

SC032058

Registered provider: Buckinghamshire County Council
Interim inspection
Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority and provides residential care for up to six young people who have social, emotional and behavioural challenges. One bed is used to support planned respite.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 18 February 2016.

Inspection date: 19 November 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 4 April 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.

The home has a clear and well-documented admissions process that identifies if young people who are referred are appropriate for the home, and if the young people concerned would fit well those already resident. Records show that the manager has declined some referrals and senior managers have supported these decisions.

Staff welcome new young people sensitively and tailor introductions to their needs. Comprehensive assessments are conducted that inform behaviour support plans and risk management.

The manager and staff have been successful in reducing risks associated with young people's friendships: they have set reasonable expectations with regard to young people informing them of their whereabouts and staff take steps to ensure that the young people are where they are meant to be. Readily available records allow staff to make

timely decisions when young people ask for permission to spend time with friends. Young people's initial resistance to seeking permission has given way to acceptance and to them being safer, including fewer incidents of going missing.

Young people have a range of opportunities to express their views, wishes and feelings. Records show how staff have responded positively to requests – even if to explain why they have not been fulfilled. Key-work sessions record outcomes, but not necessarily actions, arising from the discussions and these outcomes are not systematically reviewed at subsequent meetings.

Young people's contribution to, and views about, placement plans are not explicitly included in them. This means that a significant opportunity to gather young people's ideas, aspirations and opinions, in order to present them to others and to influence their care, is missed. However, young people are constructively engaged in working towards the targets set in their plans. This includes a journal that the staff produce with them, which records through written comments, photographs and other memorabilia how young people's experiences have helped them progress while at the home. This is innovative work.

Young people do not currently routinely sign key-work session records or placement plans, at least partly because they find it a bureaucratic process that detracts from their wish to have as ordinary a life as possible. The manager and staff are currently considering how to balance young people's views about this with the importance of encouraging them to know about and agree to what is written about them.

Case files are generally in good order, with plans and assessments regularly updated in the light of changes in circumstances and current events. Some handwritten entries in documents are, however, illegible and not always dated and signed by the person making them. This has the potential to create uncertainty about who made decisions or took actions and why.

Senior managers have responded effectively when concerns have arisen about recruits' applications, to ensure that those who work in the home have nothing in their employment histories that would suggest they are unsuitable to care for young people.

Some of the fabric and decor of the home is dated and worn; the manager is aware of this and, as and when budgets allow, rooms are being refurbished. Nevertheless, some minor damage, fittings in poor condition and dirty marks that could be quickly and inexpensively remedied have gone unnoticed and/or have not been dealt with. None of these examples have a detrimental impact on the home being a safe environment.

The manager has been quick to respond to recommendations made by the independent person in regulation 44 reports. He incorporates these into the home's development plan, which is constantly evolving as progress is made and new issues arise. The manager, supported by the responsible individual and staff team, has made significant improvements to practice, ensuring that the requirement and recommendation made at the last inspection have been robustly addressed. There is a collective determination to continue making the changes that will enhance the lives of young people living in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/04/2018	Full	Good
13/12/2017	Full	Inadequate
15/09/2016	Full	Good
25/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.</p> <p>(Regulation 14(2)(f))</p>	11/01/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.</p> <p>(Regulation 33(4)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, that supervision should be provided at the frequency specified in the home's statement of purpose and be recorded.</p>	11/01/2019

Recommendations

- Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

In particular, handwritten entries must be legible, dated and the author clearly identified.

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: SC032058

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Buckinghamshire County Council

Registered provider address: County Hall, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 1AU

Responsible individual: Noel Beaumont

Registered manager: David Knowles

Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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