

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	05/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC462951
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	ERA Care Limited
Registered person address	Unit G22 Allen House, The Maltings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, CM21 9JX

Responsible individual	Stephen Milton
Registered manager	Francis Williams
Inspector	Natalie Burton

Inspection date	05/11/2015
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 declined in effectiveness.</p> <p>Since the last inspection, the manager has met the two requirements and two of the three recommendations made. The manager has updated the home's statement of purpose, providing all the required information in line with the regulations. This ensures that placing authorities and interested parties have a good understanding of the home's aims and objectives in their care for young people. The manager has made improvements to the recording of measures of control within the home. Records now include a description of the measure used. This enables the manager to have all the required information to monitor the action taken to support young people's behaviour.</p> <p>The manager has made improvement to the environment of the home. The young people receive support in their reaching their educational goals, because the home has a designated area where young people can engage, undisturbed with a teacher when educated in the home. In addition, young people's bedrooms, where required and risk assessed as a concern, now have window restrictors. Therefore the manager's response to identified hazards protects the young people.</p> <p>The manager has not fully met the third recommendation. While sanctions within the home are now clear and reasonable, and young people understand the reasons for measures of control; they are not consistently effective in promoting positive behaviour. For example, on occasion, staff treat young people to a take away meal, following challenging and aggressive behaviour towards some members of staff. In addition, further concerns identified during the inspection noted a lack of implementing the home's behaviour management policy. The staff have failed to consistently resolve incidents in a safe and competent manner, where young people have accessed the homes roof, and presented with challenging behaviour. On occasion, staff actions to incidents have increased the young people's risk taking behaviour. This has resulted in a significant amount of phone calls to the police to assist staff in managing the young people's behaviour. On occasion, this has resulted in young people being arrested and charged.</p>	

In addition, the managers monitoring of incidents fails to identify trends and patterns to make the required changes to improve the care provided to young people. As a result, staff do not consistently provide the young people with boundaries and strategies to address their challenging behaviour.

The manager has failed to consistently implement the organisation's safeguarding policy. This is because, on occasion where concerns have been raised regarding staff practice, the organisation's paperwork fails to show clearly the action taken to safeguard young people robustly. Records do not demonstrate that the organisation interviewed all required individuals, that there had been had consulted with the local authority designated officer regarding the action to take, or the outcome of the investigation from their findings. In addition, on occasion, the organisation failed to notify Ofsted of allegations against staff. This does not demonstrate that robust investigations are completed to ensure the young people are consistently safeguarded, and the appropriate agencies are informed.

The manager has failed to consistently ensure the young people's welfare is sufficiently protected during their day-to-day care. On occasion, young people with a history of self-harm are unsupervised for long periods of time. For example, when young people have refused to go to their rooms at bedtime, staff have gone to their sleep in rooms, leaving young people awake downstairs. In addition, while the manager took some action at the time, through implementing on occasion a waking night staff; the waking night staff stayed in the office, and did not effectively supervise the young people. While the manager has taken some action to address this concern through changes within the environment of the home, there was a lack of robust action at the time to ensure the young people are consistently protected within the home.

Some young people admitted to the home, have not had their needs robustly assessed prior to admission. This does not ensure that the home can meet all of the young person's needs. The home has admitted young people, who have a history of self-injurious behaviour, however, not all staff have received training in self-harm to fully support young people and to have the required understanding and knowledge of self-harm. In addition, a lack of a robust assessment, identifying potential shortfalls, and the required resources to meet all young people's needs, has resulted in some placements ending quickly due to escalating risks presenting to other young people and staff.

The manager has made some improvements to the home. A current refurbishment of the home, has created a homely and welcoming environment, and the young people are involved in choosing new colour schemes to the communal areas.

Some young people have made positive progress while living at the home. They are engaging in their educational provision, developing independence skills, increasing their confidence and significantly reduce previous challenging and risk taking behaviour, such as missing episodes. This is because the manager has

sufficiently identified some young people's needs. The young people have developed strong relationships with staff, and staff are equipped through training, and support from the organisations therapist to meet their needs. During the inspection, observations of the interaction between young people and staff demonstrated the young people are cared for with respect, their views valued and staff responses were nurturing. The young people reported to be happy at the home, and felt safe, and could identify the progress they are making. In particular the young people identified the manager as pivotal in supporting them to make these changes to their lives.

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2015	Full	Good
03/09/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/10/2013	Full	Good

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>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person is required to ensure:</p> <p>(2)(b) 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.</p>	30/12/2015
<p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person is required to:</p> <p>(2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. This is with particular regard to ensuring all staff have self-harm training.</p>	30/12/2015
<p>14: The care planning standard</p> <p>In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure:</p> <p>(2)(a) 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.</p>	30/12/2015
<p>The registered person must implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34(1)(b))</p>	30/12/2015

The registered person must implement a policy (“the behaviour management policy”) which sets out how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children’s home. (Regulation 35(1)(a))	30/12/2015
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))	30/12/2015

Recommendations

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

Ensure that independent scrutiny of the home and information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) ensure continuous improvement. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55 paragraph 10.24)

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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