

SC000820

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and operated by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 February 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 **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 21 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young people have access to a wide range of activities. Such activities broaden their individual interests and develop their social skills. One young person attends a trampoline club that is for young people with learning difficulties. Another young person is encouraged to pursue her love of horse riding. She has won awards and certificates for her achievements.
- The staff team members are skilled and committed to supporting the young

people. They recognise the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships. This allows the young people to settle and make good progress. For one young person who was recently admitted, he has made significant progress in a short period of time.

- The home's manager recognises the importance of maintaining family relationships. The staff team takes a proactive approach to supporting young people to have family visits.
- Educational attainment is well supported. The relationships that the home has with schools and training organisations are positive. This means that the young people receive a good level of support to help them achieve to their optimal ability.
- The young people respond well to the clear boundaries that are in place. Sanctions are rare but effective when applied. A restorative approach is taken to help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour.
- The young people say that the adults who care for them listen to them and help them. The young people like spending their time with the staff team and the other young people. They identify this as their home.
- The home is warm and welcoming. The manager and staff team ensure that the home is clean and well maintained. Young people are supported to clean their own rooms. This has become part of their weekly routine. It also offers more opportunities for the staff team members to engage on a one-to-one basis with the young people. This is something that the young people enjoy.
- The staff team and home's manager follow 'Working together to safeguard children' protocols. They have excellent working relationships with a wide range of professionals. This includes the police and education, health and social care professionals. This means that the young people receive individualised care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home's manager should develop improvements in the system for accessing records for anyone who has a legitimate need to do so.
- The manager should ensure that there is consistency in the recording. This should include dates and signatures to ensure accountability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
06/12/2016	Full	Good
09/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/01/2016	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
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1))	08/03/2018

Recommendations

- Some records may be kept electronically (Regulation 38), provided that this information can be easily accessible by anyone with a legitimate need to view it and, if required, be reproduced in a legible form. In particular, transfer of records to electronic formats is carried out in a timely manner to avoid any unnecessary impact upon case records. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home provides the young people with a warm and nurturing environment. The young people attend a range of activities and events where they are able to build special memories. Each young person has a memory box, book and a memory jar to capture special moments. There is a strong emphasis on the young people enjoying and achieving. This enables young people to develop trusting relationships and make good progress in all areas of their lives.

The staff team members know the young people very well. Relationships develop quickly and are based on a proactive approach to engage the young people and provide consistency of care. Good humour assists to develop the relationships and creates a relaxed atmosphere in the home, without compromising on the boundaries. There is a real sense of family values and the staff team members being part of the young people's

family unit. This creates stability and security for the young people. A social worker said, 'It is unreal the progress that [name] has made in such a short space of time. [Name's] issues have significantly decreased. It helps that he likes the staff.'

The home is a large period property and is well maintained in keeping with its age and style. There is sufficient space for communal activities to take place. In particular, the dining area is well used. At mealtimes, the staff team members and young people come together and discuss their day. The young people enjoy relaxing in the home. There are books, films, board games and games consoles for the young people to access. There is a homely feel, with pictures of the young people displayed around the home. Some photographs capture memories of special events. The young people are involved in decorating and personalising their bedrooms. This enables young people to have a sense of ownership and respect for their surroundings.

The staff team is enthusiastic and clear about the aims and objectives as set out in the home's statement of purpose. One member of staff said, 'I love working here. It is a great place to work. I was really happy when I found out I was working Christmas eve, as this meant I got to see the young people Christmas morning.' The messages that the staff team members give to the young people make them feel cared for. This enables young people to make the necessary progress in their education, health and development. A young person commented, 'This is an amazing place to be, the best ever.'

The staff hold a monthly meeting with the young people. This provides opportunities for the young people to make contributions about the running of the home. This forum is an effective way to consider the young people's views. In recent meetings, two young people suggested a visit to a holiday cottage that is used within the organisation. At the time of the inspection, those young people were at the cottage. This demonstrates that the young people's views are considered and acted upon.

The young people were observed to have very natural and loving relationships with the management team and the staff team. One young person was excited about spending time on the farm, which is linked with the homes, with the director of the organisation. Staff at all levels have a shared collective goal to ensure that the young people enjoy positive experiences.

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

The young people are effectively safeguarded in the home. The staff team follows safeguarding procedures. Risk assessments inform the staffing levels for the supervision of the young people. This is considered in line with the young person's needs as well as their level of functioning.

One young person complained that she did not feel safe at a time when another young person (who has since moved on) was displaying disruptive behaviour. The manager of the home took decisive action to respond to the young person's concerns. The young person was happy with the outcomes. This demonstrates that young people know how

to complain if they do not feel safe and that they trust that the adults who care for them will protect them.

Care plans and risk assessments are reviewed regularly and are shared with the young people to enable them to contribute to their records and comment on the care that they receive. Risks are well identified within assessments, but strategies to change some behaviours are not always identified or followed. This can limit full progress due to the delay caused. The manager recognised this and quickly updated a risk assessment to reflect actions taken.

Episodes of going missing are not an issue of concern with the young people currently living in the home. One young person commented on the staff team and the home's manager helping her through some difficulties. Her episodes of going missing from home have significantly reduced, with no episodes of going missing from home for approximately 12 months.

Staff are adequately trained to use physical intervention. However, this is rarely used. A professional commented, 'I can't recall the last time [name] was restrained. The home has worked so hard with her and she just has a lovely relationship with everyone there.'

The use of sanctions for unacceptable behaviour is minimal and effective when used. A restorative approach is taken to help young people to reflect and learn from the impact of their behaviours.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the home. Safeguarding is discussed within individual supervisions and at team meetings. Safety is taken seriously within the home. Fire drills are carried out, as required. The home ensures safety tests are maintained and carried out within required timescales. This ensures the safety of the young people is considered on a daily basis.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is appropriately qualified for the role. He is supported by an enthusiastic deputy manager and skilled staff team. The manager works hard to ensure that the duty rotas consider the diverse range of skills within the team so that they complement each other. The staff team members are fully committed to achieving good outcomes for the young people who they care for.

The registered manager is passionate about the care provided to the young people. He has a good insight into the impact of trauma on young people and how to respond to their needs. The manager leads by example and works late one evening per week, to take the opportunity to engage with the young people and to observe practice. His presence in the home is well noted. Observations during the inspection are that young people like to be jovial with him and seek out affection from him. One young person said, 'You have to make us outstanding. [Managers name] is the best. He has done so much for me. I don't want to leave here.'

The staff receive good levels of support and supervision records are comprehensive and of good quality. The staff spoken to during the inspection confirmed that they receive the right level of support. One member of staff commented on wanting to work in the home based on the strengths of the home's manager.

The registered manager and the staff team work well with external agencies and family members. Feedback from a range of services and family members has all been positive. One family member said, 'I couldn't fault them. They do a fantastic job. [Name] has matured so much and she is the most settled she has ever been. I wish we had found them years ago.'

There are comprehensive records maintained within the home. Such records reflect the development and progress of young people. The home is adjusting its way of recording as some records are held electronically and some are in paper form. It is inevitable that there will be issues in the development or the transition of records. The manager welcomes suggestions to enhance the systems and accessing of information. Aspects of the system are impressive but could be strengthened further to demonstrate clearly the outcomes for young people.

Case records reflect the individual needs of the young people. However, there is a lack of consistency within the recording of information. In particular, the records are not always signed or dated. This means that there is a lack of regularity in the accountability of practice.

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: SC000820

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Registered provider address: Peartree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham
DL2 2UP

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Sean Cooper

Inspector:

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector

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