

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2018

OFSTED INSPECTION OF AUT EVEN

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Director of Children and Adults Services

Author: Jackie Wood, Head of Provider Services

Summary

Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection at Aut Even on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 of July 2017, the outcome of the inspection was that Aut Even was rated Inadequate. A report providing an overview of the inspection findings and consequent action plan for implementation was shared with the Committee on 31 August 2017. Further reports on 5 October and 5 December 2017 gave updates on the progress of actions that have been acknowledged to improve the service. Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit on 26 September and published their findings in a report on 20 October 2017.

Ofsted returned, unannounced, on 28 and 29 of November 2017 and carried out a comprehensive inspection of the service and published their findings in a report on the 16 February 2018 (set out at Appendix A). The outcome of that inspection rates Aut Even as 'Good'.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This is within the Council's Policy Framework.
- 1.2 On 5 December 2017 at the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Committee noted an update report would be provided to the Committee at the March meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Aut Even is a residential respite Centre for young people with disabilities, based in Twydall.
- 2.2 Ofsted carried out an unannounced inspection at Aut Even on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 of July 2017, the outcome of the inspection was that Aut Even was graded as Inadequate. A comprehensive action plan was put in place and Ofsted carried out a further Monitoring Inspection of progress on 26 September 2017.

2.3 The Council had until 25 September 2017 to respond to and take action in accordance with Ofsted's compliance notice and inspection judgements. The Compliance Notice was satisfied and closed. The majority of the requirements had been completed and Ofsted extended the period to meet the remaining requirements until 10 November 2017. On 28 November Ofsted returned and carried out a comprehensive inspection of the service, They found that the service had improved and was now rated as Good. This is a considerable achievement in a short space of time as the service could have received a judgement of 'Requires Improvement' which is the next rating up from Inadequate. An action plan to meet the requirements and recommendations of the report is attached. The aspiration for the service is to achieve Outstanding.

3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1 A considerable amount of work has taken place to improve the standards within Aut Even. A new action plan has been submitted to Ofsted, as set out at Appendix B and work on completion is underway.
- 3.2 Families have been kept fully informed and involved in the changes during this time and have remained complementary about the services offered to their children.
- 3.3 There has been significant amount of team work between the Interim Manager and the Human Resource's Team to ensure that all regulations in respect of the workforce have been met.
- 3.4 An audit of all recruitment practices across the Children and Adult's Directorate staffing, found the directorate to be 100% compliant with regulations.
- 3.5 Investigations continue in relation to the lack of compliance by previous managers, this is also being supported by an internal audit.
- 3.6 The safety and wellbeing of children continues to remain a priority for the Department and the Portfolio Holder. The progress of these services is closely monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.
- 3.7 Planning has commenced regarding the move of the Aut Even service to the Parklands site. It is envisaged that it will support the service to maintain Ofsted environmental standards.

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
1. Not achieving the required standards.	There is potential of enforcement action, should positive development not continue	An improvement plan is in place to meet regulations and standards

2. Parents stop using Aut Even.	If the Ofsted rating falls again there is a potential that there will be a decline in use of the service.	The interim Manager and deputy manager are in close communication with all parents, with support or the 0-25 team.
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- 4.1 The detailed action plan which accompanies this report, set out at Appendix B, outlines corrective action taken to date, to improve standards and mitigate against any further risks.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 All parents have been contacted and informed of the inspection outcomes and to be provided reassurance of the Councils commitment to service improvement.
- 5.2 The Parent Carer Forum has been contacted.

6. Implications for Looked After Children

- 6.1 There are no 'looked after' children supported in this service and therefore no implications arising from this report.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The original improvement plan identified a need to recruit staff both on a temporary and permanent basis which has contributed towards an overspend on the 2017/18 budget.
- 7.2 In December, Cabinet approved the move of the short breaks provision from its current Aut Even site to Parklands with the intention of not only enhancing the service but to manage the service within budget (decision number 141/2017 refers).

