

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24/01/2017
Unique reference number	1234430
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Positive Pathways Limited
Registered provider address	1556 Stratford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9HA

Responsible individual	Danielle Epps
Registered manager	Danielle Epps
Inspector	Anne Daly

Inspection date	24/01/2017
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

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Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- An inspirational manager leads the home. She is determined to deliver the best care to young people and to promote their chances of future success. She has high aspirations for young people and high expectations of staff. Her professionalism instils confidence in all those working alongside her.
- All young people make significant progress from their starting points. Key strengths of this home are the recognition of young people's individuality and the provision of bespoke plans that help to develop and progress each young person. Consequently, young people feel valued and improve in confidence and self-esteem.
- Young people benefit from a committed, caring and knowledgeable staff team. Staff develop positive relationships with young people that are based on trust, understanding and respect. This helps young people to feel safe and to know that they are genuinely cared about.
- All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are vigilant about keeping young people safe. This includes being fully aware of child protection procedures.
- The house feels like a family home. It is a friendly and welcoming environment where young people feel relaxed. The decor and furnishings are of a high standard, bedrooms are personalised and there are numerous photographs of young people around the home.
- Staff support young people to settle quickly so that they can make progress from the very moment they arrive.
- Staff use research that helps to underpin their work with young people.
- Staff recognise that family contact is key to young people's well-being. They go that extra mile to ensure that contact takes place in a positive way, and is always beneficial to the young person.
- Family members and other professionals consistently report that the staff team and managers frequently go 'above and beyond' expectation in their support of young people in their care.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

This the first inspection.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people make sustained progress across a number of areas because of the high level of support provided by staff. This includes the depth of the staff team's understanding and commitment to each individual young person. Young people's progress is recognised by family members and supporting professionals. As one social worker observed, 'They have made exceptional progress in a short space of time.' A parent stated, 'I've definitely noticed the difference. She's definitely calmer, more focused than in a long time since I have seen her.' This is the longest period that one young person, who has previously experienced prolonged hospital stays, has sustained living in the community in the last four years. Young people are very happy. Their positive relationships with staff are highly apparent, and their day-to-day experiences are filled with laughter and warmth. Young people said that they feel cared about and are positive about the relationships that they have developed with staff members. This home looks and feels like a family home. One education professional commented, 'Walking through the door is like walking into a different world, warm, cared for and welcoming.' Staff have made extensive efforts to personalise the space, and the result is a home where young people feel at ease and consider this 'their' home. There is evidence of the young people in all rooms: in photographs, their choice of paint colours and furnishings. This gives them a sense of ownership, and the result is that the young people respect the home environment. As one parent said, 'It feels like a home. I feel welcome all the time.' Young people are extremely well matched and so enjoy positive relationships with each other. They have good tolerance and understanding of their individual differences. This is a new home, and the manager has taken great care to make sure that matches and introductions are very well considered and planned. Managers undertake research and provide additional staff support and training for young people who are admitted and who have specific additional needs, to ensure that the staff team is well prepared to offer appropriate individualised care. As one health professional observed about one young person's introduction, 'Staff were brilliant working with her. They put timetables in, got her used to the local area. They really worked hard helping her settle in and to get to know her.' Staff use attachment and social learning theory effectively to inform their understanding and practice of young people's emotional and behavioural needs. These theoretical approaches underpin their practice. The home's clinical psychologist guides staff through regular clinical review meetings and team discussions, which help to enhance staff knowledge. This support enables the staff	

to recognise the emotional impact that young people's complex needs have on everyday life. As a result, staff provide young people with tailored care that takes into account their individual needs and gives them the best possible opportunity for progression and development. For example, the staff have been working with one young person who has an autistic spectrum disorder. The staff have adjusted their approach and focused on managing challenging behaviour incidents. This coordinated approach has seen a reduction in incidents.

Key-worker sessions are meaningful and in depth, and young people appreciate having their one-to-one time to discuss things that are important to them.

