

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	11 April 2016
Unique reference number	SC433430
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Laura Mumford
Inspectors	Rachel Griffiths and Ros Chapman

Inspection date	11 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted and their care and experiences are poor.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC433430

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- Children and young people are not always kept safe because staff fail to adhere to the guidance outlined in their individual behaviour and risk management plans.
- Staffing levels are not always sufficient to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people.
- Staff and managers have failed to follow the home's safeguarding policies on a number of occasions. This includes delays in reporting safeguarding concerns to all relevant people, which has the potential to hinder effective investigation.
- Managers have failed to notify Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and all other relevant parties of the suspension of a staff member due to potential safeguarding concerns. This left a young person vulnerable, with no external oversight of the situation.
- Young people have experienced inconsistent care as a result of changes to the staff team. While some of these changes have been necessary for safeguarding reasons, this has had an impact on their sense of stability and security in the home.
- Management monitoring is poor, particularly in relation to the day-to-day staffing of the home. This is compounded by inaccurate records, including the rota and the visitors' book.
- Although improvements to the interior of the home are evident, outstanding work in the garden is required before young people can enjoy this area of the home. The timescale for completion of this work remains unclear. However, a risk assessment in relation to this area of the home does help to safeguard young people from potential physical hazards.
- Due to the actions taken by leaders and managers in response to the shortfalls identified during the inspection, there are no immediate risks to the safety and welfare of children and young people.

The children's homes strengths

- Despite the above shortfalls, young people are making progress in many aspects of their lives. This is due, in part, to effective partnership working, which enables young people to receive appropriate help and support.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality of care standard the registered person must: 2(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child, with particular reference to unfinished works to the garden being completed to enable young people to enjoy this area of the home.	24/05/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: 2(a)(v) ensure that staff understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person	24/05/2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must: 2(a)(vii) ensure that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies, with particular reference to reporting safeguarding concerns without delay.	24/05/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: 2(d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child.	24/05/2016

13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must: 2(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child.	24/05/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered manager must: 2 (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home, with specific reference to monitoring the day-to-day practice in the home, staffing levels and maintenance issues.	24/05/2016
The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4, with particular reference to a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home, a record of the actual rosters worked and a record of all visitors to the home and to children, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit (Regulation 37 (2)(a)).	24/05/2016
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there (Regulation 40 (4)(c)).	24/05/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording, with particular reference to staff making accurate recordings in daily logs and ensuring that any alterations made are signed and dated ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 62, paragraph 14.4).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children and young people. The main house can accommodate two children and young people and the cottage annex on the other side of the driveway can accommodate one child or young person.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15 December 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25 August 2015	Full	Requires improvement
10 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15 October 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
Safeguarding shortfalls mean that, at times, children are poorly cared for in this home. For example, during the inspection, staff did not supervise a young person in line with their risk management plan. This placed the young person at risk of significant harm. The young person said, 'I should have a member of staff with me at all times. It does my head in, but I know I need it.' Young people's experiences are sometimes poor. In particular, a number of recent changes in the staff team have had an impact on young people's sense of stability and security. They are struggling to maintain a sense of belonging and report that they find it difficult to form stable, supportive relationships with staff. For example, a young person said, 'I am being looked after by too many different people. It feels like people are just walking in and out of my life and it is screwing with my head. I am feeling let down and it is affecting me more than staff realise.' Young people express frustration about the lack of consultation and information sharing regarding recent staffing changes. A young person said, 'I feel they tell us nothing.' The manager acknowledged this and took action to address this concern during the inspection. Consultation regarding the day-to-day running of the home regularly occurs. Young people are involved in the recruitment process. They have input into their weekly menus, they choose activities which they wish to participate in and the decor of the home reflects their choices. Despite the shortfalls, young people are making progress in many aspects of their development. In respect of one young person's educational progress, a deputy headteacher said, 'Her attendance has improved from 39% to 71% and she is now doing GCSEs. I cannot fault the home, they are very supportive of her education.' As a result of this progress, her life chances improve. Other areas of progress include young people's general presentation, their emotional health and their improved life skills. A social worker said, 'I have seen improvements in this young person's emotional well-being. He is less hyper-vigilant, he is more engaging, he feels settled and he is happy.' A parent commented, 'My son is now making an effort to clean his environment, he is doing lots of things, he is stable, calmer and he has not self-harmed or run off.' A strength of the home is the positive relationships that the manager has with partner agencies. Good working relationships with education providers, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, youth offending services and therapeutic services have ensured that young people receive the tailor-made support that they require. This effective multi-agency working provides young people with a better opportunity to address their individual difficulties and reach their potential in the	

