

1250521

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home, part of a group, offers care for up to four children who have been identified as likely to benefit from residential care.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since November 2018.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 June 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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: 18 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 18/10/2018 | Interim | Improved effectiveness |
| 23/05/2018 | Full | Requires improvement to be good |
| 15/08/2017 | Full | Requires improvement to be 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 protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard 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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that thorough risk assessment and risk management practice is evident when a new child accesses the service.</p> | 30/09/2019 |
| <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 fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, all staff, including temporary staff, should be given the information and resources they need to work safely with children in the home.</p> | 30/11/2019 |

Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing

authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

- Any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint (regulation 35(3)(c)). Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this (regulation 7(2)(b)(iii)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home, so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The registered manager and staff continue to build on the progress seen at the last interim inspection. A child said that the home is a 'calm space'. Staff and children share warm and respectful relationships.

The standard of decor in the home is very good. The external spaces, which had been highlighted as areas for improvement, are now well maintained.

Generally, children are making progress against the targets defined in their placement plans. A social worker spoke about the 'amazing work' that the home had done to stabilise a child after a string of placement breakdowns. He has seen, as a result, positive changes in the child's attitude and approach to other professionals in her support network. Staff promote the importance of engagement in education. The registered manager advocates effectively for children when they are struggling to form and maintain stable placements at school. Children who are finishing school this summer are being encouraged and supported to find employment in the local area.

The registered manager recognises that improvements are required in the recording of children's progress. Work is underway to provide a clearer picture of how children are working towards meeting targets. Key-working systems employ a traffic-light system to track progress against goals. However, staff are not making use of this. Staff complete a regular monthly report for each child which makes some reference to progress against

identified areas of need.

Children spoke positively about activities that they engage in. They are offered plentiful opportunities to engage in the wider community. The children said that the remoteness of the home can make it difficult to engage in more spontaneous activities. Staff regularly consult with children about things they would like to do. They aim to tie activities into the development goals for children. Photographic records are kept, helping promote positive memories for the children.

Staff are thinking carefully about the future for the older children in the home. They want to ensure that when a child leaves the home this is well managed and provides the best possibility of a positive outcome.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Most staff have an awareness of the risks faced by children in the home. Key workers show good insight into the background of the children and how this can influence their risk management plans. However, strategies around tackling child sexual exploitation lacked clear practical steps for staff to assist them in managing risky behaviours effectively. Some staff were not confident in how to respond to certain situations. For example, if children leave the site without authorisation some staff were unclear on the steps to follow.

The registered manager is using temporary agency staff in full-time roles. It is not clear how well they are trained and inducted to work with children in this home.

Incidents are clearly recorded. Staff complete debriefs with children after incidents, but they lack depth. Children should always be given an opportunity to explore their views and feelings. This may, in some cases, require time between the incident and discussions to be meaningful. Staff follow up incidents well with clear evidence of notifications to all relevant parties, including social workers and Ofsted. Staff learning from the outcomes of incidents is also reflected in risk management plans.

Admissions procedures demonstrated insufficient risk assessment and management for children new to the home. For one child, staff were not given enough information to ensure her safety during her first few days at the home. This placed the child at risk of harm.

Staff focus on positive behaviours. They use praise and reward to encourage children to engage positively with each other and the staff team. This is reflected in the minimal use of physical intervention and sanctions. When these are employed, it is always proportionate to the situation.

Some staff lacked confidence in how to follow whistleblowing procedures. They were particularly uncertain about where to seek external support with safeguarding issues.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager continues to build on positive progress at the home. Staff complimented him on his availability and openness to give support and guidance when required.

The staff team is still relatively new and inexperienced and there have been some significant changes in personnel. Staff and children both referred to this and had found it challenging. They all share the feeling that the home is now in a more consistent and settled period. The registered manager is aware of the impact that lack of experienced staff can have on the quality of care and support. He is currently recruiting a senior team leader to offer staff additional support and guidance.

Recruitment systems follow guidelines. However, some concerns emerged about gaps in the induction of temporary staff working in the home. The registered manager and responsible individual already have plans in place to address this and their proposed new induction programme shows promise.

Staff were positive about the quality of supervision. The registered manager is generally meeting his own targets for delivery. However, there were some staff who had not kept up their supervision schedules and the registered manager is working closely with them to address this.

Internal monitoring systems for the home identify key strengths and weaknesses. The registered manager is very open and honest about where he sees the home requiring development. The home has a new responsible individual who is in the process of completing a thorough service-level audit. She hopes to complete this and provide an action plan for improvement to the registered manager shortly.

The registered manager was able to demonstrate strong advocacy for children in education and transitions. He shows great passion and commitment to his role. He demands the best for the children he cares for.

Children have many opportunities to have a say in their lives at the home. The registered manager and responsible individual have introduced initiatives such as a 'you said we did' meeting to help children recognise that their input makes a difference. During this visit, children were very engaged and animated as they discussed their views on the house summer holiday with the responsible individual.

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: 1250521

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: Kevin Flynn

Inspector

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

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