing authority social workers, and, in one case, have requested that the young person's placing authority provides an easy-to-read summary of the young person's legal status.

In the majority of cases, young people move on from the home in a planned way. As young people approach their time for moving on, they are supported to develop the practical skills and emotional resilience needed to live semi-independently. The organisation can provide outreach support following a young person's departure from the home. In one case, a young person was able to continue seeing his counsellor from the organisation after he had moved on.

Young people have access to a range of stimulating activities, both at home and in the local community. One young person has joined a local football club, and another is in the process of joining a gymnastics club. This ensures that young people do not become isolated, and are able to pursue their particular interests and develop their talents. The young people spoke enthusiastically about days out to a number of tourist attractions during school holidays.

The home provides a warm, comfortable environment where young people can develop a sense of belonging. Bedrooms are personalised, and there are many photographs of the young people, and examples of their artwork, on display around the house. Any maintenance issues are quickly identified and repairs made accordingly.

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

Practice relating to the assessment and management of risk is not well developed. Although managers and staff are familiar with the behaviours and vulnerabilities of each young person, they do not complete written risk assessments for specific situations or circumstances. For example, young people who have been identified as at risk of sexual exploitation do not have an associated child sexual exploitation risk assessment. In

addition, no risk assessment has been undertaken in respect of a particular member of staff's vulnerability when working with one young person. No risk assessment has been completed in relation to young people travelling in a vehicle with only one member of staff present. As a result, there are not clear written strategies for staff to follow in order to reduce the potential for harm in specific circumstances.

The needs of the young people are such that they require high levels of staff supervision. The responsibilities of staff to provide this are clearly stated in the home's policies and procedures. There are waking night members of staff who have responsibility to ensure that young people do not enter a peer's bedroom during the night. The inspectors were concerned that the waking night members of staff do not locate themselves in a position from which all the bedroom doors can be observed. This is a concern because young people clearly have the potential to enter a peer's bedroom when they are not being observed.

In one case, managers failed to ensure that effective action was taken after a young person made an allegation of physical assault against a member of staff. Although the member of staff was suspended from duty while an internal investigation took place, the local authority designated officer was not informed that the allegation had been made. Consequently, there was no external oversight of how the situation was managed, and flaws in the investigation were not identified. No transcript was kept of an interview undertaken with the young person who made the allegation, and a decision was made to move the member of staff to another of the organisation's homes before the investigation was concluded. This is an isolated case. The local authority designated officer informed the inspectors that, usually, communication with the organisation's head of care is good. Consultation has usually taken place regularly, and the organisation has a history of acting upon the advice and guidance given by the designated officer.

The home operates a 'no physical restraint of young people' policy, but recognises in its statement of purpose 'that there are some circumstances where physical contact as a positive intervention may be required'. Positive physical interventions are kept to an absolute minimum, but there have been occasions when staff have had to physically intervene to prevent a young person coming to harm. However, staff do not receive training on how to hold a young person if this becomes necessary. This increases the risk of physical harm to the young person and the member of staff involved.

Other aspects of behaviour management are stronger. All young people have a detailed behaviour management plan with clear strategies for de-escalating challenging behaviour. There is a restorative approach to addressing unacceptable behaviour, and young people learn to reflect on the consequences of their actions and the impact that they have on others. Young people accept that they must make reparation for any harm that they have caused, and they all feel that the consequences for poor behaviour are fair.

Staff are familiar with the risks that young people can face when using electronic devices, particularly if these allow access to the internet. Therefore there are strategies in place for monitoring young people's use and access to electronic communication

devices. Part of the approach is to not allow staff to have their personal mobile phones with them when working. However, some staff have used their personal mobile phones to play music to young people at bedtime. This goes against a policy that has been put in place to protect young people.

