

1183621

Registered provider: A & T Home

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private organisation. The home provides care for up to four children. The provider's overall aim is to support children and their families to reunite.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 April 2019

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 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.

There has been no registered manager in post since 6 July 2018.

Date of last inspection: 30 July 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
27/02/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/04/2017	Full	Good
10/08/2016	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

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

This home has been without a registered manager for over 38 weeks.

Children's experiences are inconsistent. Since the last inspection, there have been three different managers. This has led to inconsistent practice over a protracted period. There are times during shifts when opportunities to engage in meaningful ways with children are missed. Staff's time is taken up with dealing with heightened behaviour which compromises the time afforded to other children.

There has been staff turnover in the team. Since the last inspection, some staff have struggled to manage the intensity of some of the children's behaviour. This has resulted in tired staff and affects the likelihood of well-planned shifts and good communication between staff. The emotional needs of individual children can at times be overwhelming for some of the staff. Consequently, there is not enough opportunity for the staff to work cohesively to help children to understand the effect of their behaviour on other children.

There have been no new admissions since the last inspection in July 2018. One child recently left the home to move to foster care. This is a positive outcome for this child.

Children attend appointments and receive help and support to manage their physical health conditions. Children benefit significantly from regular contact with their families. Some staff are very good at gathering information. They are good at getting to know the children and their family circumstances.

Staff build good relationships with individual children and come to know their personalities and characters. Staff eat meals with the children. The staff read with children, encourage them to do homework, and do what they can to encourage children to attend school. Mostly, children do attend school. However, when children struggle emotionally and consequently do not engage with education, the staff's efforts do not go far enough to understand individual barriers to learning. The result for those children is that their attendance and engagement in education decreases. This is despite individual staff working positively with schools and the placing local authority.

Therapists visit the home at least weekly. Some records provide a written account following on from a therapist's individual support to children. Time spent with therapists helps children to develop a narrative about their experiences and to express powerful feelings. However, it is not consistently clear if staff read the therapists' records or if there are effective systems used to enable every member of staff to access information about this input. The therapists provide local authority social workers with monthly reports about children's therapeutic progress. However, local authority social workers do not routinely receive information from the staff, for example as and when incidents occur at the home. Communication with placing local authority workers is not sufficient.

The children living at this home are highly traumatised because of their early childhood experiences. Children cause damage to the home. The staff do their best to ensure that the interior of the home remains homely and well cared for. The home has been painted

throughout since the last inspection. Nonetheless, damage in some of the children's bedrooms demonstrates that the environment as a whole is not sufficiently stimulating.

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

Children do not go missing from this home. The new manager is introducing a system to track any incidents of children going missing. On one occasion since the last inspection, a child did not return home from school on time. The staff responded appropriately and as a concerned parent would, resulting in the child's swift return.

In recent months, incidents at the home have begun to reduce. Previously high numbers of physical interventions for individual children are reducing significantly. However, written records do not consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention. This does not help staff to adjust their practice to ensure that the needs of the child are being met consistently.

The children spoken to during this inspection said that they like living at the home and that they especially like having some staff to talk to about their personal worries. However, the same children also said that some staff do not listen enough. This is despite regular opportunity for children to meet with staff during house meetings. Children know how to raise a complaint, but the actions taken by staff and managers when children do raise an issue is not sufficiently consistent. One child wrote to staff asking for more help. However, managers were unable to demonstrate what action had been taken in response. It is not clear that every member of staff has the skill to understand the importance of listening and responding to the children for whom they care.

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

The registered manager left in July 2018. Two interim managers have come and gone from the home, although one remains working for the provider. A new responsible individual was appointed in November 2018.

Overall, management systems in the home lack organisation. This causes confusion for staff about where some information is stored. Managers' comments are not recorded on children's daily records. Care plans are not consistently updated. Although placement goals are clear, records show that not all staff have signed to acknowledge that they have read the relevant information relating to each child's plan. This results in inconsistent experiences for the children.

The home's statement of purpose is ambitious in relation to the level of therapeutic support provided to every child and member of staff. Although some of this support is provided some of the time, the detail described in the statement of purpose is not consistently practised at the home. Staff attend some therapeutic training, and some staff benefit from some reflective supervision with a therapist. However, many staff do not hold a required level 3 qualification, nor are they therapeutically trained. This does not ensure that every child consistently receives the high level of therapeutic support as described in the statement of purpose.

The new responsible individual has experience of the company philosophy, having

worked previously for the company as the social work lead. The responsible individual is recruiting new staff and is motivated to bring about change. She understands the areas for improvement. The responsible individual has met many of the requirements raised at the last inspection. She has introduced some new approaches to recording information on children’s risk assessments and, with the new manager, has completed a review of the quality of care.

The most recent manager came to work at the home in February 2019. Ofsted awaits her completed application. Staff said that the new manager is approachable and that she makes herself readily available to them, offering good advice, good support and helpful guidance. Children seek the new manager out and ask for her help. This demonstrates that, in a short time, she has begun to have a positive influence.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c)) <p>In particular, help children to understand the impact of their behaviour on other children.</p>	31/05/2019
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team when appropriate; 	31/05/2019

<p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; and</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(e))</p>	
<p>The registered person must—</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, when appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))</p>	<p>31/05/2019</p>

Recommendations

- Work consistently in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, and particularly the child's statutory social worker. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 11, paragraph 2.3)
In particular, share information as and when incidents occur.
- Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
In particular, ensure that, when children cause damage to their bedrooms, repairs are carried out quickly and that the children are involved in the process.
- Ensure that all staff understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)
- Ensure that every member of staff understands that for some children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or are out of education for significant periods, it may be necessary to address and work through their past experiences and present needs before they can positively participate in learning activities and formal education. Staff in children's homes will play a key role in supporting these children in line with their personal education plan or education and healthcare plan and recommendations from education and health professionals. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 26, paragraph 5.3)
- Ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure that it meets the needs of each

child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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: 1183621

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: A & T Home

Registered provider address: Unit 7, Hydra, Orion Avenue, Great Blakenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0LW

Responsible individual: Keri Symonds

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Rosie Davie: social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

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