

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12 April 2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>SC478707</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Children's home</b>
<b>Registered person</b>	<b>ERA Care Limited</b>
<b>Registered person address</b>	<b>Unit G22 Allen House, The Maltings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CM21 9JX</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Stephen Milton</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Post vacant</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Rosie Davie</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>12 April 2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>A monitoring visit took place on 15 March 2016. The responsible individual had met the compliance notice issued from the full inspection on 15 February 2016.</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
There is a serious failure as there is no registered manager in place for more than a year.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

## SC478707

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is inadequate because:**

- The home has been without a registered manager for over 67 weeks. As a result, there is a lack of direction impacting directly on staff and the child currently living in the home.
- The child presently living in the home does not yet have a blind or curtain to provide cover for his bedroom window and did not have a bedsheet on his bed during this inspection.
- One member of staff failed to follow instructions for administration of prescribed medication.
- The internal monitoring does not yet include an evaluation or analysis of feedback from children, agencies, parents or staff about the effectiveness of the home.
- Of the supervision notes sampled, staff had not yet had copies of their notes.
- The plans to develop the workforce, including managing performance, are not yet sufficiently clear.

#### **The children's home strengths**

- The child currently living in the home is familiar with the locality. He feels safe, likes the staff and says that he feels listened to.
- The staff help the current child to attend school locally and to engage with local services.
- The child presently living in the home does not go missing.
- The child currently living in the home has regular contact with family and friends.
- Physical intervention is not used.
- Agencies represented in this inspection have no safeguarding concerns and say that overall, communication is fine.

## 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 provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if there is no registered manager in respect of the home (Regulation 27 (1) (a)).*	30/05/2016
Ensure that medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child and a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child, with specific reference to refusal to take prescribed medication (Regulation 23 (2)(b)(c)).	31/04/2016
Regarding the review of quality of care ensure that the system provides for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff (Regulation 45 (5)).	30/09/2016

\* These requirements are subject to a statutory requirement notice.

### Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities are met. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met and doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual. This is with specific reference to quickly replacing the blind in one child's room and ensuring that the sheets available in the home are on the mattress ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 15, paragraph 3.7).
- Ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a

copy of the record of discussion ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 61, paragraph 13.4).

- Devise and implement a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for each member of staff, to enable delivery of the homes statement of purpose. It should detail the processes and agreed timescale for staff to receive induction, probation and any core training and the process for managing and improving poor performance. It should also detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice for all staff performing care tasks and keep appropriate records for staff in the home. The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of all staff ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations', page 53, paragraph 10.8).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This home is managed by a private organisation. It provides care and accommodation for four children irrespective of gender with behavioural or emotional difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15 February 2016	Full	Inadequate
10 December 2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09 March 2015	Full	Adequate
12 January 2015	Full	Inadequate

## Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
<p><b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b></p>	<p>Inadequate</p>
<p>The home has been without a registered manager for over 67 weeks.</p> <p>Two of three children have left since the last full inspection, with one child remaining. The small staff team work one-to-one which, in theory, means that they have more quality time to dedicate to improving his experiences and helping him to make progress. One member of staff said: 'Things are getting better because we are working less triple shifts.'</p> <p>Registered with local health services, the current child had reason to go to the doctor a few days before this inspection. The general practitioner prescribed medication. This inspection identified that one member of staff had failed to follow or record the instructions for administration. This resulted in the child not receiving medication for two days. The responsible individual, retrospectively aware of the error, had begun to address the issue. None the less, this failure, while not life threatening, has a direct impact on this child's overall well-being.</p> <p>The staff and this child continue to get on well. Those staff represented for this inspection spoke of a warm rapport, which means that the mainly positive relationships contribute to a largely calm ambience.</p> <p>The current child has been in full time education but, led by school is currently on a shortened day. However, there is a plan to work towards achieving a return to full-time return education. Staff help with this. They provide transport. They liaise with the school. A representative from the school said: 'They attend meetings and come prepared. On the whole, communication is fine. They are easy to get hold of.' The child completes and hands in homework. He and staff say that they are available to help if needed.</p> <p>Familiar with the home's locality, the present child continues to benefit from seeing family and friends. Some visit the home, which helps him to experience ongoing connections within the community.</p> <p>The current child has new fish. He is developing an interest in dogs and is volunteering, with staff support, at a local rescue centre. This provides structure, routine and enables this child to make a positive contribution to the wider community.</p> <p>Recently engaging and re-engaging with services designed to improve his social and emotional well-being, this has the potential to be an improvement. One representative from an external agency said: 'In the short time that I have been involved, I have not had any concerns or worries.'</p>	