The manager works closely with education providers to ensure that young people receive the maximum benefit from education and tailored programmes to meet their individual needs. She advocates on behalf of young people to make sure that their education needs are addressed. Staff promote the value of learning and use incentive schemes to support positive behaviour in school. When issues do arise, staff are proactive in helping young people to address the issues, so that any disruption to their education is minimal. One young person who previously needed to be transported individually to school due to her challenging behaviour is now successfully using the school mini bus.

Young people have complex health, emotional and behavioural needs. Staff actively encourage and support young people to address their health, emotional and behavioural issues and make sure that referrals to specialist external services are made promptly and are actively promoted with young people. Staff effectively harness the advice and services of a range of specialist healthcare professionals, including occupational therapists and dieticians who have specialist knowledge and understanding of eating disorders. Joint training sessions are organised for the staff and designated health professionals to equip staff to meet young people's needs. As one occupational therapist commented, 'They are open to learning more about eating disorders and have been proactive in putting learning into practice.' This has improved health outcomes and resulted in young people increasingly taking responsibility for their own well-being. All young people attend routine health assessments and appointments with doctors, dentists and opticians.

Staff make sure that young people benefit from a wide range of social, educational and recreational activities. All young people participate in healthy activities, such as yoga, street dancing and ice-skating. Each young person is encouraged and supported to pursue their own interests. All have opportunities to participate in community clubs and groups, such as youth clubs, that provide opportunities for widening their social network.

Young people's views are sought through day-to-day interactions with staff, young people's meetings and weekly key-worker sessions. Young people feel confident to express their wishes and feelings and have trusting relationships with staff that enable them to speak openly.

The manager works closely with placing authorities to promote contact with family and friends that is positive and safe. This ensures that young people continue to

build relationships and attachments with those significant to them. For some young people who have previously had fractured relationships with parents, this has been a significant improvement. Family members are positive about staff support. As one parent commented, 'All the staff are very caring [and] kind and they know what they are doing.' Staff behaviour engenders confidence in the young people's families.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people's risks significantly reduce from the point of admission. This is because of the action taken by staff to safeguard them. Young people identify that they feel safe and understand what progress they have made in this area. Family members consulted as part of this inspection consistently report a high level of satisfaction with the staff's actions in respect of keeping young people safe. Risks for young people are well understood and managed with the support of personalised risk management plans. These plans guide staff to effectively understand young people's specific vulnerabilities and the challenges that they present. Staff understand that risk is dynamic and so they are responsive to young people's changing needs. Risks are well managed by the staff and there are clear plans in place that enable them to deal with issues such as missing from home, child sexual exploitation and self-harm. The manager and staff team consistently promote the well-being and safety of the young people at all times. Their working knowledge of safeguarding, missing from care, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation procedures is enhanced by training and research. This ensures that they are able to meet the young people's specific needs and to work effectively in partnership with other agencies, including the police and health services. Staff are highly motivated to keep young people safe and work hard with young people to help them to understand the risk associated with some of their behaviour. Key-worker sessions evidence frequent discussions about areas of risk and identification of proactive ways of supporting young people to manage their own behaviours and reduce their risks. Staff are inventive and creative in their approach, using a variety of different media, such as videos and visual aids to enhance young people's understanding.	

Staff model and promote acceptable behaviour. They make sure that there are clear and consistent boundaries in place for all young people. Target setting and rewards help to keep young people's behaviour positive and motivate them to address any areas in which they need to improve. Young people say that the rules are fair. Physical intervention is rarely used to manage challenging behaviour and, when it is, it is only as a last resort.

Missing from home episodes have significantly reduced from young people's starting points. For some young people who had long-standing histories of missing behaviour, there have been no further incidents since their placements started and, for others, missing incidents are becoming shorter in duration. There are effective agreed strategies with placing authorities, families and the police to make sure that coordinated efforts to locate young people are made. Young people are consistently offered independent return interviews. Any serious concerns are escalated to multi-disciplinary strategy meetings. This ensures that all safeguarding professionals are working together to assess and minimise risk.

