

# SC397933

Registered provider: Cove Care Residential Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned and offers placements for two young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium- to long-term placements.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 7 March 2018

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      inadequate

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:** 20 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** Sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** None

## Key findings from this inspection

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

- Young people do not always contribute to the running of the home.
- Key-work sessions do not sufficiently address significant issues for young people.
- Young people's movements are restricted within the home.
- The home is in need of redecoration.
- Risk assessments are not updated and are not factually correct.
- Surveillance equipment is used without the consent of the placing authority.
- Poor practice by social workers is not consistently challenged.
- Young people's files do not contain health plans.
- Management monitoring does not identify all shortfalls.
- The current management arrangements do not allow the acting manager to have a comprehensive understanding of young people's needs and their backgrounds.

The children's home's strengths

- Young people have trusting relationships with the staff.
- One young person has returned to mainstream education and is making progress.
- Young people, professionals and a parent gave positive feedback about the changes since the new manager has been in post.
- New staff have been recruited, and the use of agency staff has now stopped.
- One young person has successfully returned to the care of their family.
- Advocacy arrangements are good. Young people have access to an independent advocate twice per month.
- Children are safe. There has been a reduction in incidents of self-harm.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/05/2016	Full	Good
26/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/06/2015	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>If the registered person or staff consider a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, they must 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. (Regulation 5(c))</p> <p>This refers, in particular, to when social workers have not provided up-to-date plans.</p>	30/04/2018
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard requires the registered to—</p> <p>help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6(1)(2)(b)(vi))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ensuring that, when young people are preparing for independence, they have the necessary skills to manage their own toiletries.</p>	30/04/2018
<p>The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care. (Regulation 7 (1) and (2)(a)(iv))</p>	30/04/2018
<p>The health and well-being standard is that the health and well-being needs of children are met. (Regulation 10(1)(a))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to young people being referred to appropriate local services where there are concerns around substance misuse.</p>	30/04/2018

<p>The health and well-being standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff help each child to achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ensuring that there is a copy of the health plan on the child's file.</p>	<p>30/04/2018</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.</p> <p>ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. (Regulation 12(1) and (2)(a)(i)(d))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to risk assessments being updated and ensuring that furnishings are fire retardant.</p>	<p>30/04/2018</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 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</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child</p> <p>ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home</p>	<p>30/04/2018</p>

use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(2)(a)(c)(d)(f)(h))	
The care planning standard is that contact between each child and the child's parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 14(2)(d))	30/04/2018
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance; so far as is reasonably practicable in the light of the child's age and understanding, the child is informed in advance of the intention to do the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(b)(c))	30/04/2018

## Recommendations

Ensure that the design of the home provides staff that sleep in the home overnight with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people are not being adequately prepared for adulthood and leaving care. One young person is due to leave the home in a few months. She is not equipped to manage adult life, particularly in relation to personal hygiene. Staff dispense toiletries to this young person rather than enabling her to manage this for herself. Staff do not provide young people with the skills they require to live independently.

Young people are unable to access the kitchen at night and have to ask staff to unlock the cutlery drawer. This means that young people have to wake staff if they want a drink at night. The rationale for these measures is unclear. Their use prevents young people from freely accessing areas of their home.

Written records fail to show that young people are always consulted about the running of the home. While young people's meetings take place, the minutes lack detail and do not show that young people receive any feedback. Consequently, young people's views do not always influence the care that they receive.

There is little evidence of relevant key-work sessions. The records of these sessions are missing from one young person's file. Consequently, staff do not demonstrate that key working focuses on young people's individualised need

The statement of purpose states, 'The home is decorated and maintained to a high standard.' However, the home is in need of redecoration. It is clean but requires some updating. Bed linen and towels are worn and faded. Carpets in the communal areas and one of the young people's bedrooms need replacing.

Young people reported that they like the staff team. Young people's relationships with staff have improved. There is now a core staff team in place, and the use of agency staff has reduced. An independent advocate stated, 'I see positive relationships between the girls and the staff, lovely nurturing exchanges.'

Young people have access to education and attend regularly. One young person has successfully returned to mainstream education following a lengthy period of home education. This young person has been able to socialise with peers and to make academic progress. This young person spoke positively about the fact that staff from the home attended lessons with her while she settled into college life.

One young person has recently returned to the care of her family. The staff team provides continuing support to the young person and to family members. The social worker for this young person told the inspector, 'The ongoing support, now that she has gone home, is invaluable and I know Mum really appreciates this. Mum can call and check things out with staff if she isn't sure about something. This has given her a sense of confidence in her own parenting.'