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Services which are found to be inadequate and which do not make sufficient effort or progress to improve can be subject to enforcement action by the regulators.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to note the work of the service and improvements made and that an update report will be provided to the Committee following the next Inspection by Ofsted scheduled in 2018/19.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A - Ofsted Inspection Report 16 February 2018

Appendix B - Aut Even Improvement Action plan

Background papers

None

SC066166

Registered provider: Medway Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides short breaks for up to five children at a time who have severe learning disabilities and who may have an associated physical disability and/or present challenging behaviour. Currently, there are 49 children registered with the service. The local authority, primary care trust and clinical commissioning group fund the home.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 November 2017

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: 25 July 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Leaders and managers have made significant and sustainable improvements in

previously identified areas of failure and shortfall, particularly in relation to recruitment practice and workforce development.

- The staff team is stable and sufficiently equipped to consistently provide small groups of children who have complex needs with safe and enjoyable short-break stays.
- Children who have substantial needs and challenging health and dietary conditions are able to have fun and enjoy new experiences.
- Parents and carers are able to trust staff and enjoy peace of mind when their child is having a short break.
- A caring and motivated staff team provides children with good opportunities to form positive and trusted relationships with the staff and each other.

The children’s home’s areas for development:

- Some aspects of care planning documents are unclear about the purpose and targets of a child’s stay, including areas of potential risk.
- Recently completed staff training requires reflection and consolidation in order to identify any residual core training needs.
- Remaining issues that undermine staff cohesion and team working need to be identified, understood and addressed.
- The development of staff supervision practice would benefit from further improvements to records and the structure of supervision sessions.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/07/2017	Full	Inadequate
20/12/2016	Full	Good
01/06/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/02/2016	Interim	Declined in 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 provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(iv))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that plans are clear and targeted.</p>	15/03/2018
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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(2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, ensure that plans are clear and provide staff with clear guidance about how to keep the children safe and reduce the risk of harm.</p>	15/03/2018
<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 ensures that staff work together as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13(2)(b))</p>	15/03/2018

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation:

- That the registered manager ensures that systems are in place to ensure that all staff receive regular supervision of their practice by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals and that records in this regard clearly reflect these arrangements. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are supported by a staff team that knows them well and understands their complex needs. This enables the children to feel secure, and to quickly settle and enjoy the benefits of a welcoming and stimulating environment, away from their families.

Consistent care from confident, attentive staff makes the children feel valued and enables them to build trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. The repeated positive experiences of the children give parents and carers confidence and peace of mind. This enables the families to also enjoy the benefits of their children having short breaks.

Staff are ambitious and increasingly creative about expanding the life experiences of the children during stays, as well as supporting them to increase their independence. Giving full effect to these aspirations is, however, currently being hampered by stay plans that are insufficiently specific and recording systems that don't clearly capture the progress that the children make.

Staff seek to understand the wishes and feelings of the children with communication difficulties, and they do this effectively. They are not complacent, however, and strive to improve their communication with all the children who attend, and particularly with those children who have the greatest difficulties.

Staff liaise closely and effectively with schools, social workers, transport providers and parents/carers. This enables the children to maintain essential routines and engagement with their learning.

Leaders and managers are flexible and genuinely helpful in supporting parents and carers as well as the children. For example, when stays need to be rearranged or adjusted due to unexpected circumstances, such requests are accommodated. This helps to build positive relationships and to ensure that stays have the most favourable outcomes.

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

The children are safeguarded by a staff team that treats them with dignity and respect and consistently seeks to understand their needs and vulnerabilities. Leaders and managers aspire to the highest possible standards of medication administration and routine health and safety and checks, particularly those in relation to fire safety and individual evacuation plans. Any errors, however minor, are taken seriously, and appropriate remedial action promptly taken.

The children are safer and their well-being better protected as a result of the recent review and revision of, and added rigour to, staff recruitment practice. Current practice better identifies persons most suitable to work with the children and more reliably screens out those not suited.

The current system of record-keeping does not make the key information about the children's safety and best possible care clear or readily available. Managers recognise this shortfall and are taking improvement action.

Staff's good knowledge and understanding of the children, use of proactive preventative strategies and good de-escalation techniques combine to limit the need for physical restraint. If used, it is only as a last resort. When applied, restrictive techniques are proportional and of short duration and mostly aimed at preventing or limiting self-injurious behaviour.

The children are kept physically safe by vigilant, proactive and well-informed staff. Equipment and toys are safely used in accordance with the abilities of the children. Staff display a sensible attitude towards risk-taking, and allow the children to test and explore their abilities and interests, while keeping them safe.

