

1250287

Registered provider: Acorn Children's Home (Branston) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to four children and young people who have moved following a breakdown in either their fostering or residential placement, or who are required to live away from home. The registered manager is suitably qualified, but has been on sick leave since October 2017. There is a new manager who is applying to be a second registered manager for the home.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 July 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

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

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29 November 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 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, this is with regard to the regular review and update of children's behaviour management plans.</p>	30/08/2018
<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 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 the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) and (2)(d)(e))</p> <p>In particular, this is with regard to reducing the number of agency staff in the home in order to promote consistency of care.</p>	30/08/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that the privacy of children is appropriately protected;</p>	30/08/2018

<p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises; and any limitation placed on a child's privacy or access to any area of the home's premises is intended to safeguard each child accommodated in the home; is necessary and proportionate; is kept under review and, if necessary, revised; and allows children as much freedom as is possible when balanced against the need to protect them and keep them safe. (Regulation 21 (a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv))</p> <p>This is with regard to the lock on the kitchen door.</p>	
<p>The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(b))</p> <p>This is with regard to ensuring that any gaps in employment and any criminal records are fully and robustly addressed.</p>	30/08/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p>	30/08/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that 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;</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)(c))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ascertaining and recording the child's views, wishes and feelings regarding incidents.</p>	30/08/2018
<p>The registered person must supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (4)(a))</p>	30/08/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where 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)
In particular, ensure that impact risk assessments are robust and take into account all relevant information available regarding the child.
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
This is with particular reference to recording sanctions accurately and clearly, including the duration of the sanction, staff reflection on the incident leading to the sanction, and effectiveness of the sanction.
- Those with a leadership and/or management role should be visible and accessible to staff and able to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. Any registered manager employed in the home should have sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.7)
This is with particular reference to ensuring that there is a registered manager in day-to-day charge of the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people benefit from a welcoming and comfortable environment. The introduction of additional activities, including a trampoline and games console, have encouraged young people to spend more time in the home. This has helped them to benefit even more from their warm and trusting relationships with staff and develop positive relationships with each other.

Young people are settled and like living here. They said that they feel secure and cared for. They have fun and benefit from a range of stimulating activities in the local area, including swimming and going to the gym. This supports their emotional and physical well-being and their social development.

Staff listen to young people and consult them about the home and about their views,

wishes and feelings. One young person is interested in improving the home's allotment and a staff member has contacted a charity to come and help the young people tidy it up as a youth project.

Despite a recent unsettled period, young people have achieved stability. This has enabled them to make good progress in managing their own emotions and behaviour, education, relationships and self-confidence. One young person has successfully completed his exams and has a place at college for the autumn and another young person has a school place to start in the new term.

Young people engage in relevant and positive key-work sessions. When they have concerns, they talk to staff and have regular access to an advocacy service. An area for improvement is to ensure that staff always record consultations with young people after incidents have occurred, in order to clarify the young people's views and wishes. Staff also need to formally assess the necessity of having a lock on the kitchen door, which can restrict young people's access to areas of the home.

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

Highly trained staff respond appropriately when young people go missing from the home. They follow protocols and engage effectively with other agencies to help keep young people safe. Staff have supported one young person to reduce his substance misuse, and missing incidents have significantly reduced. This means that young people are becoming increasingly safe.

Young people benefit from the support of an in-house therapy service and from engagement with drug support services. Staff undertake in-depth key-work sessions with young people to discuss issues including self-harm, going missing, sexual health and internet safety. These sessions help young people to understand how to keep themselves safe.

Young people feel safe. Risk assessments are detailed and provide staff with guidance and strategies to address incidents and de-escalate behaviour. The home is safe and well maintained. However, there are some areas for improvement. While risk assessments are up to date and inform staff, the manager does not regularly review the young people's behaviour management plans. In addition, one impact assessment did not fully explore a potential risk of radicalisation that was highlighted in the referral from the placing authority. These shortfalls relate to the quality of recording in the home and have not impacted on the young people's safety or the good-quality practice of the staff team.

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

While the registered manager has been on sick leave for several months, the covering managers have enabled the young people to continue to experience stability and security and make progress. Staff are up to date with training and work together as a child-focused team. The home has continued to meet young people's needs and staff

have worked with other professionals effectively, advocating on behalf of young people when this has been required.

Professionals spoke very highly of the way the home is run. For example, one placing authority service manager said, 'The manager is fantastic to work with.'

Staff shortages have been an ongoing issue, with a high use of agency staff at times. This has started to reduce, and new staff are being recruited. Staff like working here and feel supported by managers. Staff build strong and effective relationships with young people and their families, strongly supporting contact and keeping families informed.

However, the lack of a registered manager in day-to-day charge of the home has impacted on the quality of managerial monitoring. This has led to staff not receiving regular formal supervision and a failure to monitor the effectiveness of sanctions. Recording of sanctions needs to be more detailed and informative. Recruitment of staff needs to ensure that any gaps in employment and any criminal records are fully explored with applicants. Finally, the registered manager's review of the service has not been submitted to Ofsted. It is now intended that the service will seek to register a second manager, in order to ensure consistency and stability for the 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: 1250287

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Children's Home (Branston) Ltd

Registered provider address: Repton House Suite 1.33 Bretby Business park, Burton On Trent, DE15 0YZ

Responsible individual: Farzana Khan

Registered manager: June Johnson

Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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