

1244386

Registered provider: Sankofa Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The provider is also registered as an independent fostering agency.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 January 2018

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are safe and their well-being is promoted by staff and managers who are committed to meeting their needs.
- Young people feel heard and valued by the staff and managers.
- Young people said that the home is homely.
- Young people's cultural heritage is celebrated.
- Staff and managers support the young people in line with the ethos of the home's statement of intent.
- Staff and managers work in partnership with professionals and families.

Recent inspection history

This was the first inspection of the home.

What does the children's home need to do to rove?

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>11. The positive relationship standard</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must ensure that staff—</p> <p>(iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone</p> <p>(xi) de-escalate potentially violent behaviour by children.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(2)(iv)(xi))</p>	30/03/2018

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person should only accept placement for children when they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and when they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person must ensure that, when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

- The behaviour management strategy should be understood and applied at all times by staff, and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of clear recording. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4). In particular, ensure that complaint resolutions are clearly recorded.
- Local authorities have a duty under section 22 (3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of their children looked after, which includes, as set out in guidance, seeking a school or other education setting that is best suited to the child's needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.5)
- When commissioning a placement in a children's home, the placing authority must establish how the home will support the child's educational needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.7)
- The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance, and supplement, that provided by their school through personal, social and health education. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.18). In particular, staff should help young people understand and change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being, such as the use of legal highs and drugs.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people in the home receive good care from the staff and managers who develop positive relationships with them. A young person who has been in local authority care for nine years said, 'I'm quite grateful that I'm here. As a child in care, you always want to be with your family, and they try to make it as good as they can.' The young person said that he feels understood by the staff and described the home as homely.

Young people are helped to feel accepted for their identity. Their cultural heritage is respected. Young people benefit from a family-like environment in which birthdays are celebrated and contact with their family members is promoted. Their achievements, however big or small, are recognised.

Young people attend and contribute to residents' meeting in which they voice their thoughts on matters that directly concern them. They feel heard and valued in the home.

Young people have individualised care plans that assess their needs and outline the desired outcomes with named staff responsible for meeting the targets. Young people are in good health and have access to local health services when they need them. Key work sessions cover issues important to the young people, which are also reflected in the care plans. Staff handover meetings are effectively utilised to ensure continuity of care for the young people.

Young people, who are placed in the home without a school placement or other educational provision, receive tuition. Diligent efforts are made by the home, working alongside the educational authority, to support the young people who are not accessing education. A virtual school adviser stated that the home encourages the young people to engage in education and challenges them if they are reluctant to do so. Managers accept that there is room for further attempts to be made to promote young people's learning. They also acknowledge a need for the placing authority to provide clarity on how the home will support the young person's educational needs.

Staff offer young people good support and encouragement to develop their independent living skills. A young person, who was admitted to the home from a secure unit, moved on to semi-independent living accommodation. The young person was equipped with a set of skills to enable him for such a placement, although he needed to improve his budgeting skills.

The children's guide includes a complaint procedure and the contact details to various professionals, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner. One complaint has been filed by a young person since the home's registration. It was appropriately handled, reflecting a child-centred approach. However, there is no clear written recording of how the complaint was resolved.

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

While there are no widespread failures, there is room for improvement in assessing the potential impact of young people admitted to the home. Two young people, in particular, had unsatisfactory placement outcomes. Risk factors were identified, but not robustly assessed, which resulted in ineffective safeguarding of the young people, particularly when they transition from a restrictive environment. A lack of rigorous analysis of the young people's static and dynamic risk factors resulted in plans that did not meet their complex needs. All young people admitted to the home have impact assessments on file. However, the quality of the assessment of how the young people's challenging needs might affect others' vulnerabilities varies.

When several young people were admitted on an emergency basis due to the nature of their circumstances, the home struggled to effectively manage their challenging behaviour. Behavioural management plans set out strategies for managing difficult behaviour. However, it is not clear what substantive impact these actions have had on helping young people make progress. Some of the standard strategies have been ineffective in managing more challenging behaviour. This resulted in the young people being aggressive towards staff and causing damage to the property. Moreover, there is limited evidence of young people having input into the completion of their own behavioural management plans.

