

# SC478707

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited 5921904

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group of homes that is run by an independent provider. This home provides care and accommodation for up to four children, irrespective of gender, who have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

**Inspection date:** 25 January 2018

**Judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

**Date of last inspection:** 18 September 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 sustained effectiveness.

At the time of this inspection, no children were living in this home and there was no manager registered with Ofsted.

The last child moved on to an alternative service two weeks before this inspection because the provider gave notice on the placement. The child had been in placement for two months and therefore the effectiveness of the home on his progress cannot be meaningfully evaluated. Missing incidents for this child, who was already known to go missing from care, did continue. The staff took appropriate action to notify and alert the relevant agencies on each occasion. They made an effort to dissuade the child from leaving the home, and tried to contact him after he had left, with mixed success.

The staff do their best to manage challenging behaviour. Clear written records show that, on occasions, some of the staff do have success in de-escalating some aggressive outbursts. The staff spend time with children who are not in education, for example playing board games with them or taking them on trips to the shops.

On some occasions, the staff have been threatened and hurt by the children. Allegations or complaints made by the children about the staff are shared with the appropriate agencies, such as the designated officer, which ensures that the home's practices are transparent. The provider seeks feedback from placing authorities about placements. For example, the provider could demonstrate that one placing authority social worker's view was that the home had done a good job of caring for their child.

A number of the staff recruited in the last year have left, or have been moved to work in other homes within the group. The home began to use agency staff to ensure that even when only one child was living in the home, there were always two adults working together on shift. Records show that on one occasion, the provider did not seek full and satisfactory reference checks from a recruitment agency before allowing an agency member of staff to work on shift. This practice does not ensure that the managers and leaders have relevant and up-to-date information about every adult who comes to work in the home.

The responsible individual wrote to Ofsted outlining the action that had been taken following the last inspection to meet the regulations and quality standards raised. However, the extent to which the majority of the regulations and quality standards have been met since the last inspection cannot be fully evaluated, because during this time two children have not lived together in the home for more than a few days. As a result, the regulations and all but one of the quality standards are being carried forward to the next inspection.

The responsible individual has informed the regulator that this home will not be accepting any new placements for a period of time, while a new manager and staff team are recruited and trained. Should the home decide to accept placements, the provider is required to inform Ofsted of its intention before it does so.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 18/09/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement |
| 05/07/2016      | Interim         | Not judged           |
| 12/04/2016      | Full            | Inadequate           |
| 15/02/2016      | Full            | Inadequate           |

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

| <b>Requirement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Due date</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on mutual respect and trust, an understanding about acceptable behaviour and positive responses to other children and adults. (Regulation 11(1))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 29/06/2018      |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child, and help each child to manage the relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iv)).</p> <p>In particular, ensure that each child's written risk assessments clearly outline the potential risks.</p>                                                                                                                                                                             | 29/06/2018      |
| <p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that helps children to aspire to their full potential and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose, and ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child, and understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)(f))</p> | 29/06/2018      |
| <p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home, and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 29/06/2018      |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 29/06/2018      |

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety and ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of the matters in Schedule 2 (Regulation 32(3)(d)).

29/06/2018

In particular, when using staff from a recruitment agency to work in the home.

## Recommendations

- As the home will have a day-to-day understanding of young people's capabilities and needs, children's homes staff will have a valuable contribution to make to the pathway planning process. They should actively seek to make the fullest contribution, working with other relevant persons ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 18, paragraph 3.28).

In particular, take a proactive approach and develop effective strategies to demonstrate the support children receive, so as to enhance practical skills such as cooking, housework and budgeting.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- It is good practice for a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision to be kept consistently. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.4)

## 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:** SC478707

**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

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