

1256973

Registered provider: Cameron & Cooper Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to take up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. One of these places is in an independence flat for one young person who may move into this from the main house. The home is the only home owned and operated by a small private organisation.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor and they are not making progress.

Date of last inspection: First inspection

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is inadequate because:

- Managers have failed to implement a safe admission process. A number of young people were admitted to the home in close succession when the staff team did not have the experience or skills to manage their identified behaviours.
- Young people's placements have ended prematurely and without progress due to staff being unable to manage the level of risk exhibited by the young people.

- There have been a very high number of missing from care episodes and incidents of self-harm. Strategies to manage these problems, counter gang culture and knife crime and keep young people safe from child sexual exploitation are ineffective.
- Staff training has not accurately addressed the needs of some of the young people staff are caring for.
- The young people's care plans and risk assessments are not specific in detail and do not consistently take into account all information in referral paperwork. This inhibits the staff from managing all the risks posed to young people effectively.
- Young people have insufficient structure during the day while they are awaiting formal education arrangements.
- Managers have failed to ensure that the children's home is at all times operated in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose.
- The monitoring of the home has failed to address some of the significant shortfalls identified during this inspection.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people state that they are happy living at the home and can approach staff when they are unhappy.
- Some positive relationships between staff and young people have begun to develop.
- Young people are well supported to maintain strong attachments with family members and others who are important to them.
- The managers and staff team are child-centred in their approach and learn from previous decisions made. The senior team demonstrates a commitment to improving the quality of care being offered.
- The manager has developed links with external professionals and continues to challenge other professionals if services are not forthcoming.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that care plans and risk assessments are detailed and include all relevant information staff need to support children.</p>	20/03/2018
<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>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment; (Regulation 8(2)(iv))</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8(2)(v))</p>	20/03/2018
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships.</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; (Regulation 11(2)(a)(i))</p>	20/03/2018

<p>help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship. (Regulation 11(2)(a)(vii))</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—</p> <p>(a) 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; (Regulation 12(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>help each child to understand how to keep safe; (Regulation(12)(a)(ii))</p> <p>In particular, provide the strategies and support through key-working and/or appropriate means.</p> <p>have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (Regulation(12)(a)(iii))</p> <p>understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (Regulation(12)(a)(v))</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies; (Regulation(12)(a)(vii))</p> <p>(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. (Regulation(12)(b))</p>	<p>20/03/2018</p>
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (2) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>lead and manage the home in a way that that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; (Regulation 13(2)(a))</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (Regulation 13(2)d))</p>	<p>20/03/2018</p>

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(2)(h))	
<p>The care planning standard is that children— receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose. (Regulation 14(2)(a)) In particular, carry out comprehensive impact risk assessments to determine the suitability of placements.</p>	20/03/2018
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children’s safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32(3)(d))	20/03/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children’s identity and ethnicity are fully explored, considered and documented in care plans. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 17, paragraph 3.21)
- Staff should understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4) Specifically, ensure that records aren’t duplicated and that it is clear what staff should be working to.
- Ensure that all records are kept up to date and detail all the information. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.3) Specifically, ensure that the records relating to complaints detail the outcome.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This is the first inspection since the home was registered in August 2017. The experiences of young people are inadequate due to poor decision-making in respect of admissions, which has led to young people not being protected from risk, and has hampered the potential for young people to make progress. Young people have not been

supported to learn adequately how to keep themselves safe and how to change their behaviours. Although judged as inadequate, there are many strengths seen within the staff and management team. They are learning from previous and current placements and the decisions they made, and they demonstrate real commitment to ensuring that they move forward and develop their skills as a team.

Young people currently in placement have been admitted to the home without any education provision in place. None of the young people currently resident receive full-time education. The manager has challenged relevant professionals, including the virtual head, to seek to improve this. Although staff encourage young people to make sure they are up in the morning, there are no structured daytime activities. Young people state that there is 'nothing to do' and they are bored and would like to attend a school or college. Young people have not been provided with meaningful alternatives. This lack of routine is highly unsatisfactory for the young people at the home.

Young people are given time and attention to begin to reflect on their past experiences by engaging in the therapy provided. They are beginning to develop good relationships with the staff and speak positively about them. Social workers confirm that staff try their best with the young people and communicate effectively with them about any concerns. Relationships are developing with external professionals as the home expands its networks.

There have been six admissions since the home opened in August 2017. Three young people have been discharged and there are three currently in placement. Three young people were admitted in quick succession, although staff did not have the experience or skills to manage their identified behaviours. The three young people who have moved on left in an unplanned manner. Managers recognised that they couldn't manage the level of risks exhibited by these young people, and the placements did not end positively. Young people now living at the home stated that they liked living at the home, and that they felt they were listened to and their wishes acted upon.

The manager seeks to gain information prior to a young person's arrival and develops a placement plan, risk assessment and behaviour management plan. However, not all the information detailed in referral paperwork is contained within these plans. In addition, the plans do not give staff enough direction to support the young people. Staff have not had clear strategies with which to intervene and reduce young people's negative behaviours. Young people's identity, beyond their religion and ethnicity, is not reflected within these plans.

Key-work sessions are identified as a strategy in the home's care planning both to help support young people and to meet targets set out within the placing authorities' care plans. However, these sessions are not recorded effectively, and it is therefore not evident how young people's emotional and behavioural needs are being met in practice. It is reported that staff discuss relevant issues with young people; however, these discussions are not consistently documented to be able to discern progress and ensure that the therapeutic aims of the home are being met.

