

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC032725
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Sunderland City Council
Registered person address	Sunderland City Council, PO Box 102, SUNDERLAND, SR2 7DN

Responsible individual	Martin Birch
Registered manager	Sharon Willis
	Michael More
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	08/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>At the previous inspection three statutory requirements and three recommendations were made. The registered manager has addressed all these in full.</p> <p>The registered manager has a better grasp on monitoring the performance of the home and its impact on young people. It makes good use of the voice of young people in identifying the home's strengths and areas for development. The views of parents, social workers and staff should also be included in order to gain useful feedback on what the home could do better. Regular progress reports on each young person include an assessment of their emotional resilience. This helps staff in identifying areas of concern and addressing them. The reports of the independent person who makes monthly visits offer more challenge to the home's practice.</p> <p>Young people are safeguarded more effectively. Those who go missing are better protected as a result of improvements in how the home manages this. All young people now have an interview with a person independent of the home when they return. This provides helpful information in identifying what factors led them to go missing. One of the staff is a champion for addressing the challenges of child sexual exploitation, and attends monthly multi-agency meetings. This has resulted in better sharing of local intelligence and reduced the risk to young people. Staff have also had additional training in this area.</p> <p>The registered manager has taken action to address bullying. He convened a meeting which every young person's social worker attended. This 'whole home' approach to the issue has proved more useful in shifting the focus of work from individual young people to group relationships. Key worker sessions and group council meetings continue to support young people, both perpetrators and victims.</p> <p>Young people's health has improved. Staff have been proactive in liaising with local police and other agencies to reduce the availability of illicit cigarettes in the area. Staff are having training in smoking cessation, enabling them to provide greater</p>	

support and encouragement for young people who want to give up the habit. The emotional health of young people is well promoted through the close working relationship that staff have with child and adolescent mental health services. Most young people engage productively with this work, and so improve their emotional wellbeing.

The arrangements for professional staff supervision have been significantly improved, and are a model of good practice. All staff, both those who give and receive supervision, have received training in this subject. The format of each monthly session ensures that the focus of the exercise is firmly on the needs of each young person. The member of staff's accountability for improving outcomes for young people is clearly stated. Any shortfalls in practice are challenged, and deficits in skills are identified and addressed through the scheduling of additional training. This provides a much better service for young people and promotes their safety and welfare more effectively.

Recording systems are now almost all electronic. This greatly improves their accuracy and protects confidentiality. It also makes records more accessible, both to staff and individual young people, improving the impact of care planning on young people's outcomes. The home continues to work with young people in a very nurturing and non-institutional way. This approach is somewhat compromised by the requirement for young people to sign documents such as key work summaries and pocket money records.

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/08/2015	Full	Good
19/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/07/2014	Full	Good
09/01/2014	Interim	Satisfactory progress

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
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. The system must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1) and (5))	29/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment. Specifically, that young people are not required to sign documents such as pocket money records and key worker sessions. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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