

1232658

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home provides care and support for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home has been without a registered manager since April 2017. A new manager is in post and has applied to Ofsted to become the registered manager.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 July 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: 23 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/05/2017	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>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>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 work as a team where appropriate.</p> <p>ensure that the staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b))</p>	24/08/2018
<p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16(1))</p>	24/08/2018
<p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))</p>	24/08/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children and young people, and that the home is a homely domestic environment. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that any areas at the home requiring repair are made safe in the interim period.

- Ensure that the expectations of standards of behaviour are high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)

In particular, ensure that any sanctions are consistently applied, and that the behaviour management plans are strengthened.

- Ensure that the staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Information about the child should always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, reconsider the use of some words, such as 'absconding', in records and documentation.

Inspection judgements

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

Young people are developing positive and trusting relationships with staff. Young people are increasing in their confidence to talk to staff about the things that are worrying them. Young people are beginning to develop an appropriate sense of permanence and belonging in the home. One young person said that they would score the staff a 'nine out of 10'. Another acknowledged that they knew that the staff were there for them.

Young people receive personalised care and support. Their wishes and views are listened to and, where possible, acted upon, for example in selecting their activities, meals, the decor in their bedrooms and venues for days out. Young people said that they felt involved in the decisions being made about them.

Young people's health and well-being are improving. Staff are proactive in ensuring that the young people receive the correct medication and healthcare. Young people are eating healthier diets and becoming more physically active.

Young people enjoy a range of activities. One young person was keen to talk about their passion for repairing engines, including steam engines. The young person is delighted that he has his own shed in which to store his tools and equipment. The young person is keen to start his agricultural engineering course in September. The young person has a clear plan for his future career path, and the staff are helping him to achieve his dream.

All young people are in education. Their attendance and attainment are generally good. Staff support some young people effectively during the school day, and this is helping the young person to maintain their school place. Staff proactively challenge professionals when young people are not adequately supported with their education. This constructive challenge helps to bring about change for young people.

Transitions to and from the home are improving. Plans are underway to support a young person who is due to move on from the home, and this is making this a positive experience for the young person. Staff have created a memory book for him that has been signed by all the young people, staff and managers. In addition, the staff have helped him to prepare practically by purchasing suitcases with the young person so that he has an appropriate means to transport his belongings to his new home.

Contact with families and friends is supported well. Staff ensure that young people can keep in contact with those people who are important to them. This means that young people can sustain positive relationships. For example, one young person regularly visits a friend who lives some distance away from the home. Staff manage this well, in agreement with the friend's parents.

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

improvement to be good

Staff receive regular training in child protection and safeguarding. They are aware of the vulnerabilities of each young person, although this is not always recorded in their various records and risk assessment. Staff are responsive to young people's worries or concerns, and take the time to discuss these with them. This helps young people to develop the skills to help to keep themselves safe, such as when out with friends or when using the internet.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are declining. Recent incidents were managed well by staff, who actively searched for the young people. As a result, the young people were located quickly and returned home safely. Records do not always reflect the action taken by staff to find the young people. Staff are acutely aware of the dangers that young people face when they are missing, and talk to them about this. However, this is not reflected in the key-worker records. Ultimately, this does not contribute to maintaining effective records.

Young people's behaviour is improving. The last year saw a high level of physical intervention and sanctions imposed upon the young people. However, since January 2018 this has reduced. This reduction was in part because one young person left the home. The manager and staff have reflected upon this placement and, as a result, there are improved systems in place for accepting young people into the home. Staff understand that young people can take time to settle into the home and that this can result in spikes of poor behaviour.

Behaviour is generally managed well. However, some staff and young people commented that sanctions are not consistently applied. The young people said that some young people can 'take advantage of some staff'. The manager has identified this as problematic. Consequently, the manager is initiating crisis intervention plans that are to be devised in consultation with the young people.

Staff recruitment is secure, and visitors to the home are suitably vetted. This means that there are sound arrangements to ensure that young people are protected from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The home has not had a registered manager since April 2017. There have been several interim managers, some of whom have applied to Ofsted to become the registered manager but later withdrawn their application. This resulted in a declined in effectiveness judgement at the last inspection in January 2018.

A new manager was appointed in March 2018 and, following a delay, their application to become registered has now been submitted to Ofsted. The new manager has a wide range of experience and has a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. A suitable organic plan is in place to move the home forward. This plan needs time to become embedded into the home. However, a secure foundation is in place on which the home can build.

There have been issues with staff retention over the past year. This has been addressed and the home now has a team of 10 permanent staff. Of these, eight are completing a level 3 diploma. Three regular agency staff further supplement the staffing levels. This provides consistency of care. However, many of the team are new to the home and are still in the process of building relationships with the young people and each other. Staff supervision is now improving, and a matrix shows each member of staff's future supervision dates. Staff are complimentary about the new manager, stating that she has brought stability to the home. Staff said that they are now included in the decisions being made about the home, and feel valued and listened to. Consequently, they are developing a sense of ownership of the home.

The home is in the process of being decorated, and the young people are included in choosing the colour schemes and soft furnishings. However, there are some maintenance issues, such as the damaged spindles on the staircase, that require attention. Young people's bedrooms are very hot, especially the bedroom at the top of the house. Fans were purchased during the inspection to aid ventilation. However, the manager and staff need to be proactive in addressing health and safety issues in a timely manner.

The statement of purpose does not meet the requirements of schedule 1. This is because it does not provide information about the therapists, their qualifications and who provides their clinical supervision. Also, there is no information about the staff's qualifications and experience. This does not provide clear insight into the care and support provided.

Records and documentation are now up to date and are signed by the person creating them. However, several records lack sufficient detail about the young people. For example, healthcare plans do not explain how certain conditions can affect the young people, and incident records and key-worker records do not reflect the actual events, discussions or actions taken. Several records contain the word 'absconding' when referring to young people who are missing from the home. Overall, the current shortfalls in the recording of important information do not help the young people to understand their experience and outcomes when they access their records, now or in the future.

Monitoring by the new manager is sound. The manager has identified key objectives that are to be addressed immediately, and this is demonstrated by the home's development plan. The manager holds regular team meetings to ensure that the staff are aware of any changes to practice or the circumstances of the young people. Monitoring by the independent person is appropriate.

The manager is building relationships with the social workers and other people involved in the young people's lives. A social worker was complimentary about the manager and the support provided to their young person during a difficult period of transition. The social worker said, 'Staff have gone above and beyond to try to sustain the young person's placement', and that staff are providing a smooth transition for the young person into their new home. The manager is confident to challenge professionals to

source the right support for each young person 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 difference 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: 1232658

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Mountfields House, off Squirrel Way, Epinal Way, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3GE

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chris Scully, social care inspector

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