

# SC462951

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited 5921904

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this children's home**

This privately owned children's home is one of a small group run by the organisation. The home provides care and support for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

**Inspection date:** 17 January 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Date of last inspection:** 25 May 2017

**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**

This home was judged requires improvement at the last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

The managers and staff have worked effectively to meet the requirements and recommendations made at the last full inspection. Staff make referrals to other agencies to ensure that children are given the opportunity to access specialist intervention if they are known to use drugs.

There has been a significant improvement in the home's approach to engaging with the children, particularly in relation to supporting and emphasising the value of learning. The previous registered manager said, 'For the new children who have come without an education placement, we have not waited for something to happen but have made sure that we are addressing education from the start.' The result for the two children admitted to the home since the last inspection is that they understand and are often

fulfilling the plans identified regarding their education. A representative from an alternative education provider visiting this home at the time of the inspection said, 'The staff are very supportive of any initiatives that we want to put in place.' This helps children to reach their potential.

There are three children living in this home and one of the children has continued living in the home since the last inspection. Overall, he is making progress from his starting point. For example, the staff help him practically and emotionally to seek and sustain employment. This child sat his GCSEs and enjoyed a summer holiday abroad with the staff. The staff take a proactive approach to help him to plan for his future and to learn additional life skills in preparation for adulthood. This child said, 'There have been times when I have not been willing to do things and so the staff have had me doing some work on becoming independent. They are always trying to think of ways to help me. It is good.'

Relatives provide positive feedback about their child's experiences. One relative said, 'I put the improvements my child is making down to the work that the staff are doing with him.' The majority of children say that they have good and supportive relationships with the staff. One child said, 'The staff are always trying their best for me.'

The registered manager has voluntarily cancelled his registration with Ofsted but he remains closely involved with the service and so at the present time his resignation as registered manager has minimal impact for the children and the staff. The new manager continues to be supervised by the previous registered manager and the new manager intends to submit an application to register with Ofsted. There has been some staff turnover and movement within the team since the full inspection. The children say that they do not always receive an explanation about why a member of staff has left or if they are coming back to work at the home. This can result in the children feeling unsure about the reasons behind staff departure from the home.

The staff are trained on how to manage challenging behaviour effectively. The managers support the staff and talk to the children about their expectations of appropriate language and behaviour around the home. As a result, the intensity of incidents in the home has reduced. For example, staff intervene by using humour or standing between the children who start to argue with each other. With this group of children, it helps to de-escalate potentially serious situations. Matching documents and risk assessments are written by the manager. The records show that written risk assessments are reviewed and new information is included. However, clearer information following a specific incident between the children would help provide the staff who have not been on shift with a more dynamic overview of the current issues to be aware of between the children.

The staff do not consistently sign and date records. The home keeps paper files as well as information stored electronically. This results in some information about the same child being stored in two places. This is confusing for any child wishing to see or contribute to their records. However, sampling of records shows that the quality of written information has improved since the last inspection, particularly in relation to

demonstrating the manager's response to incidents.

There have been no complaints or restraints. The frequency of children going missing has reduced significantly and some of the children do not go missing. Records show that the staff make contact with the children when they are out in the community and take the required steps to liaise and share information with other agencies. This helps to keep the children safe. The staff and the manager maintain individual incident records when the children go missing from the home. However, there is no central record of every incident. This administration process does not help the manager to oversee and identify any potential gaps in practice or to evidence what has worked well in reducing events of going missing over time. This has had no impact for children.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/5/2017	Full	Requires improvement
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
26/01/2016	Full	Good

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

### Recommendations

- Positive relationships are those which are characterised by consistency and unconditional positive regard for the child on the part of the carer.

In particular, ensure that, when staff leave or stop working at this home, the children receive an explanation for the staff's absence. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.3)

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Evaluation of missing-from-home incidents should be undertaken. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.31)

In particular, using the range of data available in the missing-from-home records, further develop the evaluation of these incidents to better inform the home's understanding of them.

- Ensure that case records are consistently kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Ensure that staff understand that the home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.5)

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC462951

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** ERA Care Limited 5921904

**Registered provider address:** Unit G22 Allen House, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire CM21 9JX

**Responsible individual:** Stephen Milton

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Rosie Davie, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018