

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	22/11/2016
Unique reference number	1232649
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Artemis Support Ltd
Registered provider address	31a Station Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne And Wear NE26 2QZ

Responsible individual	Clare Coward
Registered manager	William Elliott
Inspector	Nick Murphy

Inspection date	22/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- In the short time that the home has been open, the quality of the support provided by staff has enabled young people to make significant progress. Staff persist in trying different approaches in working constructively with young people who refuse to cooperate with their plans.
- Young people trust staff to act in their best interests. Staff advocate strongly for young people's rights, for example, in accessing high-quality educational opportunities. Staff are also creative in stimulating young people's interests in different leisure activities. As a result, young people develop better self-esteem and social skills.
- Clear and detailed care plans set out what staff need to do to protect young people. The good relationships between staff and young people, and clear behavioural boundaries, create a settled and welcoming atmosphere.
- Staff work well with other professionals and families. They challenge effectively when the contribution of other agencies is not up to standard.
- Staff are well supported through effective induction, training and supervision. This maximises their ability to promote young people's welfare and keep them safe.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious for further improvement. The organisation of the home is excellent, ensuring that care and support for young people are delivered efficiently. Two recommendations have been made in relation to minor shortfalls.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Regulation 45 sets out requirements for the registered person to have a system in place which allows them to monitor the matters set out in the regulation at least once every six months; also see regulation 13(2)(h) (the leadership and management standard). The report should clearly identify any actions required for the next six months of delivery in the home and how those actions will be addressed. The whole review process and the resulting report should be used as a tool for continuous improvement in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', pages 64 and 65, paragraphs 15.2 and 15.4)
- Ensure that the home provides a domestic and homely environment and, in particular, that staff carry keys more discreetly. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides accommodation for up to five children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

This is the home's first inspection

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home was registered in July 2016, and accepted its first young person for placement the following month. Even in this short period, the home has demonstrated that the quality of the support that it provides has had a highly positive impact on young people. Most have made significant progress. For example, one young person who has a prior history of very poor school attendance has engaged in educational activity from the first day, in the form of home tuition. He said, 'Staff have helped me get back into school. They've got me into a football team. I don't get into trouble any more. I don't need to because I have people around to support me.' Staff liaised closely with social workers and other professionals, such as virtual school heads, in order to advocate for full-time education to be put in place. This has been agreed and is due to commence shortly. Even when young people are not willing to cooperate with the plans for them, staff are tireless in attempting to motivate and encourage them. They contact local providers and arrange interviews for training and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships. If the young person chooses not to attend, staff will persist in exploring other avenues and persuading the young person at least to try before rejecting the opportunity. Care plans are clear, easy to follow, and tailored to each young person's individual needs. They set out the overall objective of the placement, with specific targets, which are agreed with each young person and closely monitored and reviewed by all staff. This focus on outcomes ensures that staff are always looking at what else can be done to help the young person to achieve success. Staff respond to young people with warmth and acceptance of their shortcomings and challenges. They treat even the most disaffected young people with respect. Formal sessions between key workers and individual young people enable formal work to achieve targets to be carried out and any difficulties ironed out. Records of these sessions demonstrate the understanding that staff have of how young people might be feeling, and how to support them effectively. For example, one discussion about an incident of bullying clearly showed how the member of staff helped the young person to reflect on his feelings and to construct a plan for dealing with any subsequent issues. Staff are good at ensuring that young people's health needs are met. They support them to attend appointments, such as with a dentist or an optician. Young people who smoke are encouraged to attend smoking cessation clinics. In addition, the home promotes healthy lifestyles. One member of staff is a committed runner, and	

has motivated one young person to take part in a five kilometre run for charity. Arrangements for administering medication are safe and effective. Staff liaise with health professionals, such as consultant psychiatrists, in reviewing medication levels. This ensures that treatment to enhance young people's emotional well-being remains effective. Additionally, the registered provider has reviewed the service that it commissions to provide psychological support. This has been increased to half a day per week, and will result in greater direct work being undertaken with young people as well as consultation and training for staff.

Staff listen to young people and value their views. The home has recently been recommended for an award by a national body, to recognise the quality of its consultation with young people. One young person said, 'I get treated with respect by the staff. They look after you. If you feel down or upset, you've always got someone to talk to.' Young people make choices on a daily basis, for example, in what activities they would like to do, or at mealtimes. When young people move into the home, staff allocate them a sum of money to personalise their room, with posters and the like. Staff are proactive in supporting young people to try new experiences. Two young people have joined a local football team, and go to watch nearby teams in the premier league and championship. Such activities enable young people to make friends, enhancing their social skills and confidence. Staff have provided young people with memory boxes and scrapbooks, enabling them to keep mementos, such as event tickets and photos of what they have done and where they have been. This promotes young people's sense of identity and will provide happy memories of their time here.

