

1183936

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people. The home's statement of purpose states that the home offers placements for children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Placements are generally medium to long term.

The home has been without a registered manager since July 2019.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 August 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: 13 May 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

At the last full inspection, the home was judged inadequate. Following the inspection, a notice restricting accommodation at the home was served on 21 May 2019.

Inspectors conducted monitoring visits on 21 June 2019 and 18 July 2019. The home complied with the notice restricting accommodation. Ofsted lifted the notice restricting accommodation on 26 July 2019.

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 13/05/2019 | Full | Inadequate |
| 01/05/2018 | Full | Good |
| 24/05/2017 | Full | Good |
| 06/03/2017 | 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 registered person must–</p> <p>keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))</p> | 31/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home. (Regulation 29(4))</p> | 31/12/2019 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that–</p> <p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes–</p> <p>the name of the child;</p> <p>details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure;</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure;</p> <p>the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used;</p> <p>the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and</p> | 31/12/2019 |

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| <p>a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")–</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and</p> <p>has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii), (b)(i)(ii), (c))</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which–</p> <p>include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child;</p> <p>are kept up to date; and</p> <p>are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that documents are correctly dated and young people sign their records, where appropriate.</p> | 31/12/2019 |
| <p>Schedule 4 sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.</p> <p>The registered person must–</p> <p>maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4.</p> <p>A copy of the staff duty roster of persons working in the home, and a record of the actual rosters worked. (Regulation 37(1), (2)(a)) (Schedule 4(3))</p> | 31/12/2019 |
| <p>A notification made under this regulation–</p> <p>must include details of–</p> <p>the matter. (Regulation 40(5)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the full details of the incident must be included in the notification and the initials of all those present must be</p> | 31/12/2019 |

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| <p>recorded.</p> | |
| <p>The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months.</p> <p>In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating–</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and</p> <p>any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review (“the quality of care review report”).</p> <p>The registered person must–</p> <p>supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed; and</p> <p>make a copy of the quality of care review report available on request to a placing authority, if the placing authority is not the parent of a child accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45(1), (2)(a)(b)(c), (3), (4)(a)(b), (5))</p> | <p>31/12/2019</p> |

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of the children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, a bedroom roller blind, an en suite bathroom door handle and bedroom door paint in the unoccupied bedrooms must be repaired.

- Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9)

In particular, staff must consistently complete the young people's scheduled key-work sessions to address any concerns or risks to them.

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

In particular, the training matrix must be kept up to date.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people have positive experiences in the home and develop trusting relationships with the staff team. A young person said, 'My key worker is always there to help me sort out my teenage stuff.' A young person compared the home's challenges earlier in the year, and said positively: 'It's not as loud as it used to be.'

Young people make good progress from their challenging starting points. Young people's progress includes improved relationships with their families, a decrease in episodes of going missing from the home, a reduction in incidents of challenging behaviour and increased unsupervised time in the community. A social worker said, 'Staff have supported [X] and her needs and brought on her development.'

Young people have a voice in the home. Young people attend monthly house meetings and put forward personal suggestions and requests. A new 'You said, we did' book records staff's responses to those requests. This has resulted in summer holiday day trips, new bedroom furnishings, a new bicycle and trips to hair and beauty salons. However, one young person's request for new garden goalposts was not actioned for one month.

Plans are in place for all the young people to continue with their education in the new school year. A young person has engaged very well with her tutor and has recently achieved the top exam marks in her year group.

Young people are helped by staff to lead a healthier lifestyle. Young people attend community activities such as football and cricket clubs. Written contracts are agreed between staff and young people to help appropriately to limit the time that young people spend on interactive video gaming in the home. This helps young people to explore different activities, widen their experiences and develop their social skills.

Young people display positive behaviour in the home. Individualised financial incentives encourage young people to adhere to appropriate boundaries, such as settling at bedtime and handing in their mobile phones at night.

The large, six-bedroomed home provides young people with spacious communal areas, which encourages peer-group socialisation. The large garden provides a good amount of space for young people to play football games and enjoy trampolining. However, two of the unoccupied bedrooms require maintenance.

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

Staff are aware of the specific risks to each young person and the actions that they must take to help to protect them.

After the previous inspection's judgement of inadequate, the responsible individual undertook a thorough safeguarding audit of the home. The audit ranged from first-aid box checks through to risk assessments and a review of all policies, procedures and safeguarding incidents. The audit identified the areas requiring improvement. Consequently, safeguarding has been prioritised.

Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. However, some risk assessments are incorrectly dated, incorrectly colour coded or unsigned by the key worker or young person.

Young people spoken with said that they felt safe in the home and out in the community. Staff mostly engage young people in weekly key-work sessions to address their individual risks or concerns. However, one set of records did not contain a key-work session to address a young person's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. This means that direct work with the young person to assess and help minimise their risk of sexual exploitation has not been completed.

Since the last inspection, there has been a significant decrease in episodes of young people going missing from the home. Staff's use of de-escalation techniques helps to limit young people's challenging behaviour.

On occasion, appropriate physical restraint is used to keep young people safe. However, one incident notified to Ofsted did not include all the necessary details, such as confirming that all parties had received a debriefing.

The in-house health and well-being team assesses the emotional needs of young people. They provide support, advice and additional training to the staff to help them to meet the needs of the young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Following the previous full inspection, the registered manager was dismissed. The home is actively seeking a new registered manager.

The staff team structure has been redeveloped and staff have been given more responsibilities and increased accountability in their roles. Staff are positive, and those spoken with said that the team has a new energy and motivation. Staff also said that they were receiving more management support, weekly team meetings that are more focused and regular supervision. Improved practice is being embedded in the staff team.

Since the last inspection, new online and face-to-face training has been delivered to the whole staff team. This includes training on the topics of safeguarding young people, the risks of child sexual exploitation, behaviour management, including de-escalation techniques, and autism spectrum disorder. Further training is scheduled. However, the staff training matrix is not regularly updated by the company's head office.

Since the last inspection, the newly appointed responsible individual, together with the

interim manager, has made significant progress in meeting the requirements made at that inspection. Despite this, one of the requirements remains and several new requirements have been made at this inspection.

Most of the requirements made at this inspection are administrative and do not have a significant impact on the welfare of young people in the home. The home's statement of purpose was reviewed and amended during the inspection and requires further review. The final record of staff rosters worked is neither readily accessible nor clear. The home's quality of care review does not contain the feedback and opinions of staff, young people, parents or professionals. This is a missed opportunity to further develop the service.

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: 1183936

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes (UK) Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Carol Bradley

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Victoria Jones, social care inspector

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