

1258627

Registered provider: Doncaster Children's Services Trust Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A children's trust operates this home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 January 2018

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 **outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young people are happy and feel safe and secure in the home.
- The young people are making good progress in developing self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
- The young people's emotional and physical health have improved as they are no longer involved in substance misuse.
- An inspirational management team leads an enthusiastic and well-motivated staff team.
- Excellent partnership working with professionals and parents ensures that the young people receive consistent messages and targeted care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The young people would benefit from the staff team members having a more thorough understanding of attachment issues.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, with particular reference to understanding attachment issues. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people are happy and take great pride in their home. Their sense of contentment and belonging is enabling the young people to thrive and lead more fulfilling lives. These accomplishments further empower the young people to learn to like themselves and to start to make plans for their future. A young person said: 'I feel loved and happy.'

The young people live in a spacious detached home in a residential neighbourhood. There is easy access to local community provisions. The young people take great pride in their home and participate in keeping it clean and cooking meals for each other, as they would in a family home. This enhances their sense of belonging, allowing them to form meaningful attachments with the staff team members and each other. A young person said: 'I am able to show others I care by cooking for them.'

The purposeful yet calm and nurturing environment provided by the staff team members generates a welcome in the home that is enjoyed by the young people, parents and professionals alike. As a result of the positive relationships that this inspires, the young people are happy and taking positive steps towards their future adult lives. A young person said: 'I'm made to feel like family.'

The enthusiastic, patient and committed staff team members strive to provide the young people with a nurturing and stimulating home in which to grow. A complementary mix of gender, age, experience and ethnic background within the staff team ensures that the young people have individuals who they are able to identify with. A young person said: 'I actually feel like I belong somewhere.'

Comprehensive care plans are robustly applied ensuring that all of a young person's needs are identified and worked towards. As a result, the young people are making good, and in some cases significant, progress in most aspects of their lives. In particular, building feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, allowing them to engage with the care provided. A social worker reported: '[Name] is settling in placement and is developing a relationship with her key worker and other residents. A positive change has been seen in

[Name] and she is much happier.'

The detailed contact arrangements and the staff team members' commitment ensure that the young people maintain important community links. Consequently, the young people are able to meet with their family members on a regular basis. Parents report extremely positively about the care that their children receive, the communication from the staff team members and their welcome in the home. As a result, the young people are able to maintain, and in some cases rebuild, familial links which will sustain them now and in their future adult lives. A parent said: 'Staff always keep me informed about what is happening and I cannot think of anything they should be doing that they are not doing.'

Although all of the young people are, or have been, on the role of a local mainstream school academy, none are receiving full-time education at this time. Two young people are currently excluded and in receipt of home tuition and the third has officially left school and is in the process of seeking either employment or a further education placement. The staff team members have ensured that the young people are able to engage positively with their home tutors and are liaising with education providers to secure a return to school. This commitment supports the young people to retain an interest in learning.

Even though none of the young people are involved in full-time education, they have daily planned activities. One of the young people has also participated together with staff team members on a number of training events including first aid. The young people are encouraged to participate in inclusive activities in the community, with the support of staff if need be. This proactivity encourages learning and enables the young people to maintain a good routine.

The young people are making good progress in improving their emotional and psychological health and well-being as a result of the consistent care that they receive from the staff team members, in partnership with specialist agencies. This growth is evident in the young people's development of emotional resilience and coping techniques. A child and adolescent mental health worker said: 'Her self-harming has significantly reduced. That is a combination of staff being able to recognise how to manage her behaviours and when to call us in.'

The young people's physical health improves as they learn to enjoy a healthier lifestyle, which includes regular, nutritious meals and engaging in positive activities. One of the young people has made significant progress in abstaining from substance misuse and smoking. He not only takes great pride in his clean drug tests and how much fitter he is becoming but can now see a future for himself. A looked after children's nurse said: 'His health is improving. It can only get better but it can take time because he used that many drugs, but he is doing really, really well.'

All of the young people are confident in expressing their wishes and feelings. The manager, in order to inform care practice and to plan day-to-day activities in the home, regularly captures their views. The young people feel heard and valued, enhancing their

sense of belonging.

The young people are being prepared well for transition to adulthood, in line with their age and ability. One of the young people is actively working through his 'Try to My Future' folder, which is enabling him to develop a number of skills, including cooking, cleaning, budgeting, preparing a curriculum vitae and job applications and attending interviews. A young person said: 'Since I've been here, I want to do something in the future that makes a difference in people's lives so that I meant something. I would never have thought about that before but because I'm happy now I can plan ahead.'

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

The staff team members understand and apply good safeguarding protocols and procedures. As a result, the young people feel safe as their well-being is promoted and they are protected. A school safeguarding coordinator said: 'Kids are definitely safe there.'