Staff understand their wider safeguarding role and are alert to possible indicators of exposure to harmful circumstances when children come for breaks. They take appropriate action to respond to concerns when necessary, including liaison and referral to safeguarding professionals.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

This service is currently led by an experienced and capable interim manager who has applied for registration with Ofsted. He is supported by a deputy who has extensive experience in working with children who have complex needs. An experienced and capable middle-management structure is in place.

Systematic and sustained efforts by leaders and managers to address previous failings and shortfalls are reflected in a staff team that shows improved capacity, competency and stability. There are, however, some unresolved issues relating to some staff relationships that undermine consistent and cohesive team working, which is fully focused on the well-being and progress of the children.

Significant progress has been made in the organisation and delivery of staff supervision. This supports staff to provide consistent and continuous care to the children to a good standard and contributes to the further development of the service. This improvement remains in its infancy and is not yet an established part of staff culture. Good systems for the induction and probation periods for new staff are now in place. New staff learn about the setting and the children at a realistic and appropriate pace, and this enhances the quality of care the children receive.

A thoughtful and proactive approach to staffing schedules ensures that carefully composed groups of children are matched to staff teams that are properly equipped to meet their needs and best able to enhance their stays.

There has been an emphasis on core training for staff in recent months, increasing the levels of staff competence and confidence in caring for the children. The full benefits from this training, however, have not yet been analysed through a process of review and consolidation, nor channelled into individual staff appraisal systems.

Leaders and managers display a professional attitude and practice in their dealings with external agencies. They are able to appropriately challenge and encourage others in order to secure the best possible cooperation and contributions to the care and progress of the children.

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: SC066166

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR

Responsible individual: Ian Sutherland

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector:

John Pledger, social care inspector

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Home: Aut Even
Inspection Date 28.11.2017
Report Date 16.02.2018

Target Date for Completion: 15/03/2018 Plan Number: 3

Aim of Plan:/ Good at next Inspection aspiring to Outstanding

Compiled by: David Ballard Date: 19/02/2018

Statutory Requirement This section sets out the actions that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.	Action Required	By Whom/ Person Responsible	Timescale For Completion	Comments and Signature to Confirm Completion of Action
1 (Regulation 6(2)(b)(iv))				
(a) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who provide personalised care that meets each child’s needs, as recorded in the child’s relevant plans, taking account of the child’s background. (b) In particular, ensure that plans are clear and targeted.	Complete the introduction of a revised case file system. The new files contain clear up to date information and plans for stays linked to wider Child in Need developmental plans.	D Ballard and Caren Smith	15.03.2018	
2 Regulation 12(2)(a)(i)				
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. 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	The Management team will conduct a review of all case files and ensure that risk assessments and risk management plans are fully updated and focused on the needs of the child at that time.	D Ballard and Caren Smith	15.03.2018	

AUT EVEN IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Appendix B

<p>child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that plans are clear and provide staff with clear guidance about how to keep the children safe and reduce the risk of harm.</p>	<p>These are contained in new Case file system and focus on Risk Management.</p>			
<p>3 Regulation 13(2)(b)</p>				
<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 ensures that staff work together as a team where appropriate.</p>	<p>Complete monthly team Meetings, practice meeting and introduce a series of staff development days linked to planned move to Parklands Resource Centre.</p>	<p>D Ballard and Caren Smith</p>	<p>15.03.2018</p>	

<p>Recommendation</p> <p>To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation</p>	<p>Action Required</p>	<p>By Whom/ Person Responsible</p>	<p>Timescale For Completion</p>	<p>Comments and Signature to Confirm Completion of Action</p>
<p>1 Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)</p>				
<p>That the registered manager ensures that systems are in place to ensure that all staff receive regular supervision of their practice by appropriately qualified and experienced professionals and that records in this regard clearly reflect these arrangements.</p>	<p>Temporary Senior RSW's have been appointed to provide supervision and support. Managers are assisting in that process and all staff now receive regular supervision in accordance with Medway Council Policy Comprehensive monitoring of supervision, revised supervision agreements and recording systems are now in place.</p>	<p>D Ballard and Caren Smith</p>	<p>15.03.2018</p>	