

1183936

Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home offers placements for children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Placements are generally medium to long term.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2020

Inspection date: 26 January 2021

This monitoring visit

The visit was conducted because the home has not been inspected since August 2019, and to address specific concerns about behaviour management in the home not being effective and Ofsted not receiving all safeguarding notifications as required. The management of the home was also monitored as an additional line of enquiry during the visit. The visit was conducted off site.

The ability of staff to protect young people in the home from harm is poor. Staff do not have the skills and experience to prevent assaults, bullying, harassment and intimidation of all young people and staff members. As a result, some young people avoid using the home's communal areas. A young person reported eating and drinking less because he did not feel safe sitting down for dinner in the kitchen with another young person present. Because of this, young people who have been subjected to bullying have eaten meals alone in their bedroom or have temporarily returned to their family home to help keep themselves safe. A young person said, 'It's not fair that I should have to go to my bedroom when I have done nothing wrong.'

Staff's behaviour management strategies are not effective. Sanctions, such as the loss of computer time, fail to reduce challenging behaviours. Young people do not receive regular one-to-one support, key-work sessions or individual debriefs to

support or challenge bullying behaviours. A young person said, 'I did not feel safe here until a few weeks ago.'

Staff spoken with were unclear of young people's current care plans. Staff were uncertain of the young people's plans for education during the visit. Case records are not consistently kept up to date. For example, a risk assessment record inspected was not up to date and reports of bullying did not match the incident reports.

Some staff expressed their concern that the leadership and management of the home are insufficient. A member of staff said that communication is bad. Another member of staff said that morale is low and nothing is being done about it. Team meetings and staff supervisions have been cancelled.

A member of staff described the staff team's relationship as being 'on edge'. A recent argument between staff in the office has resulted in a staff member's dismissal. The registered manager said that staff's roles and responsibilities have been addressed at a recent team meeting. However, the inspector could not find any evidence of this being discussed or recorded.

Despite the shortfalls identified during this visit, social workers are complimentary about the home. Social workers praise the staff for their regular communication with them and for enabling young people to see important family members and friends.

The inspector found one safeguarding incident that was not notified to Ofsted. This has now been addressed. The registered manager said that he will ensure that any future safeguarding incidents are notified to Ofsted.

The inspector recognises that incidents of bullying in the home have decreased recently and there have been no reported incidents or safeguarding concerns in recent weeks. A young person said, 'I am happy here and I feel safe.'

The home has managed the challenge of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic well. Rigorous safety procedures are in place. Leaders and managers have developed a 'Best practice assessment toolkit during COVID-19'. No young people have tested positive while resident in the home.

During this visit, the inspector did not review all the requirements and recommendations set at the last inspection and these have been restated at this visit. The home's statement of purpose has been amended. Therefore, the relevant requirement has been met. Three further requirements are set following this visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/08/2019	Full	Good
13/05/2019	Full	Inadequate
01/05/2018	Full	Good
24/05/2017	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
The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home. (Regulation 29 (4))	30 June 2021
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(b))	30 June 2021
Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home. The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (1) (2)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must keep the register of children up to date.	30 June 2021
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and	30 June 2021

<p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report").</p> <p>The registered person must—</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b)(c) (3) (4)(a)(b) (5))</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>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—</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p>	<p>30 June 2021</p>

<p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> <p>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>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")—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>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)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a) (2)(a)(b)(iii))</p>	30 June 2021
<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>manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;</p>	30 June 2021

<p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(iv)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff must provide young people with levels of supervision as identified in their care plans, and the registered person must ensure that effective strategies are in place and followed by staff to manage any risks to children in the home.</p>	
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that when staff are unable to attend team meetings, a record is kept to evidence that staff have read the team meeting notes.</p>	<p>30 June 2021</p>
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. (Regulation 14 (1)(a) (2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to provide care and support to children in the home that is in line with the home's statement of purpose.</p>	<p>30 June 2021</p>

<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing—</p> <p>injury to any person (including the child);</p> <p>serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).</p> <p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) (2))</p> <p>In particular, staff must not deprive children of their liberty unless authorised by a court order, and the number of staff used to restrain children must be proportionate to any risk of harm.</p>	30 June 2021
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>In particular, staff must receive regular supervision</p>	30 June 2021
<p>The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—</p> <p>a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation;</p> <p>an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious;</p> <p>there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there;</p> <p>a child protection enquiry involving a child—</p> <p>is instigated; or</p> <p>concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or</p> <p>there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii)(e))</p>	30 June 2021

The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—

30 June 2021

mutual respect and trust;

an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and

positive responses to other children and adults.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

that staff—

meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans;

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;

help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;

communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;

help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child's age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;

help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;

strive to gain each child's respect and trust;

understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;

<p>are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;</p> <p>de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;</p> <p>understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and</p> <p>have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and</p> <p>that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix)(x)(xi)(xii)(xiii)(b))</p>	
<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> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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;</p> <p>ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;</p> <p>ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c))</p>	<p>30 June 2021</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of the children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular, a bedroom roller blind, an en-suite bathroom door handle and bedroom door paint in the unoccupied bedrooms must be repaired. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. In particular, the training matrix must be kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that staff support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves. In particular, staff must consistently complete the young people's scheduled key-work sessions to address any concerns or risks to them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1183936

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: 424 Margate Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6SJ

Responsible individual: Carol Bradley

Registered manager: Paul Johnston

Inspector

Victoria Jones, Social Care Inspector

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