

1259184

Registered provider: Ashwood Children's Care Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is able to care for up to four children. Its statement of purpose states that the home's policy is to consider children, irrespective of gender and aged between eight and 17, who are having trouble in their lives and who would benefit from the placement.

The home has been without a registered manager since 21 June 2018. A manager has been appointed and he has submitted his application to be the registered manager of the home.

Inspection dates: 31 July to 1 August 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 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: This is the home's first inspection

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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 who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</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)(a)(b)(2)(b)(vi))</p>	28/09/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and</p>	28/09/2018

<p>of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c)(iv))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>at all times, at least one person on duty at the home has a suitable first aid qualification. (Regulation 31 (2)(a))</p>	28/09/2018
<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 promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p>	28/09/2018
<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.</p> <p>Case records must be kept—</p>	28/09/2018

securely in the children's home during the period when the child to whom the case records relate is accommodated there. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(c))	
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Recommendations

- The capacity and competence of staff to build constructive, warm relationships with children that actively promote positive behaviour, provides the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each child's individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.14)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Any registered manager placed in charge of a children's home or staff member in a deputy or supervisory role such as 'shift leader' should have substantial relevant experience of working in a children's home and have successfully completed their induction for the home in which they are employed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.21)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. Professionally qualified staff employed by the home, e.g. teachers or social workers, should be provided with relevant professional or clinical supervision by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Inspection judgements

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

The placement of some children in this home has not been good. Two children have left the home in an unplanned way because the home could not meet their needs, and their behaviour was having a negative impact on other children. This is likely to have resulted in poorer outcomes for them. The manager recognises that matching children

appropriately is essential and is strengthening this process. Two children who have recently moved into the home did so in a very planned way. The manager visited them at their previous placements and the children then visited the home prior to moving in. A foster carer commented: 'Communication was excellent.' This planning is likely to lead to more successful placements.

Older children are gradually developing the skills to enable them to live more independently. However, staff work with children in an ad hoc way. There is no structured programme to ensure that all the necessary skills are developed, and there is no record of the work completed. This makes it more difficult to assess progress and does not provide the child with the evidence of their achievements.

Most of the children living in this home have only been here for a short period of time. Their progress is therefore difficult to assess. A parent identified that despite living at the home for only three weeks, her child had made 'great progress', particularly in relation to his behaviour. A social worker said of another child: 'He's moved on a long way.' A child said: 'I'm managing my anger better and I am more independent.'

All the children have positive relationships with the staff. They are having good experiences, such as going fishing, going to the seaside and playing games with staff. All the children say that they are happy here, and one child said that the best thing about the home is 'the staff'. Another child said the best thing is 'the activities'.

Children say that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns. They feel that staff listen to their views and take them seriously. The home has regular meetings so that children can plan their activities, choose what they want to eat and discuss any problems.

A strength of the home is the access to an in-house counsellor who provides planned weekly individual sessions as well as drop-in sessions for the children at the home. She is also available for consultation to give staff guidance and to help them with strategies to manage children more effectively.

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

Children feel safe in the home and risk-taking behaviour, such as misusing illegal substances and going missing, has reduced. The good staffing ratios contribute to the effective supervision of children. Going missing from the home is not an issue at present, although it has been in the past. Staff responded to these incidents appropriately. However, there is not a clear record of the efforts made to request an independent return home interview and there is no record of the findings of that interview to use to minimise risk. This is a missed opportunity to improve children's safety.

The management of children's behaviour requires improvement. There are times when staff do not appear to understand the underlying reasons for the challenges that children pose, and their responses are not as constructive as they could be. This leads to an

escalation of challenging behaviour and physical intervention. This is not beneficial for children or staff.

The recording of incidents, including those of physical intervention and sanctions, is poor. Some records do not have the names of the people involved in debriefing staff and children or the time and date of these debriefs. The records are not always completed in a timely way. One form is used for all incidents, which makes monitoring difficult. These records are an important tool for the manager to assess staff practice and gain the views of the children involved, particularly if a complaint is made. These records are not used effectively at present.

Risks are clearly identified and form part of the home's plan of care. However, the current format is rather complex and the manager is looking at ways to make them easier to understand and act on.

Staff have undertaken training in safeguarding and understand their roles and responsibilities. The manager has responded appropriately to allegations and involved the designated officer for the local authority as necessary.

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

The home has experienced some challenges since it first registered in January 2018. The previous manager left suddenly, and the new manager has only been in post for five weeks. Although feedback from staff, children and stakeholders is very positive about his appointment, he has had limited time to make the improvements required. However, the responsible individual and the manager have a realistic understanding of the shortfalls in service provision and they have a plan to address these. This includes the appointment of a deputy manager and more training for staff.

The staff are child-focused and committed to the children in their care. However, most of the staff lack experience and only one member of staff has the required childcare qualification. Most staff are either undertaking the diploma or are registered to do so, but the current situation means that there are times when inexperienced staff are in charge of the home, which could leave children or staff vulnerable. The manager is on call and he does respond to requests for assistance when he is not in the home.

Only two members of staff have a first aid qualification so there are times when no one in the home is suitably qualified. Staff training is booked for next week in recognition of this shortfall.

Staff have felt unsupported until recently. They have not been supervised regularly so their practice has not been subject to scrutiny. The new manager has started to address this. He has also started to hold regular team meetings that enable staff to express their concerns as well as discuss their practice. One member of staff said: 'It is 100% better.' Staff are now being led and managed more effectively.

Children's case records are poorly organised and do not provide a coherent account of

their time at the home. Information is not easily accessible, and two files could not be found in the home during the inspection. This is poor practice and it leaves staff without the information that they need to care appropriately for the children. The provider is in the process of installing an electronic system to improve record-keeping. Staff are also having training in record-keeping as the manager has identified this as an area for improvement.

Relationships with other professionals and parents are good. There is regular, effective communication. The home is working well in partnership with other professionals and parents to progress children's care plans.

External monitoring is thorough and effective. The independent visitor has played an important role in identifying many of the shortfalls that were present prior to the new manager joining the home. The provider responded appropriately to these concerns and is using the findings from the reports to improve the quality of care. The manager is also developing his own internal monitoring systems.

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: 1259184

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ashwood Children's Care Home Limited

Registered provider address: 9 Rowbury Drive, Burton-on-Trent, Derby DE15 0LP

Responsible individual: Elizabeth Nixon

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Ros Chapman: social care regulatory inspector

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