Staff have not used physical restraint on young people. The use of sanctions is appropriate. Staff seek the young people's views on sanctions. However, the effectiveness of sanctions is limited, in particular with regard to those young people with more challenging behaviour. Furthermore, sanctions are not consistently applied by staff. This results in ineffective intervention to help young people with their behaviour.

Young people's risk and health assessments are routinely updated. These assessments include risks associated with self-harming, misusing drugs or alcohol, and child sexual exploitation, as well as their physical health. However, it is not clear how the effectiveness of the corresponding strategies and the steps to manage the risks day to day to are being evaluated.

Young people do not routinely go missing from the home. Some of the young people, who have a history of going missing from their previous placements, have had either no missing episode or a few incidents since admission to this home. When young people do go missing, staff follow the home's procedures and carry out debriefs with the young people. However, there are no arrangements in place for independent return home interviews to be offered to the young person.

Staff make appropriate efforts to raise young people's awareness of cannabis use and its potentially negative impact on their health and emotional well-being. Staff carry out appropriate room searches and impose supervised spending. Managers accept that there is scope for closer multi-agency working to support young people to reduce their cannabis use.

There have been no allegations made against staff in the home. Managers and leaders work collaboratively with the local authority designated officer who has delivered training to the staff on managing allegations and child protection procedures. The designated officer stated that the managers are receptive to advice.

The police missing person's/child sexual exploitation coordinator stated that there have been a few missing episodes but expressed no serious concerns about the home and said that the home is not considered a 'problem venue'.

The home notifies Ofsted without delay of serious incidents that have taken place. The home's location risk assessment and the safeguarding policy are comprehensive.

Staff working in the home are clear about child protection procedures and they actively share information about the young people with relevant agencies.

A young person stated that he feels safe living at the home and was able to identify trusted adults whom he could talk to about any concerns.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed by a suitably qualified manager. The registered manager has relevant experience of working with vulnerable young people. They are supported by a deputy manager. The registered manager ensures that safe recruitment practices are in place and that the home is adequately resourced to meet the young people's needs.

Managers ensure that the staff team works in partnership with families and professionals to promote positive experiences for the young people. A social worker stated that he has no concerns about the care being provided by the home. The social worker further stated that his young person is happy in the home and complimented the staff for their regular updates and for proactively promoting family contact. Managers and staff operate in line with the ethos of the statement of purpose.

Newly appointed staff undergo a structured induction programme. Staff receive regular supervision, and there is evidence of staff being effectively challenged and developed through supervision. Staff have stated that they receive good support from their peers and managers.

The home's workforce development plan is comprehensive, and staff are offered training that covers the mandatory and supplementary areas for staff's learning. Staff and managers have access to the in-house psychologist and therapist who offer training and advice on understanding and working with young people who have complex needs.

The registered manager's self-evaluation of the home's strengths and areas for further improvement is thoughtful and considered. The manager makes accurate assessments of the young people's needs, as well as the needs of her workforce. The manager is keenly aware of the areas of staff's practice that she needs to further develop. The manager is

implementing the learning from her audits, practice observations and the challenging experiences of the young people and staff to deliver an improved service. She has a plan in place to more effectively manage the emergency referrals and promote successful placement outcomes.

The independent visitor's reports are comprehensive. The registered manager recognises the important function of these reports in informing the quality review of the service.

A staff member said that he 'loves' his work and that 'we all work together' for the children 'even though we have different strengths'. Another staff member stated that he knows whether he is making a difference in the young people's lives by the progress they make, and that is important to engage the young person. A member of staff added, 'This is not an institution; this is a homely 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: 1244386

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sankofa Care Ltd

Responsible individual: Olivia Osei-Asibey

Registered manager: Abby Osei-Asibey

Inspector

Linda Kim-Newby, social care inspector

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