No young people have come to harm as a result of the shortfalls identified by the inspectors, and other aspects of safeguarding practice are stronger and firmly embedded in practice. The positive relationships that staff build with young people ensure that the young people feel safe enough to speak about past abusive situations that they have found themselves in. Most young people are able to speak more to staff about their thoughts and behaviours that could place them at risk of harm. As a result, staff are able to offer young people the advice and guidance needed to help them become safer in the future. All the young people said that they feel safe in the home, and all could name a member of staff to whom they would speak about any worries they may have.

There was a well-coordinated response to one young person who regularly went missing from the home, and has now moved on. Agreed protocols were followed, and all relevant agencies were informed immediately when the young person left the home. Staff took a proactive approach to locating the young person and liaised with professionals and family members to gather as much information as possible. There was an acknowledgment from managers that staffing levels in the home did present challenges in terms of being able to follow and look for the young person every time he left the home without permission.

The staff spoken with during this inspection demonstrated a clear understanding of the action that they should take if they became concerned for a young person's welfare. Examples were given of where safeguarding concerns have been notified to relevant external professionals, when the behaviour or mood of a young person has given cause for concern. All of the staff were familiar with the organisation's whistleblowing policy and were able to name the agencies that they would approach if they felt that their concerns were not being taken seriously.

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

The home's registered manager resigned from her post in September 2017, due to unforeseen circumstances. Senior managers quickly implemented a transition plan, and the deputy manager, who has been managing the home since July 2017, is in the process of submitting an application to become registered with Ofsted. She is currently studying for the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

The home currently has two vacancies for full-time care staff, and the organisation is actively recruiting for new members of the team. Bank staff who are employed by the organisation are used to fill any gaps in the staff rota. This ensures that the staff who work in the home are familiar with the routines and strategies for meeting the young people's needs.



In recent months, the level of staffing has presented some challenges. There are short periods when only one member of staff will be on duty. On one occasion, a member of staff who was lone working had to ask two young people to go to their bedrooms, while she managed the challenging behaviour of a third young person downstairs. This meant that two vulnerable young people were not being adequately supervised. There have also been occasions when staff were not able to follow or search for a young person who frequently left the home without permission.

There are established systems for monitoring the standard of care being provided. However, managerial scrutiny of serious incidents has not consistently identified weaknesses. For example, in the incident referred to above, the manager's monitoring comments did not consider how long the two young people had been required to remain in their bedrooms, or the safety implications of leaving the young people unsupervised.

Managers ensure that all relevant information regarding a young person's background and associated needs are obtained during the pre-admission process. This information is not always used to full effect when considering the impact that the new admission may have on the group of young people already settled in the home. One impact risk assessment reviewed by the inspectors did not make any reference to how the known behaviours of a potential new admission would affect his peers. The organisation's head of care acknowledged this shortfall, but was able to give examples of how this process is now being given higher priority.

Leaders and managers maintain effective oversight of young people's care plans. This ensures that the plans contain detailed strategies for meeting young people's care needs. A core group of staff with specific responsibilities for meeting the young person's needs review the plans on a regular basis. The progress that young people make across all aspects of their lives is recorded in detail. Leaders and managers have high aspirations for young people, and they strongly challenge external agencies that are perceived not to be working in a young person's best interests.

The staff are well supported and benefit from being able to consult a range of professionals on the most effective ways to engage traumatised young people. There is a strong commitment to providing staff with regular practice-based supervision. On occasions when the regularity of staff supervision has dropped, leaders and managers have quickly identified the problem and taken effective action to address the issue. Staff said that they feel that they are listened to and are able to practice in ways that maximise their skills and strengths.

In the majority of cases, leaders and managers have ensured that communication with all relevant professionals and agencies has taken place when child protection concerns have been identified. However, the failure to consult the local authority designated officer, referred to earlier in this report, was compounded by the fact that leaders and managers also failed to notify Ofsted that an allegation had been made against a member of staff working at the home.

## **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:** SC481040

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** SWAAY Child and Adolescent Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** 591 London Road, Sutton, Surrey SM3 9AG

**Responsible individual:** Gerard Berry

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspectors

Stephen Collett, social care inspector

Paul Taylor, social care inspector

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