

1226397

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a private organisation and is registered to accommodate up to four children or young people who exhibit anti-social and challenging behaviours. There is currently no registered manager in post. The current manager has applied to be the registered manager.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 September 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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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: 13 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/05/2017	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>In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must ensure that staff seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5 (d))</p> <p>This is with particular reference to liaising with a child's school nurse when potential safeguarding issues arise.</p>	31/10/2018
<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 requires the registered person to ensure that staff ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare and help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i)(iii))</p>	31/10/2018
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(xi))</p>	31/10/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p>	31/10/2018

<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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that staff take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vi))</p>	31/10/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to 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)(2)(d))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that sharps are kept locked in a cupboard at all times when not in use and that any damaged furniture is removed from children's bedrooms and shared spaces as a priority.</p>	31/10/2018
<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. In particular, the standard requires the registered person to use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(h))</p>	31/10/2018

Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people do not feel that staff always listen to them. For example, one young person asked to swap her bedroom for a smaller room, but staff have not explored the potential emotional basis for this request and the manager has dismissed it as impractical. Another young person told a staff member that she was upset at being restrained by a male member of staff because of an issue in her personal history. The manager failed to ensure that all staff were aware of this information. He did not consider her views, wishes and feelings and how these could reduce the likelihood of this occurring again in the future.

Staff are ineffective at managing relationships between children and young people. Although children and young people relate well to each other overall, there have been

several occasions when the youngest child in the home has been physically violent to the older young people. One young person says that staff do not do enough to prevent or stop these attacks and that she finds them distressing and difficult to cope with.

Children and young people benefit from positive experiences, including having warm and trusting relationships with staff. Children and young people benefit from a welcoming and mostly comfortable environment where they have space to be together or alone as they wish. The manager is aware that the kitchen needs refurbishment, as the cupboards are in disrepair, and he has made a request for a new kitchen. Stimulating and fun activities with staff are provided for the children and young people, who have recently had an exciting trip to Disneyland in France. Young people's meetings, which are held on a weekly basis, are where the children and young people contribute ideas and plan their menus and activities. Meals are nutritious and staff, children and young people are encouraged to sit together to eat and chat in the dining room.

Staff enthusiastically and successfully support children and young people to attend and engage in education. Children and young people who have previously missed lengthy periods of school are now making good progress in education. They also make progress through having supportive family contact, gaining unsupervised free time and developing their skills in being independent. One young person recently travelled on the bus by herself for the first time. Staff teach young people to cook and one young person now helps the other young people to learn to cook.

Staff help children and young people to become more patient and to compromise; this supports their social development and helps them sustain positive relationships. Skilled staff undertake regular and relevant key-work sessions with children and young people to support their learning, emotional well-being, understanding of rules and boundaries and personal hygiene.

Children and young people have experienced two changes of manager since the registered manager resigned in April. Experienced and caring staff have worked hard to limit the negative impact of these changes on the young people.

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

Staff do not always give sufficient priority to keeping children and young people safe. Staff have, on occasions, failed to follow agreed protocols and risk assessments. When a highly vulnerable young person went missing at night, staff searched for her for an hour before reporting her missing to the police. Her risk assessment clearly stated the need to report her missing immediately, because of the high levels of risk. It is a positive factor that the manager addressed this with the staff member in supervision.

All the young people living in the home are at risk of self-harm, and on two occasions during the inspection the cupboard in the staff room where sharp knives are stored was left wide open. The risk assessment for sharp knives states that they must be locked in the lockable reinforced cabinet (the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health cupboard),

which is not in the staff room. In addition, broken furniture with exposed screws was left overnight in a young person's room after she and a peer had barricaded themselves in the night before and damaged the furniture. On one occasion, a young person had been able to take a sharp knife from the kitchen up to her room while staff attended to another young person and did not notice her. The manager recognised this poor practice and addressed it with the team. While the children and young people in the home have not used these items to self-harm, the actions of staff have placed them at unnecessary levels of risk.

