

1183494

Registered provider: Slough Children's Services Trust Limited (09487106)

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This purpose-built children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children. It aims to provide security and stability for children who have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

The home has been without a registered manager since 16 December 2016.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 June 2019

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

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

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

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: declined in effectiveness

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2019	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
02/05/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/01/2017	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
11/05/2016	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 order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>that staff help each child to develop socially aware behaviour; encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding. (Regulation 11 (2)(a)(ii)(iii))</p>	31/08/2019
<p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>that staff 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; help each child to understand how to keep safe and have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii))</p>	01/08/2019
<p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person is required to:</p> <p>understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (2)(f))</p>	31/08/2019
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must provide adequate means of escape from the home in the event of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(b))</p>	07/06/2019
<p>The registered person must ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. (Regulation 33 (1)(a))</p>	27/07/2019
<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 which includes the name of the child; details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of</p>	31/08/2019

<p>the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate.</p> <p>The registered person must ensure that 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)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that records of sanctions comply with this regulation.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation so that the process followed and how it has led to the outcome is clear. (Regulation 39 (3))</p>	<p>31/08/2019</p>

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered provider must ensure staff are able to build a positive relationship with each child and help the child develop skills to have positive relationships with others. 'Others' includes individuals both inside and outside the home, such as other children in the home, staff, family members, siblings, previous carers and friends (in accordance with their relevant plans). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 38, paragraph 8.6)
In particular, ensure sufficient continuity of staff to maintain relationships over time.
- No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home

should be from an external agency. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.17)

- The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.9)
In particular, ensure that transition plans and their implementation are well documented.
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.19)
- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next 6 months of delivery within the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

This judgement area is limited to 'inadequate' as 'how well children and young people are helped and protected' has been judged 'inadequate'.

Some young people have very strong relationships with staff who they have got to know well, but continued staff changes have still affected them. One said, 'I've been in the system for two years. You can trust them. They are good people. They have experience, but when someone is in your life for six months and they go, I'm surprised; you can't have their phone number and you can't see them afterwards.'

Relationships have been key to successful interventions. A professional commented on how a young person 'eventually went to a clinic with a member of staff he had built up a relationship with.' He, himself, said adults here 'changed my whole life and are helping me in taking a big step, like a parent and a friend,' adding, 'I have people here who

worry about me. I will have freedom [when I move] but I need people who want to know how I'm doing.' This is genuinely so in this home.

Staff consider young people's religious and cultural needs well and enable them to participate in observance of special occasions and practise their faith as far as they wish.

Agency staff who work at the home are almost always well known to the young people, which helps to provide continuity of care. All waking night staff are agency workers, so when one of the 'sleep-in' team is also from an agency this means that they form the majority on the shift.

Young people personalise their rooms and like them. There is, however, little in communal areas of the home that reflects them or their interests. There are some institutional aspects, such as office-like noticeboards and a hand-gel dispenser at the entrance that detract from a homely atmosphere.

Staff have made attempts to help young people to quit smoking and using cannabis. This has not always had a significant or long-lasting impact, but young people no longer smoke either openly or covertly without being challenged by staff.

The team actively works with education staff to support young people's learning, helping some to improve attendance and achievement. One young person reached 100% attendance for a time. Not all young people have responded so positively, but staff have still worked hard and advocated on their behalf to improve their opportunities, including obtaining a work experience placement.

Support for moving on to semi-independent living has, in the words of one professional, 'been amazing!' However, this work, including the development of independence skills and emotional support, is largely absent from recording.

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

Young people have not been kept safe at the home, and there have been serious failures to promote their welfare. The new manager has made efforts to improve safeguarding, which include training for staff, maintaining a chronology of concerns and improving information sharing between staff, the police and voluntary support agencies. As a result, staff now have a better understanding of their responsibilities. However, these changes have been reactive, and delays mean that young people have been exposed to potential harm.

Issues include a delay in taking effective action when a young person may have been subject to child sexual exploitation. Staff used a screening tool but did not risk assess the identified vulnerabilities or recommend any protective actions.

Most individual risk assessments do not appraise the likelihood or severity of risk or evaluate the effectiveness of control measures; some that do suggest controls that will not reduce risk. In one instance, an assessment did not identify any measures likely to

have an impact on the risk.

On one occasion, a young person indicated that they wished to cause themselves significant harm. This information was passed to staff, but they did not consider all protective actions. They ensured that the young person was safely monitored until they slept but failed to assess whether mental health support was needed, whether the young person's bedroom was safe or whether welfare checks should be instigated through the night.

While on site, the inspector found that a fire route from the building was partially blocked, and a gate used to get from the garden to the muster point required a bolt to be slid open to exit through it. Although the manager took steps to rectify these issues immediately, it is of significant concern that the home's checks had not identified the shortfalls in ways in which staff and young people are protected in the case of fire.

Staff spoke to one young person about paying a fixed penalty she had received but did not also take the opportunity to talk about the reason it had been imposed, her personal responsibilities or potential consequences of a reoccurrence.

The one young person said that he feels 'absolutely safe'. He thinks that his relationship with longstanding staff is especially good and he can talk about important things to them. He believes that they would help him or tell others who could. There is evidence that this young person has become safer over time, especially following the work done by staff to reduce episodes of him going missing.

Staff have imposed one sanction since the last inspection, but the entry in the log does not allow for adequate recording of required information, including the young person's views, and does not demonstrate that timescales have been met. The outcome of any management monitoring of these and physical interventions is also lacking.

Safer recruitment procedures have been closely followed for staff appointed since the last inspection.

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

There has been no stable management in the home, or registered manager, for 30 months. This has had a disruptive impact on the running of the home. The current manager, who is acting up into the role, has identified several weaknesses and acted swiftly to address many, including ensuring that all staff received supervision in the first month of her being in post.

Action to meet requirements and recommendations has resulted in most being met; however, for some it has been insufficient. A review of care in the home was undertaken but failed to include actions to improve. The behaviour management policy remained lacking in guidance to staff about welfare checks during some physical intervention techniques. A senior manager redrafted this policy during the inspection, and no such holds have been used since the last inspection, but staff have not had sufficient

guidance to ensure their safe use.

Induction processes for new staff are poor, with little more than a series of documents for staff to tick off when they have been read. Training records are not up to date. Leaders and managers have therefore not ensured that new staff receive appropriate support and guidance to fulfil their roles safely and effectively.

Case files are generally in good order with clear and accessible information, helped by periodic audits by key workers. There is strong evidence that staff follow up actions arising from statutory reviews and other plans for children who are looked after.

Staff have made attempts to involve young people in contributing to their records, but not consistently. Staff have not gathered information from key-work sessions or observations to include what is known about young people's views in their plans.

The independent person has highlighted several issues in regulation 44 reports. These matters and the lack of a registered manager have prompted leaders and managers to review the current position of the home. Leaders told the inspector, during the inspection, that they plan to admit no young people to the home for a period of three months.

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: 1183494

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Slough Children's Services Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Ground Floor West, St Martin's Place, 51 Bath Road,
Slough, Buckinghamshire SL1 3UF

Responsible individual: Jackie Pape

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector

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