An excellent locality assessment includes details of the potential risks posed to the young people from becoming involved in gang culture, as well as links with radicalisation and extremism. The information from this document underpins the home's generic risk assessments and informs the steps needed to address the young people's unique and diverse vulnerabilities.

The young people's individual risk assessments detail the proactive steps necessary to protect them from self-harming behaviour. This includes such measures as removing items from bedrooms and specific training for staff in partnership with specialist mental health practitioners. As a result, the young people are learning more appropriate coping strategies, leading to a reduction in such episodes. A looked after children's nurse said: 'In regards to reducing her accident and emergency attendances and self-harm behaviours, they have dramatically come down. They are managing her behaviours really well.'

There have been a high number of episodes of going missing from most of the young people since the home opened. The dedicated staff team members actively search for the young people and do all they can to return them to the home, as good parents would. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in absences, particularly for one young person. A young person said: 'What made the big difference for me here was that they never gave up on me. They just kept coming and coming looking for me and bringing me back and then it became bringing me home.'

The consistent use of restorative practice allows the young people to learn appropriate coping strategies and develop an understanding of the impact that their behaviours can have on others. The emphasis on rewards encourages the young people to develop positive behaviours that they can, and do, take pride in. Where sanctions have been imposed, the young people recognise consequences, which promotes further positive actions. One young person wrote: 'Fair sanction and I'll do my best in future.'

As a result of the good relationships that the young people have with the staff team members, and their sense of trust and security in the home, physical interventions are very rarely necessary. When they have been used in order to protect a young person from self-harming, all appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that the young person is safe. It is of note that due to the young people's sense of security and belonging there have not been any restraints since 16 December 2017. A child and adolescent mental health worker said: 'Being here has allowed her to thrive with these boundaries in place.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

This is the home's first inspection since its re-registration in July 2017. The suitably qualified manager has over 18 years' experience in residential childcare. She and her deputy have been managing this home since it opened. Together they form an inspirational team. Their commitment, enthusiasm and passion to meet the needs of the young people in their care enthuses the staff team members. The manager said of the young people: 'We are getting our arms around all three of them and are providing them with nurturing and stability. We've set a good foundation and a family environment.'

This home is one of a number either opened or re-opened by the children's trust within the last 12 months. As a result, a number of new personnel have been appointed to ensure that there are sufficient carers for the young people and to support the experienced staff team members. The deputy manager recognised that many workers may not have direct experience within a residential children's home and devised an induction programme to ensure that practice was consistent. He was fully supported in this by the home's manager who participated with him on delivering the sessions. This excellent and innovative practice is empowering for staff team members who are then able to meet the needs of the young people.

Records evidence that staff team members receive supervision and annual appraisals that support them and improve their practice. Excellent case discussions, held as part of team meetings, ensure that all staff team members have an understanding of the young people's developing needs and how to address them. This has included working together with mental health professionals following a new diagnosis of autism for one young person.

A comprehensive training programme, both online and taught sessions, covers a range of core subjects, including child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' agenda. However, as yet, the staff team members have not had any training on the complexities posed by attachment issues.

The management team members know the young people in their care extremely well. This knowledge ensures that they are aware of the progress that the young people are making and that they are able to take proactive steps to address any shortfalls. They ensure that all of the young people's notable achievements are recorded so that they can form part of the young people's care history and can be built upon. A parent said: 'I have no criticisms about the staff here at all. [Name] would not want to move from here

or go into foster care or any other home as she is so happy here.'

Excellent internal monitoring processes ensure that the records kept by the home are comprehensive and detailed. They support and inform the young people now and if they wish to access them in the future. The views of the young people, staff team members, parents and professionals are regularly captured in order to influence care practice and improve outcomes for the young people and inform the home's development plan. The external monthly reports are thorough and detailed. They actively contribute towards young people's well-being and safety.

As stated in the statement of purpose, staff act as good parents, providing a positive group living experience. This includes encouraging an awareness of racial, gender, cultural and religious needs. The young people are happy and have grown in confidence and self-esteem, demonstrating that the home is achieving its aims.

The proactive management team members have built excellent working relationships with partner agencies. Their commitment to ensuring that the young people receive the holistic care that they need, and deserve, includes challenging other agencies where necessary. These positive relationships contribute towards the young people's positive outcomes and development. A school safeguarding coordinator said: 'It is really good communication. I can't fault them' and a looked after children's nurse commented, 'The communication is excellent. I'm kept up to date.'

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: 1258627

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Doncaster Children's Services Trust Limited

Registered provider address: Blue Building, 38–40 High Street, Doncaster DN1 1DE

Responsible individual: Susan May

Registered manager: Angela Currie

Inspector

Ann-Marie Born: social care inspector

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