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

The failure of staff to review risk assessments appropriately leaves young people at risk of harm. One young person was spending four and a half days each week with her family when the formally agreed plan was two days a week. This arrangement was not risk assessed and, on one occasion, the young person was assaulted by her sibling, necessitating police involvement.

One young person's health plan is not on file. This means that not all young people benefit from care plans that take into account their individual health needs. Staff are not always proactive in seeking services to assist young people when there are potential concerns about drug misuse. There is no evidence that young people have support to cease smoking. Young people do, however, have access to all primary health services.

Furnishing in young people's bedrooms needs to improve. One young person was sleeping on an exposed foam mattress. This was not fire retardant.

Instances of self-harming behaviour have significantly reduced. A young person told the inspector, 'Since the new manager has been at the home, I feel I can talk to her and don't feel as if I need to stay in my bedroom and self-harm.' Missing episodes have also reduced. When young people go missing, staff follow procedures, and young people are offered return interviews.

Staff are trained to recognise and respond to signs of child sexual exploitation. They allow young people the freedom to enjoy free time, while remaining vigilant and monitoring their safety. Staff ensure that young people have mobile phones to keep in contact with staff when they are away from the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

An acting manager is in day-to-day charge of the home and she has applied to become the registered manager. However, current management arrangements are not adequate. While the acting manager has extensive experience of working with young people who have challenging behaviour, her experience of working in a residential setting is relatively new. The existing registered manager reported that he is providing 'mentoring and oversight' to the acting manager. The level of support offered to the acting manager is variable and difficult to quantify. The inspection identified that the acting manager does not have sufficient knowledge of young people's backgrounds, behaviours and risks. She is therefore limited in her capacity to review young people's individual progress and the quality of care provided by the service.

All staff either have (or are working towards) the required level 3 diploma qualification. The acting manager is beginning to make sure that the staff training programme is relevant and reflective of young people's needs. Staff said that they feel supported by the acting manager. However, the current sleeping arrangements for staff are not adequate. One member of staff reported that they are unable to sleep on the sofa bed and this impacts on their well-being.

Written records of the professional supervision received by the acting manager are not robust, and do not show that young people's progress is vigorously discussed. This has the potential to impact on the acting manager's ability to make sure that young people are safe, to monitor their progress and to check staff performance.

The acting manager's ability to undertake management tasks is compromised as she is covering care shifts for the majority of her working hours. Consequently, management monitoring checks are not effective. There are significant gaps in paperwork on young people's files. For example, one young person's file did not have a health plan. There were no key working sessions on another young person's file. This means that staff do not have the information that they need to ensure that young people's individual needs are met.

Due to the size and organisation of young people's files, it is difficult to locate essential information. Current documents are stored with archived records and are not at hand to provide staff with easy access to essential information. For example, after a child had recently returned home, it was not possible to locate a plan of how this move was being monitored and supported.

Door alarms are in operation on external doors. Placing authorities, parents and young people have not consented to these measures. Additionally, the kitchen is not accessible to young people after 11.00pm as it is locked. The cutlery drawer, as has been referred

to, has to be unlocked each time a young person wants to make a drink or prepare food. Current risk assessments do not highlight what risks, if any, young people may face in the absence of this surveillance. The use of these measures is now customary practice in the home and not necessarily for the purpose of safeguarding young people. These arrangements mean that young people are living in a home that is institutional rather than homely.

The staff team works closely with key staff from local colleges. The acting manager has developed positive working relationships with the safeguarding lead at a local college. This relationship has been crucial in enabling a young person to return to mainstream education. The staff team works closely with a wide range of professionals and family members in order to meet the needs of young people.

The acting manager is new in post. Feedback from young people, social workers and family members indicate that she is making positive changes in the home. One young person reported, 'She is a Godsend. I only have to ask once now for something to be done.' The acting manager is beginning to make improvements. For example, she has established a consistent staff team that has reduced the need for agency staff. As a result, relationships between young people and staff are positive and young people receive care from adults who know them.

### **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:** SC397933

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

**Registered provider:** Cove Care Residential Ltd

**Registered provider address:** Cove Care Residential Ltd, 16 Waterloo Road,  
Wolverhampton WV1 4BL

**Responsible individual:** Lee Smith

**Registered manager:** Lee Smith

## **Inspectors**

Annemarie Parker, social care inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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