future.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Behaviour and risk management plans, which detail the levels of risk and clearly state how young people should be supervised, have not been consistently adhered to. For example, on a number of occasions, only one member of staff has been supporting a young person who should have two members of staff with her at all times. Because of the assessed risks of self-harm and sexual exploitation, this has placed her at risk of harm. Staff and managers do not consistently work in accordance with the home's safeguarding policies. In one instance, a young person who made an allegation about a member of staff was asked to repeat this on two further separate occasions. It was not reported promptly, which resulted in a delay in the instigation of a child protection investigation. These errors potentially hinder an effective investigation and have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of young people. In another instance, the young person's social worker, the local authority designated officer and Ofsted were not informed of an allegation about a staff member. Not only is this a regulatory shortfall, it prevented any independent review of the concerns raised. This has the potential to compromise the safety of young people. Despite the above serious shortfalls, there are examples of practice that have enhanced the safety of young people. Due to the multi-agency help and support that young people receive, incidents of self-harm are reducing. Proactive behaviour management systems are effective, resulting in young people becoming more settled, having fewer incidents of aggressive and damaging behaviour and a reduction in the need for physical interventions. Despite some young people having a significant history of going missing prior to living in this home and being assessed as being at high risk of sexual exploitation, incidents of going missing from care are infrequent. On the two occasions when a young person has gone missing since the last inspection, staff have implemented individual missing from care procedures, resulting in the young person being safely located and welcomed back into the home. The rural location of the home, good links with the police and work undertaken with young people about the dangers of going missing are significant protective factors which safeguard young people in this home.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The leadership and management of this home are judged as inadequate due to insufficient actions taken in respect of safeguarding concerns and poor oversight of the functioning of the home. Of significant concern, is the fact that leaders and managers were not aware of instances when there were insufficient staff on duty to safeguard and support young people. This lack of oversight and management monitoring left young people vulnerable and at a greater risk of harm. Two requirements from the last interim inspection have not been fully met. Although improvement is evident in relation to the interior of the home, and as a result it is now a safer and more welcoming environment, a proportion of the garden area continues to resemble a building site. It is not accessible to young people. Adverse weather conditions have contributed to the delay in works being carried out, and a risk assessment mitigates against the area posing a risk to young people. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate what actions the manager has taken to get the outstanding work completed. Improved recording and monitoring in relation to maintenance issues are thus still required in order to promote improvements to the home environment. Some records, required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, are poorly maintained. Not all visitors are signed into the home's visitors' book. In addition, staff rosters are, at times, inaccurate. Consequently, it is difficult for managers and leaders to monitor who is coming in and out of the home and when, and how the home is staffed. Poor recording in daily logs makes it difficult for the manager to monitor what is happening in the home on a day-to-day basis. For example, changes made to written logs make them difficult to read. A failure to initial or sign to confirm who is making changes makes accountability impossible. Additionally, written records do not always consistently reflect what staff have told the manager. Such shortfalls prevent a clear audit trail of what is happening in the home and make effective monitoring or investigation of any potential concern or safeguarding issue extremely difficult. Despite identified shortfalls, there are some management strengths. The registered manager is experienced. She is on target to complete the required management qualification within the timescales set out in the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. She is held in high regard by young people, parents and professionals. During the inspection she has been very reflective and is eager to implement improvements. Similarly, the responsible individual demonstrates a significant commitment to improving the home. Staff who are not in their probationary period are either suitably qualified or are working towards the required qualifications within timescales. Regular supervision and attendance at team meetings helps to enhance practice. Staff are up to date	

with their mandatory training. They have also participated in recent training provided by a therapist to help them develop better insight and understanding into complex attachment difficulties. As a result, they are better equipped to meet the specific needs of children and young people.

The home's statement of purpose is up to date. The document provides parents and placing authorities with clear information about how the service aims to help and support young people while living in the home.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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