Staff are flexible as regards arrangements to facilitate contact with young people's families, and they take into account the young people's views and emotional well-being.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

Staff have not successfully protected young people from harm. The staff team has not been equipped with the necessary skills to support the complex needs of the young people who have been placed in the home, and this has put young people at risk. There has been frequent police and emergency service attendance at the home due to the young people being at significant risk of harming themselves.

The manager and staff are learning from placements, and their approach to managing behaviours is adapting with experience. Some staff come with a wealth of knowledge and experience and are confident in managing situations, while others are inexperienced and still learning how to intervene with young people's challenging behaviours.

Staff fail to engage young people successfully in regular preventative work about the dangers of going missing from the home. Since registration of the home, there have been over 50 episodes of young people going missing from the home and being reported to the police. For one young person, the frequency and duration of missing episodes are increasing. Staff respond promptly, and actively search for young people when they are missing. When young people return, staff reiterate the risks young people could face when their whereabouts are unknown. However, this has not been effective in reducing missing episodes.

Young people have also been at risk of harm due to self-harming behaviours, some of which are extremely concerning. Some incidents have increased as young people receive therapeutic input and begin to come to terms with what has happened to them in the past. However, staff have then been unable to manage this behaviour. Young people are at risk of harm through exploitation in many forms, including gang culture, knife crime and child sexual exploitation. Staff have not responded to the level of vulnerabilities indicated in referral paperwork, and do not have the skills and training to be able to keep all the young people safe. There are concerns that some young people are involved in damaging relationships within the community; however, these young people have not been provided with the support, advice and skills to understand the impact these relationships have on them, or to be able to withdraw.

Young people can identify adults they can talk to and can trust. Purposeful attachments are beginning to be formed. Young people state that they feel safe and enjoy living at the home.

Young people's admissions to the home have been poorly assessed and the potential impact within the peer group has not been fully taken into account. Prior to young people's placement, impact risk assessments are completed. However, they do not accurately consider whether staff have the necessary skills to support a young person and do not identify whether the placement is suitable. They list, rather than evaluate, some but not all of the pre-placement information. This has led to the managers agreeing to admit young people who subsequently they have been unable to properly support.

There were two complaints identified during the inspection that included information relating to allegations against staff; these were treated as complaints and not referred on to the necessary professionals. The manager has recently attended training in managing allegations and now recognises the flaws in some reporting. The safeguarding policy was not followed in these cases. In other cases, the manager has referred the necessary concerns on and then awaited guidance.

Young people generally understand the rules of the home and the boundaries that are in place. Staff are trained in behaviour management, and there have been some recorded incidents of physical intervention since the home opened; these have been appropriate given the level of behaviour exhibited. Staff skills in managing behaviour are developing; some staff members have more confidence in addressing challenging and manipulative behaviours than others. However, boundaries are inconsistent and young people are therefore uncertain of the expectations.

Recruitment procedures are not robust. Recruitment processes do not evidence if satisfactory exploration of information has taken place prior to staff commencing work. This relates to exploring gaps in employment. Records are disorganised, although a checklist demonstrates all other checks have been completed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The registered manager has been in post since the opening of the home. He is continuing to grow in the role and is learning from practice; he recognises there are areas that need to improve. The responsible individual is fully involved and visible in the running of the home and clearly has the young people's best interests at heart. There are real strengths and skills within this senior team, despite the difficult beginning, and the team's determination to improve the service being offered is evident.

Although some areas for development have been recognised by the managers, not all have been identified and therefore there are no plans in place to address them. The manager has monitoring systems in place; however, they have been ineffective in identifying some issues raised during the inspection. The home is not currently operating within the approach and ethos of its statement of purpose, and is not delivering the outcomes set out in the statement of purpose.

The home has a high number of staff working on each shift, with varying abilities, and the manager is aware when additional staff are required. There is an open and inclusive atmosphere, in which young people are able to explore different cultures and feel confident in talking to staff; the staff team is diverse.

Staff receive training during a comprehensive induction week, and are complimentary about the training offered. They also receive advice and support from the therapists. Despite this, there are too many examples of staff not knowing how to operate in a way that provides good enough care for the young people. The manager has recognised the need for more face-to-face, rather than the current online, training. Although staff have had some specific training when required to support a young person, such as in preventing self-harm, training provided for specific areas of need is reactive to what has not gone well, rather than comprehensive in scope.

The manager and staff team work with external professionals to consider the young people in placement and whether they can continue to meet their needs effectively. They communicate when they feel they can no longer keep a young person safe. They have developed better links with the local police to share information prior to a young person being admitted to the home.

Supervision for staff is regular and supportive, and staff report that senior managers are approachable and highly supportive to them as a new team.

There have been a high number of complaints recorded from young people; however, most have been low level and easily rectified. There is evidence that these are taken seriously, although recording does not indicate the outcome or whether any further work is required. External complaints received have been fully investigated.

Records are currently duplicated and information is in various places, which makes it difficult to determine what the care plans, risks assessments and targets for young people are.

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: 1256973

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Cameron & Cooper Limited

Registered provider address: 54 Bushy Park Road, Teddington TW11 9DG

Responsible individual: Camilla McInnes

Registered manager: Gowkurrin Chuttoor

Inspector(s)

Emeline Evans, social care inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

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