

1244386

Registered provider: Sankofa Care Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home provides therapeutic care for young people who have social and/or emotional difficulties. The accommodation is arranged across two sites and the main home is currently closed for refurbishment.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2017.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 October 2019

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| 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: 20 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 20/03/2019 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 16/10/2018 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 30/01/2018 | 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 |
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| <p>Other records</p> <p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person must keep a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, and records of the actual rosters worked.</p> | 28/02/2020 |
| <p>The protection of children standard</p> <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <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> | 28/02/2020 |
| <p>The positive relationships standard</p> <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—</p> <p>mutual respect and trust;</p> <p>an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and</p> | 28/02/2020 |

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| <p>positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(b))</p> | |
| <p>The education standard</p> <p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;</p> <p>support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;</p> <p>understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;</p> <p>help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;</p> <p>promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;</p> <p>maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;</p> <p>help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of</p> | <p>28/02/2020</p> |

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| <p>exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;</p> <p>help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and</p> <p>ensure that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(b))</p> | |
| <p>Fitness of workers</p> <p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or</p> <p>in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016.</p> <p>The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual—</p> | <p>28/02/2020</p> |

does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or

works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32(2)(a)(b)(4)(a)(b)(5)(a)(b)(6)(a)(b))

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the children to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the children's relevant plan and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- 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. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, the registered provider should repair or replace damaged and missing bathroom doors, young people's bed headboards and the kitchen television aerial.

Inspection judgements

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

Some young people who have moved into the home are not a good match with the existing residents. This has had a negative effect on the home's atmosphere and group-living dynamics. On occasion, young people have influenced other young vulnerable young people living in the home to engage in antisocial behaviour, both in the home and in the local community.

Staff work hard to mediate between the young people when they do not get on with each other. Although there have been occasions when young people have verbally and physically hurt each other, relationships between the young people have recently improved.

From their challenging starting points, some young people make progress while living in the home. Missing-from-home episodes have decreased in number and one young person is engaging more with staff through activities such as baking cakes, and has created their own curriculum vitae to improve their chances of future employment.

Young people's communal areas, such as the lounge and kitchen, are either locked or 'out of bounds' to them later in the day. The registered manager stated that she has put the kitchen boundary in place to keep young people safe from risks of fire from the kitchen oven. However, these restrictions detract from the therapeutic environment and appear institutional.

Because of the current restrictions, young people have responded negatively, and they have broken the kitchen door. Young people have also thrown food around the kitchen during the daytime, at staff and in each other's bedrooms.

The young people's living environment needs improving. One bathroom door is missing, the kitchen television aerial is loose and young people's bed headboards are broken. This does not create a homely environment.

Young people's education outcomes are mixed. When young people have an educational placement, their attendance is sporadic. Behaviour agreements are put in place to encourage school attendance. However, at the time of this inspection, none of the young people in the home were attending or engaging in their educational options or school placements.

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

The risks posed by young people who move into the home are poorly considered. One young person's known risks were not assessed before they arrived at the home. There were no strategies identified to help staff manage or minimise the young person's previous involvement in gang activity and knife crime. Furthermore, no strategies were recorded to minimise the risks this posed to other young people living in the home. This shortfall leaves young people at risk of harm.

The home employs a specialist gang consultant. He has extensive experience of working with young people in residential care and the youth offending services and is also a youth mentor and a gang consultant. He provides guidance and mentoring for young people in the home who may be at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity, exploitation or antisocial behaviour.

The specialist gang consultant provides young people with the opportunity to reflect on their challenging behaviours during individual key-work sessions. He also provides training for staff to help them to develop an improved awareness of the risks posed to young people, particularly the risk of them becoming involved in gangs.

Working alongside staff, the specialist gang consultant also supports young people to attend their important appointments, such as going to court and youth offending services meetings.

Leaders and managers assess and record young people's placement suitability prior to them moving into the home. However, one young person was readmitted to the home for a second short-term placement after a previous unsuccessful short-term placement at the home. Staff were unable to keep the young person safe, and consequently the young person experienced a second unplanned ending to a placement at the home.

When young people go missing from the home or are absent without permission, staff do not know where the young people are, what they are doing or who they are with. Police have returned young people to the home after their alleged involvement in incidents of antisocial behaviour in the community, including robbery, shoplifting, serious physical assault and possession of illegal drugs.

Information from return home interviews is not shared with staff. This limits the staff's ability to understand and analyse young people's missing behaviours.

Staff are committed to maintaining consistent boundaries with the young people in the home. However, the staff's use of de-escalation techniques to manage young people's challenging behaviour is not always successful. On one occasion, a member of agency staff employed by the home locked themselves in the bathroom to protect themselves from a young person's physical and verbal abuse. The young person continued to act inappropriately and kicked the bathroom door off its frame.

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

Leaders and managers have recently engaged the services of a clinical psychologist to provide the staff team with regular peer-group support. The clinical psychologist has also introduced a new approach to therapeutic intervention which is designed to help staff to develop strategies for engaging with young people and promoting their development

Not all of the staff working in the home have a suitable residential children's home qualification, or are enrolled to study for such a qualification. This means that some staff do not have the necessary residential skills and knowledge to support the young people appropriately in the home.

Staff have received group training in subjects that enhance their knowledge of the complex needs and challenges of the young people, for example training on understanding young people's challenging behaviour and supporting them to lead healthier lifestyles. The local missing-persons coordinator has provided staff with direct training to enhance their understanding of missing-person protocols and processes. Staff spoken with said that the training in the home is helpful.

Staff rotas do not reflect the shifts that staff have worked. Leaders and managers have increased the staffing levels at night to help manage the challenging dynamics in the home. However, one of the rotas inspected did not reflect this increase. The registered manager said that the rota was incorrect.

The most recent quality of care review report completed by the registered manager states: 'Children in the home have been very challenging and have at one stage consistently challenged staff equilibrium, the young people lack motivation, are on the fringes of gang related activity, missing behaviour and refuse to engage in education. These challenges have also impacted the staff.'

A social worker said: 'The home is committed to [the young person], but have struggled to engage him in any meaningful activity or get him to school.'

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: 1244386

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Sankofa Care Ltd

Registered provider address: N/A

Responsible individual: Olivia Osei-Asibey

Registered manager: Abby Osei-Asibey

Inspector

Victoria Jones: social care inspector

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