

SC478616

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company which has similar homes in the area. It is registered to accommodate up to four young people who may display challenging behaviour and experience difficulties in forming and sustaining relationships. The company also has a school which young people may attend.

The home has a permanent manager who is in the process of registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 June 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 good

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

Date of last inspection: 9 March 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
21/11/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
24/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2016	Full	Good

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 care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>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. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the mechanisms used for identifying children’s full range of needs are effective.</p>	15/09/18
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home. (Regulation 14 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the recording of plans makes them clear and accessible to all staff.</p>	15/09/18
<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—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>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</p>	15/09/18

to the child. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))

In particular, ensure that assessments are clearly recorded and that arrangements for reducing risks are clear and accessible to all staff.

Recommendation

- The registered person must provide a welcoming, nurturing and supportive environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7) In particular, develop the outdoor area to further improve and expand the living area of the home.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children become emotionally invested in the home and develop a sense of belonging. They are able to form attachments to staff because staff are consistent and reliable. The children's feelings of security and well-being strengthen and they are able to express their feelings. When this expression lacks adequate control, staff respond with confidence and consistency. This provides the children with opportunities to learn about reasonable boundaries and the rules of acceptable behaviour.

The care of the children is highly individualised, and their strengths and abilities are emphasised. They are supported to develop their talents and interests through a wide range of activities inside and outside the home.

The children's education and vocational development is championed by the staff, who maintain a close working relationship with their schools. Children's views and opinions are valued by staff and they are meaningfully involved in assessing the suitability of new staff.

The members of the staff team are focused on achieving children's best possible transitions out of the home and are their strong and persistent advocates when the performance of external agencies is insufficient in supporting these plans.

The home is well maintained and provides a homely atmosphere. Good use is made of a large public park across the road from the home, for recreation and exercise. However, the home's own outdoor area is under-developed and under-utilised, and the children currently lack a comfortable outside space of their own.

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

The children are kept safe and helped to address behaviours that place them at risk, by a staff team that is clearly focused on their protection and well-being. The staff are equally committed to equipping the children to deal with everyday hazards and enabling them to protect themselves. However, formal plans to reduce identified risks are sometimes lacking in clarity and detail. Staff expertise in understanding complex behaviours as they happen, and taking steps to address their associated risks, also requires further development.

When children display behaviour that is becoming increasingly unsafe, and planned strategies to avert this have been unsuccessful, staff respond with confidence and care. Physical interventions are proportionate to the circumstances and do not last longer than is necessary. Records of these events are detailed and clear and reflect the necessity of the action and the care that staff have taken to safeguard the child.

The staff team's approach to keeping the children safe and promoting their well-being is underpinned by a display of real care and interest in them. This approach is supported by a good standard of mandatory safeguarding training, as well as training in specialist areas such as online safety, exploitation and extremism.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A focused and energetic manager leads a dedicated and committed team of staff who hold high aspirations for the progress and achievements of the children. The communication between staff is strong but is currently too reliant on verbal exchanges and handover information. This is, to some extent, a result of the documents being used for recording and planning the care of the children not being effective. Documents lack focus and clarity in guiding staff to work together in targeting key areas of risk and need. This also inhibits the monitoring of children's progress.

The methods used for properly understanding the needs of children and their associated risks, and matching of these to staff expertise before they move in, are not sufficiently robust and do not always support good admission practice and the meeting of the care planning standard.

The good care and progress of the children is underpinned by the staff team's effective communication with external agencies and the maintenance of positive working relationships. A placing social worker spoke highly of staff's understanding of and commitment to the children, the effective sharing of key information and responsiveness to enquiries.

The overall quality of the children's care and progress is supported by sound recruitment practice that is able, with the involvement of the children, to identify those who are suitable to provide for their care. Staff feel supported through regular supervision and staff meetings. This enables them to focus on the needs of the children and work together as a team. The manager displays good awareness of the strengths of the home as well as the areas requiring further development.

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.

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: SC478616

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Registered provider address: 424 Margate Road, Ramsgate, CT12 6SJ

Responsible individual: David Knowles

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector:

John Pledger, social care inspector

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