

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	17/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC032715
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	Mark Christie
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	17/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
<p>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</p> <p>This home was judged requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff have worked hard to address the large majority of the statutory requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection. Staff challenge other agencies more effectively to provide information on young people in a more timely manner, and to provide appropriate levels of service. This partnership working results in better outcomes for young people, for example, in providing them with access to full-time education. The staff group is more stable, and work has been undertaken to help them function more effectively as a team. This provides greater consistency for young people. Staff are more aware of their responsibilities in advocating for young people and having the highest aspirations for them. This has resulted in some particularly good work in supporting young people to make the transition into independence.</p> <p>Staff have undertaken a range of additional training. Some of this, such as first aid training, directly contributes to the safety of young people. In addition, more specific training has taken place to enable staff to promote the welfare and safety of young people with particularly complex and concerning needs. Staff have a better awareness of the risks associated with sexual exploitation. Intelligence sharing with other agencies provides staff with up-to-date local information and this protects young people more effectively. Staff now receive better support and oversight from managers. A new supervision format focuses on the needs of young people and challenges staff to reflect on how they contribute to meeting them. This system is not yet fully embedded, for example, some monthly sessions have not taken place as scheduled and some records of supervision could not be found.</p> <p>The registered manager has overseen improvements to the premises. In general, the home is a comfortable and welcoming environment. Young people are able to have a say in how they want the home to look, giving them a greater sense that their opinions are valued. A young person said, 'We have young people's meetings where we get asked about things like activities, meals, how the home is decorated and so on. I'm sometimes out when the meetings are on, but staff always ask if there is anything I want raised.' Some aspects of maintenance require closer monitoring. For example, at the time of the inspection, bathroom light pull cords</p>	

were missing, a staircase hand rail was loose (but rectified during the inspection), and two pendant lamps had no shades.

Much work has been carried out to enhance the quality of records. The home is moving to a paperless system which is easier to access and provides greater security of information. Risk assessments are more comprehensive and shared with placing social workers. They address the relationships between young people in the group and how to manage them more safely. Staff manage behaviour well. A new protocol with the local police provides clearer guidance for staff on when to call for their assistance. Staff write a plan for each young person of how they are to be supported when they are in crisis. One such plan did not include details of what kind of physical restraint to use should it be necessary. This omission compromises young people's safety if they need to be held.

The registered manager's audits of the home's performance, and its impact on young people, are now more effective. They include a newly-devised tool which assesses each young person's emotional wellbeing and where extra support is needed. Senior staff carry out regular audits of young people's care plans to ensure that agreed tasks are completed and other agencies held to account. As a result, young people are making good progress. All are engaged in education or actively looking for employment. Staff are skilled in building trust with young people, fostering productive relationships, and creating mutual respect between everyone in the group. One young person said, 'It's great here, like one big family, everyone gets along with everyone else, there is no bullying.' Another commented, 'I love the activities. We go swimming, and I like going out shopping with the staff. I feel safe here, very safe.'

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/08/2015	Full	Requires improvement
02/03/2015	Interim	Adequate progress
15/09/2014	Full	Good
13/01/2014	Interim	Good 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
<p>6. The quality and purpose of care standard</p> <p>In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard with particular reference to maintaining the quality and safety of the premises the registered person must:</p> <p>(2)(c)(i) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child.</p>	15/04/2016
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees - receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation (33)(4)(b))</p>	15/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any use of restraint should be suitable for the needs of the individual child, in particular that risk assessments describe the method of restraint which can be safely used with each young person. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 48 paragraph 9.54)

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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