

# SC023645

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 is part of a larger organisation, which has a number of homes in the area. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 11 January 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 21 to 22 May 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:** 19 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
19/02/2019	Full	Inadequate
24/01/2018	Full	Good
19/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
19/10/2016	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 children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who develop positive relationships with them; engage with them; and take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to make each child aware of and, if necessary, remind them of each of the matters in sub-paragraph (d)(i) to (iii); to ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision. (Regulation 7 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(vii)(d)(iii))</p>	30/06/2019
<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 ensure that staff promote opportunities for each child to learn informally. (Regulation 8 (1)(2)(a)(v))</p>	30/06/2019
<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 the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(b))</p>	30/06/2019
<p>Restraint in relation to a child is only permitted for the purpose of preventing injury to any person (including the child); serious damage to the property of any person (including the child).</p>	30/06/2019

<p>Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate. (Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b)(2))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that the reason for the use of physical intervention being necessary is accurately recorded to demonstrate the appropriate accountability of staff undertaking a restraint.</p>	
<p>The registered person must ensure that 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 a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure; 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") has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(b)(i)(ii))</p>	30/06/2019
<p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(1))</p>	30/06/2019

## Recommendations

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care sets out the steps local authorities and their partners should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do go missing. Children's homes should have regard to the relevant aspects of this guidance. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.25)
- Where a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, such as frequently being absent from the home to meet with inappropriate adults, the registered person, in consultation with the child's placing authority, should convene a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the young person. The strategy should be agreed with the child's placing authority, the local authority where the home is located and the local police. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.35)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children are cared for by a staff team whose members know them well. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and how best to support these. Where there have been changes within the team, the established staff members have provided continuity of care. Children are supported effectively by staff to develop their independence skills in an age-appropriate way. Staff support children well to engage in a range of activities which children choose. Children describe feeling settled in the home.

Through the regular house meetings, children are well supported by staff to contribute to developments in the home. Children know that staff and the registered manager are strong and effective advocates in accessing support for them. However, children are not currently aware of how to access independent advocacy support, should they need this.

The registered manager has tenaciously advocated for children's rights to education. Children are supported well to engage in learning through individual tuition where they are not attending school. However, there is no specific focus on staff supporting informal learning for one child in the home where they are on a reduced timetable.

Children are supported effectively through direct work with staff around their individual needs. Staff work well with specialist services to ensure that children receive the right support. The support provided by the in-house health and well-being team has been important in helping to meet children's individual emotional needs. Children are supported through direct work and 'drop-ins' provided by the service. Staff are supported through the consultation and advice provided to them from this service.

Planning for children moving on from the home has been undertaken by staff working effectively with the placing authority. The registered manager has made the appropriate decision to end a child's placement where this was no longer meeting the child's needs. Planning for another child moving into the home was thoughtful and the child's needs were understood well by staff. Matching with the other children in the home was particularly effective. Staff continue to support children's relationships with their family members where this is possible.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the known risks for each child in the home. Individual risk management plans are detailed and provide effective guidance for staff in addressing the identified risks for each child. Through effective individual staff supervision, the registered manager has ensured that staff have a detailed understanding of how to keep each child safe. The registered manager ensures that staff supervision is effective and that all staff have a detailed understanding of how to keep each child safe. This has been further embedded through the registered manager

utilising team meetings as a way to enable the team, as a whole, to discuss the individual needs of each child. However, there was a delay in staff removing an item which had been identified as a possible hazard following an incident the day before this inspection.

There have been a small number of missing-from-home episodes which staff have responded to appropriately. However, there have been no return home interviews undertaken by the placing authority, in respect of two children. The home did not request a risk management meeting where this could have benefited the child.

Staff have developed their understanding of contextualised safeguarding through additional training. This training has been put into practice by staff and reflected in the improved quality of risk management plans. Children have been helped by staff to better understand how to keep themselves safe. This has been supported by individual online training provided for children around the specific risks relevant to them. The registered manager arranged a specialist workshop for children which helped them to develop their understanding of the risks associated with being part of a gang.

The registered manager has responded appropriately to practice issues which were identified in relation to two staff members. He has ensured that disciplinary procedures were followed and proportionate decisions reached in relation to these practice issues.

The quality of recording by staff has been identified by the registered manager as an area for development. Staff recording, in relation to two separate occasions when physical intervention was used, does not provide clear information in terms of the nature of the holds used with each child. One of these recordings does not provide a clear explanation for why the use of physical intervention was needed on this occasion.

During the inspection, there were separate allegations confirmed in respect of two staff members. The registered manager consulted the designated officer and followed their advice. The appropriate safeguards were in place through the registered manager's effective response to these allegations. There is currently an investigation being undertaken by statutory agencies. It is not possible to fully evaluate the potential impact of this until the investigation is concluded.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The registered manager, together with the responsible individual, has thoroughly reviewed practice following the full inspection in February 2019. The registered manager continues to manage the changes in practice which are being embedded in the staff team. Through the individual supervision provided to staff and focused practice discussions in team meetings, he has supported the changes being put in place effectively.

Requirements and recommendations from the last full inspection and subsequent monitoring visit have all been met by the registered manager. He has a good

understanding of the home's strengths and areas which need development. The registered manager is now able to evaluate the quality of care provided by the home effectively due to the improved monitoring systems in place. However, there has been a delay in the independent visitor's monthly monitoring reports being submitted to Ofsted.

Together with the newly appointed deputy manager, the registered manager has provided effective support to staff during this period of change. Staff feel well supported by the management team and value the additional training opportunities provided to them. Staff have been supported well by the registered manager to continue to develop their practice. They are utilising the training to help them support children better.

Consultation with children has been an area the registered manager has improved. He has met with children both individually and as a group to seek their views on the home. The house meetings, chaired by the management team, have been welcomed by children, who value the opportunity to contribute to the development of their home.

## **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:** SC023645

**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:** Christopher Davies

## Inspector

Maria Lonergan, social care inspector

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