For some young people, alcohol misuse is an area of concern. Staff respond effectively and make referrals to specialist agencies. The local community vulnerable person's officer has also visited the home to raise the young people's awareness of the wider safeguarding risks linked with substance misuse and episodes of being missing. Staff undertake individual work with young people on the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse and associated risks. These key-working sessions are used proactively to help young people to reflect on their risk-taking behaviour. This ensures that young people are supported to access specialist support and information to help them to make the right choices to keep themselves safe.

The staff have helped young people to stay well informed about the risks associated with child sexual exploitation. Staff revisit this in a number of forums, including staff team meetings, young person's meetings, supervision and individual key-worker sessions. Particular members of staff have undertaken specific training with a specialist service to equip them to undertake awareness raising in the staff team and individual bespoke training with young people. This helps staff and young people to better understand the risks and the motivation and behaviour of people who may pose a risk to them. As a direct result of this work, a multi-agency panel has reduced one young person's assessed level of risk.

Staff take online safety seriously and receive training and use research to educate the young people about the risks of the internet and social media. This support helps to protect young people from harm.

Young people are able to raise any concerns that they may have with staff. They are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and complaints and deal with them appropriately. This helps young people to feel safe and secure and protects them from the risk of harm.

The manager ensures that safe recruitment practices are appropriately utilised to ensure that young people are protected and that all staff at the home are suitable

and safe to work with young people.

Young people benefit from living in a home that has a safe and secure environment. Regular health and safety checks ensure that the equipment works well and that fire drills are regularly completed. There is a detailed location risk assessment that highlights risk factors in the surrounding area and indicates how these will be managed.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
An experienced and inspirational manager leads the home. The manager holds the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for children and young people in residential services. She has managed the home since its registration in July 2016 and clearly prioritises the needs of the young people placed in the home, developing an ethos in which the young person is at the centre of the home's practice. The manager has a thorough understanding of the young people and the progress that they are making, identifying any areas in which they are not making sufficient progress and where further work needs to be focussed. Plans are regularly reviewed to make sure that work is effective in supporting young people's progress. This new staff team is stable and is made up of experienced staff previously employed in one of the provider's other homes and new staff to the organisation. All staff either have completed the national vocational qualification level 3 residential award or will complete the qualification within the statutory timescale. Staff report high levels of satisfaction in the level of support that they receive in the home from managers and their morale is very high. There is effective communication between staff members to ensure that care is consistent. Supervision and appraisal are delivered regularly and meaningfully supported by an effective culture of learning. There is a high level of training on offer and specialist support from a clinical psychologist for advice on caring for individual young people. New staff report positively about the induction process and feel well supported in their roles. Most members of the staff team are highly experienced and competent, delivering outstanding levels of care to the young people. Professionals working with young people who were consulted during this inspection consistently commented on the staff's professionalism and caring, committed	

approach.

The management team is highly proactive in progressing and developing the home, using research to inform, improve and evolve practice. Any shortfalls or weaknesses are quickly identified and effectively addressed through robust monitoring systems.

Young people's records are of a high quality, and staff are fully committed to maintaining this quality. They are aware that the records will inform the young people's understanding of their time in care when they are adults and realise the significance of this.

The home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose. The statement of purpose sets out clearly the help and support on offer to young people, which keeps placing authorities, families and other agencies informed. The young person's guide provides detailed information in an appropriate way to young people, so that they know what to expect when they arrive at the home to commence their placement.

The quality of professional relationships with families, host authorities and other agencies is exceptional. External agencies consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the way in which they are kept informed of all relevant information and praise the home for good levels of communication. Similarly, parents of young people report that they are kept very well informed of their young person's progress and any issues affecting them.

The manager and staff effectively utilise partnership relationships to advocate and challenge on behalf of young people, to ensure that they receive appropriate support to meet their needs. Staff are confident in challenging other professionals, including educational professionals when they perceive shortfalls in practice that could affect the well-being of young people. When progress is not achieved, the staff escalate their concerns to affect change.

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 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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