Staff promote young people's independence as far as possible. The home is close to good public transport links, so young people can get around without having to rely on staff. They are able to cook with the support of staff and use the laundry. In addition, staff use a formal programme designed to assess the level of each young person's readiness for independence and enhance their knowledge and skills. This is excellent, covering not only practicalities, such as simple household maintenance and budgeting, but emotional issues, such as relationships and managing loneliness. Such work is important in preparing young people for adulthood.

The home is extremely well decorated and equipped, and presents a welcoming and homely appearance. The aim of the home to be as non-institutional as possible is somewhat compromised by the practice of some staff carrying large bunches of keys on their belts.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Some young people's homes are at the other end of the country. Staff understand the importance of maintaining contact between young people and their families and friends and overcome logistical difficulties to do so. On one occasion, staff travelled a considerable distance with the young person so that they could spend a day out with their girlfriend at the zoo. The emphasis placed on ensuring that contact is meaningful is important for young people's emotional well-being. It also keeps them safe, reducing the need for young people to go missing in order to see people who are important to them. Staff complete risk assessments on each young person and keep them up to date through frequent review. This ensures that, as a young person's circumstances change, staff can remain alert to any new threats to their safety. When a new young person is being considered for admission, the registered manager gleans all available information from the placing social worker and other professionals. He also travels to meet the young person and their parents or carers. As a result, the registered manager is able to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of whether the placement can meet the young person's needs, keep them safe, and not present any risks to the group of young people already resident. This level of preparation ensures the greatest likelihood of the placement being successful. There have been only two incidents of a young person going missing since the home opened in August 2016. Both have been managed well, with good liaison between staff and the police and detailed recording. Of particular note is the quality of the return-to-home interviews conducted by an independent organisation. These are excellent, providing detailed feedback to staff of the reasons given by the young person for going missing. Such information gives additional assurance that any concerns expressed by the young person can be promptly addressed. Staff rely on their good relationships with young people to encourage good behaviour and consideration for others. By and large, this approach is successful. Bullying is rare, and when it happens staff deal with it effectively. One young person said, 'I feel safe here. I don't need to worry about anything. I trust the staff to look after me.' The use of sanctions, such as preventing young people from spending their pocket money without the supervision of staff, is reasonable and appropriate. Staff also use positive inducements to reward a particularly noteworthy action by a young person. Staff are trained in positive behaviour management and draw up plans for each young person, which describe what might spark off their anger and how best to manage it. Staff also have the skills to restrain young people safely, but the need has not yet arisen to use them.	

The home has recruited a number of staff in the last few months in preparation for opening. The recruitment and vetting process is a model of good practice, ensuring that only those who are suitable to work with young people are employed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is experienced and suitably qualified. His leadership and that of the responsible individual promote a model of practice, which is centred on the welfare and safety of young people. It is evident that the registered manager and staff challenge other services when their contribution to a young person's plan is inadequate. Staff are proactive in making links with a range of professionals to ensure that young people's needs are met. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. These are reinforced through regular, individual supervision with the registered manager, which is extremely detailed and comprehensive. Each member of staff has been allocated a specific area of responsibility, for example education. This means that staff acquire more specialist knowledge about, for example, local resources and the national context, and can cascade this information to the staff team. As a result, the quality of the service to young people is enhanced. The home's monitoring by an independent person is thorough. In addition, the registered manager's monitoring reports provide good evaluation of the home's performance and its effectiveness in achieving good outcomes for young people. Although there is a separate development plan for the home, these monitoring reports do not contain planned actions for the ensuing six months. This means that Ofsted is unable to scrutinise or evaluate how the home intends to bring about improvements. Records and case files are very well organised. Care plans are written so as to be easily understandable by young people. The home's records are in the process of being computerised. During the inspection, one young person's case file was successfully uploaded. Eventually, each young person will be able to use the home's personal computer to securely look at their plans and targets, enhancing their ownership and involvement in achieving progress. Newly appointed staff undergo a thorough induction, completing most basic training, such as first aid, prior to working directly with young people. Ongoing training is comprehensive, and is a mixture of face-to-face and online learning.	

Staff are able to express areas of interest and relevance for additional training opportunities. The next such sessions will be on attachment, bonding and therapeutic parenting. The majority of staff have the appropriate qualification, with the others being enrolled either now or when they successfully complete probation. As a result, staff's knowledge and skills are constantly being updated and augmented, ensuring that they can support young people more effectively.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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