

# SC046276

Registered provider: Devon County Council

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. The Department for Education approves it to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 young people who are aged between 10 and 17 years and accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

**Inspection date:** 30 October 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Date of last inspection:** 22 March 2018

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## This inspection

### The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.

At the last inspection of the home in March 2018, two statutory requirements and three recommendations were made. Both statutory requirements and two out of the three recommendations have been met.

Leaders have improved the management oversight and monitoring of medication records. Errors are now rare. In the event that a recording error does occur, it is rectified immediately. Managers have implemented an escalation policy to ensure that placing

authorities and external agencies provide essential information prior to and following a young person's admission to the home. Most, but not all, documents are now in place. This has enabled managers to develop detailed risk assessments, care and behaviour management plans.

The quality of records kept about young people has improved. Single separation records now detail staff observations, and these reports are legible. Records relating to searches now include details about the outcome of the search.

Progress to improve the communal and recreational rooms remains too slow. New furniture has been purchased and a decoration programme is under way. Despite these improvements, further work is needed to make these spaces more child friendly, comfortable and homely.

Since the previous inspection, 10 young people have been admitted to the home and 12 have been discharged. At the time of this inspection, five young people were registered as living at the home; this is a decrease since the last inspection. The registered manager has intentionally kept the numbers low due to staffing shortages. In response, he has reviewed the recruitment and selection processes to ensure that staff retention is successful.

Young people make good progress relative to their time in this home. This is because they receive support from a well-led and child-focused staff team. The ongoing development and successful integration of 'secure stairs' and the introduction of a trauma-informed therapeutic model of care have enabled staff to better understand the young people's needs and behaviours. Inspectors observed meaningful and respectful interactions between young people and staff.

The home has a well-established complaints procedure. The young people are confident to use the complaints system, which allows them to express any dissatisfactions they may have. There have been 18 complaints raised by 12 different children since the last inspection. All complaints are thoroughly investigated by the management team, and the young people are informed of the outcome.

Since the last inspection, there have been 18 referrals to local authority children's services about potential safeguarding concerns. Referrals are timely, and records detail the actions taken to keep children safe and the outcomes of any enquiries or investigations. Young people's safety is given the highest priority.

Physical restraint is used in line with regulations. Records reviewed by inspectors showed that, in the last three months, the number of physical interventions used has increased significantly. These interventions are associated with one child. Records and closed-circuit television reviewed by inspectors demonstrate that the criteria for using physical intervention had been met appropriately. Leaders and managers monitor all incidents that involve the use of physical intervention, and they identify where lessons have been learned to improve practice moving forward. This has contributed to the reduction of interventions, improving the quality of young people's experiences and staff's

professional development.

The statement of purpose provides good information about the home's aims and objectives and the services and support available to young people. However, the registered manager has not updated this document to ensure that the information provided is correct in relation to the registered numbers of children and the use of single separation.

A previous recommendation relating to the education provision was not assessed at this inspection and will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Good
12/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- Ensure that the young people are provided with a nurturing environment that is welcoming. This specifically relates to the decoration of the communal areas in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The home's Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

In order to meet this recommendation, the provider must update the home's statement of purpose to outline the circumstances when single separation is necessary. They should make clear the arrangements in place to ensure that young people who are separated are closely monitored and are only separated for as long as is necessary to protect them or others from harm. In addition, the home's statement of purpose should accurately reflect the number of young

people that the home is registered to provide care for.

- Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)

In particular the registered person must take action to ensure that all relevant documents held by the local authority, such as care plans and health care plans, are obtained and held on the young people's case files.

- Ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

In particular, teachers should agree and plan with the young people the personal and social skills they need to develop during their work placements, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to improve these while at the placement. The development of these agreed personal and social skills should be measured by teachers to ensure that young people make good gains in these areas.

## 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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:** SC046276

**Provision sub-type:** Secure Unit

**Registered provider:** Devon County Council

**Registered provider address:** Atkinson Secure Children's Home, Atkinson Close,  
Beacon Lane, Exeter EX4 8NA

**Responsible individual:** Jean Kelly

**Registered manager:** Darren Beattie

## **Inspector(s)**

Sharron Escott, social care inspector  
Lee Kirwin, social care inspector

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