The interior combined with the refurbished outbuildings provides ample space for children. Living in the home for some months, this child likes and has personalised his bedroom. The room is adequately furnished and there is adequate bedding available for single beds within the home. Yet, this inspection noted that the child's bed did not have a sheet on either day of the inspection. Additionally, the responsible individual is yet to ensure the fitting of a blind or curtain track to the window. This represents a failure to meet basic needs in the way that a good parent would.

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	Requires improvement
<p>The current child feels safe living in the home. He said: 'I do feel safe. Safeguarding has got better. It is good.' He is clearly able to articulate and identify adults who he can approach for help. This includes his allocated local authority social worker.</p> <p>The responsible individual has recently taken a more proactive approach to checking out the validity of some of the present child's relationships in the local community. This, alongside partnership working with the placing authority, helps to ensure that the staff working in the home know more about where he is when he is out. This helps to ensure his and others' safety.</p> <p>There have been no incidents of going missing and there are no known concerns about exploitation. Staff are aware of the action required should they become aware that a child leaves the building. They have access to on-call support. The newly introduced door alarm system is available to prompt monitoring if needed.</p> <p>There have been no allegations from children or complaints from external agencies. Children approach the responsible individual should they wish to raise an objection about how well staff look after them. He looks into issues towards finding solutions which hold the children in mind. The result is that they feel that they can approach the responsible individual. The current child said: 'The staff do their best.'</p> <p>Physical intervention is not used. Instead, routine financial incentives and some rewards contribute towards the present child's 'exemplary behaviour' in the home. The staff offer routine and structure. They provide guidance and advice, for example, through individual sessions. This means that additional support is available from the staff for children should they seek this.</p>	

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	Inadequate
<p>This home continues without a registered manager. This means that there is a lack of direction. The post has been vacant for over 67 weeks. This timeframe significantly exceeds Ofsted’s regulatory requirement. As a result, a compliance notice has been issued stating that this agency must urgently appoint a manager for the home.</p> <p>A small number of staff work long hours. Those represented say that they love to see the difference that they are making for children. One member of staff has the required qualification. Some are yet to register, and another has a similar qualification. There is not yet a clear workforce development plan. This does not help to familiarise staff with the systems for support of their professional development, management of performance and timeframes for training.</p> <p>The responsible individual continues to oversee the staff and the current child, spending time in the home. He is developing working relationships with other agencies and placing authorities and is also attending meetings regarding children’s care and education.</p> <p>The responsible individual provides supervision to staff, providing opportunity to discuss the children, their progress and improving systems in the home. Of the records sampled, the staff had not yet received copies of their notes. While this has no direct impact for children, in the absence of regular team meetings, this does not help to remind them of what is required towards improving practice.</p> <p>A new person, has very recently begun to undertake the external monitoring of systems. The reports are have improved and recommendations are made to improve care at the service. However, the internal monitoring reports submitted to Ofsted, as required by regulation, fall short. This is because they do not yet demonstrate how the home has considered feedback from key stakeholders towards driving improvement.</p> <p>The statement of purpose and children’s guide, recently updated by the responsible individual, outline the ethos of the home. The aspiration is to provide services that are considerate and sensitive to the individual child, their families, local authorities and all sections of the community.</p> <p>The responsible individual is trying to ensure that the child currently living in the home has all that he needs. He also recognises the urgent need to appoint a manager and hopes to continue to action a plan towards getting this home to a judgement of good.</p>	

## 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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