

SC462951

Registered provider: ERA Care Limited 5921904

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group run by an independent provider. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children aged between 11 and 18 who cannot live with their own families and require support and help to manage their emotions and behaviour.

The current manager registered with Ofsted in May 2018.

Inspection dates: 30 to 31 May 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/01/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement
28/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that -</p> <p>the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 6(1)(c)(i))</p> <p>This is in regard to ensuring that there is appropriate covering for each window in the children's bedrooms.</p>	<p>29/06/2018</p>
<p>The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to-</p> <p>ensure that staff-</p> <p>help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment. (Regulation 8(1), (2)(a)(ix))</p>	<p>29/06/2018</p>

Recommendations

- Ensure that the statement of purpose is developed and kept under review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

This is in relation to written information about promoting independence.

- Ensure staff develop an understanding of the role of the virtual school head. If a looked after child from a different local authority area is placed in the home, the virtual school head of that local authority remains responsible for promoting the child's educational achievement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 27, paragraph 5.10)
- Staff should 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)

This is in relation to consistently updating risk assessments following a significant event and proactively engaging children in discussion about social media.

- The registered person should ensure that staff access appropriate resources to support their training needs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

This is in relation to training which raises awareness about mental health in adolescence.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The same children have lived together in this home since the last inspection. This experience has provided continuity and enabled each child to make progress in their own way. The children like living in the home, they want to continue living here and they are able to accept the help and support on offer. Overall, the children learn effective ways to manage their anger and frustrations, and this helps to raise their self-worth.

The children receive encouragement and practical assistance to maintain significant relationships and friendships. The communication that staff have with other agencies, such as youth offending and mental health, is a particular area of strength. They develop effective relationships with families and external professionals who are actively involved with the children. The flow of discussion with other external agencies ensures that the children keep appointments and receive good support from their extended network.

Children benefit from attending regular health appointments. The children's personal hygiene and self-care skills improve and the children take pride in their appearance. The staff do a good job to promote the importance of structure and routine. The staff have improved their approach to involving the children in activities. For example, the staff take the children out fishing and to the park to play football.

Overall, the children respond to the staff's encouragement and see the value of learning new skills. The home has a room for the children to use for study. Those children who had been disengaged from education take part in daily tutoring sessions. This is a significant and positive step for the children. The staff do try to help those children who are above compulsory school age to engage in further education, training or employment. However, more is required to help the children to participate in plans for their future in a meaningful way. Staff have a lack of understanding of the role of the virtual school headteacher.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The children do not go missing. The staff have developed good arrangements for keeping in contact with the children when they are out in the community, and this helps the children to make better decisions. When children want more free time, for example to see friends, the staff are responsive and balance the individual's need for independence with acting as a responsible parent might.

Risk assessments are clear and identify the key issues. The manager's oversight and written records provide guidance for staff about the actions to take to keep the children safe. On occasion, risk assessments are not updated after every incident. Sampled records of key work and group meetings with the children show that the staff do not talk to the children proactively about their use of social media.

The staff do not use physical intervention. Instead they redirect the children's attention

from the incident or they reason with the children. The staff encourage the children to take responsibility and to reflect on their behaviour. The children respond well to restorative approaches and to financial rewards. The behaviour management systems overseen by the manager help to encourage more appropriate responses from the children. The staff intervene quickly and effectively when children become confrontational with one another. Incidents in the home have been reduced. The provider repairs the damage caused by acts of aggression and the manager is mindful about any decisions to involve the police, which helps to ensure that children are not criminalised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Some of the staff team are new to working in a children's home, but they are settling in well and say that they receive good support. Many do not yet have the required level 3 qualification, but some are working on this. The provider has improved the arrangements for staff induction and the range of training available has improved. For example, the staff access training in safeguarding, completing risk assessments and first aid. However, some children have diagnosed mental health issues, and the provider could go further by ensuring that staff receive training on mental health in adolescence.

Some aspects of the furnishings in the home are not sufficient. For example, the curtains in one of the children's bedrooms do not adequately fit the windows and so let in daylight. This detracts from the homely aspects of the communal areas.

The manager routinely meets with children after any incident. Financial incentives are used to encourage the children to complete some tasks and do chores in the home, which helps the children to develop some skills in independence. However, the statement of purpose makes reference to a tailored approach to independence which is not happening in this home.

Staff receive regular supervision and attend team meetings. Recently, the external monitoring of the home has improved, and this helps the registered manager to identify areas to develop the home.

The registered manager is attuned to the individual needs of each of the children. He and the assistant manager work well together and have developed good and trusting relationships with each of the children. This enables the children to have their say and share their views about their experiences with the managers day to day.

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 difference 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.

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: Thomas Rainey

Inspector

Rosie Davie, social care inspector

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