Managerial oversight of the quality of risk assessments for children and young people is not sufficiently effective. Risk assessments lack the necessary detail and analysis. Despite the manager reviewing risk assessments monthly, several were found to have incorrect and out-of-date information for staff to follow. One risk assessment stated that the young person was at low risk of child sexual exploitation, despite having been subject to a serious incident of sexual exploitation just a matter of weeks before. The assessment did not explain how the young person had moved from high risk to low risk and did not highlight the significance of the young person not believing she was at risk. This risk assessment had been written by a staff member and reviewed by the manager shortly after they had attended child sexual exploitation training.

In most situations, staff and the manager liaise with a range of other professionals to ensure that young people are found when they go missing and receive independent return home interviews. However, they did not contact a child's school at the start of term to alert it to behaviour that had emerged during the school holiday and has potential safeguarding implications for staff and other children at school.

The manager responds appropriately when he identifies that staff safeguarding practice is not at the required standard. For example, when staff undertook an inappropriate physical intervention, the manager addressed this with staff individually in supervision and with other staff in a team meeting. Further, to improve the staff team's response to risks of child sexual exploitation, the manager has arranged for staff to have additional and relevant training. This has been reinforced by inviting the local police to speak to the young people about the risks they could face.

Staff safeguarding training is up to date. Staff undertake regular and beneficial key work with children and young people to address bullying, harmful relationships, missing and child sexual exploitation. Incidents of missing and self-harm have reduced since young people were admitted and young people say that they feel safe living in the home.

Health and safety and fire checks are undertaken regularly, and staff are recruited safely. One social worker commented that the manager is very vigilant about maintaining the standards of staff practice, and that a strength is that he liaises with the designated officer immediately if any allegations are made against staff.

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

Management oversight and monitoring of the systems in the home, which underpin staff practice and the quality of care, are poor. For example, risk assessments are in place which state that internal doors are to be locked at bedtime and young people are to have bedroom door alarms set. The manager acknowledges that these are no longer relevant but has done nothing to update young people's files and so they are used as guidance by staff.

Room searches are not recorded separately to the daily logs, and checks on young people's mobile phones are not recorded at all. During the inspection, the manager struggled to locate documents, some of which had been misfiled. Ready access to information for both the manager and staff is essential if managerial monitoring and staff practice are to be effective.

When the manager is considering placing new children and young people in the home, impact assessments do not address the impact on existing young people, or on the new child or young person. The recent placement of a much younger child has created anxiety for some of the young people already in placement. One young person commented that staff spend a lot of time with the new child as 'she is a baby', but that this has reduced the attention that she and the other young people receive. In this case, the impact assessment does not address the emotional needs of each child and young person in depth and does not therefore provide staff with sufficient guidance to understand and minimise the impact.

The manager ensures that staff receive regular and helpful supervision. Team meetings where staff can express their views are held regularly. Appropriate levels of staffing ensure consistency of care for children and young people. Staff like working in the home and feel supported by the manager and their team. They understand the ethos of the home and follow the resilience, education, acceptance, child-centred and holistic model of care.

Staff work with a range of professionals to identify and meet children and young people's needs. Discussions with placing authorities, health, education and the police are child-focused and effective in securing the services that will meet children and young people's needs. Staff speak knowledgeably about each child and young person's background and care needs. The manager ensures that placing authorities provide the required documentation for case files and is active in his efforts to obtain them if they are not provided within reasonable timescales.

The manager has a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development in the staff team. Staff are suitably experienced and well trained, with most holding a level 3 diploma. Professionals provide positive feedback about the service, saying that they have good relationships with staff, who keep them informed about the children and young people and take time to discuss their needs.

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: 1226397

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Compass Children's Homes Limited

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

Responsible individual: Benjamin Jordan

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Louise Whittle, social care inspector

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