

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC006921
Inspector	Barbara (Polly) Polain
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Five Rivers Child Care Limited
Registered person address	47 Bedwin Street SALISBURY SP1 3UT

Responsible individual	Richard Marshall Cross
Registered manager	Naome Cynthia Muzeremwi
Date of last inspection	31/10/2013

Inspection date	13/08/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
-------------------	-------------

This home provides good quality personalised care for young people in a family atmosphere. Staff ratios are high and allow for staff to engage with young people and develop a good level of understanding and rapport. Staff tend to be of long standing and are generally motivated and enthusiastic. The aim of the home is to provide a safe, nurturing and therapeutic environment in which young people can thrive and develop aims and ambitions.

Young people make good progress at the home, particularly in respect of education and psychological health which are areas that the home specialises in.

The manager of the home is experienced and suitably qualified. The home has a development plan which is constantly being reviewed and updated in order to ensure there is a constant level of improvement.

Young people are comfortable and confident at the home and well able to articulate their views. The home provides a range of activities and there is a plan for holidays and outings during the summer school break.

There is also a reward system in place which encourages positive behaviour and reduces the need for sanctions by ensuring that young people are motivated to do well.

The home works in partnership with families and local authorities to ensure good outcomes. Young people are successfully supported in transition periods, for instance, in regard to a planned return home or a move towards independent living.

Young people are included in some of the day to day tasks of the home and staff engage with young people to help them learn independence skills such as budgeting and cooking. The weekly house meetings also invite residents' contributions in regard to menus and activities but do not go far enough in terms of encouraging young people to have a say in the day to day running of the home. Increasing the involvement of young people in these arrangements would serve to promote the development of some essential independence skills as well as ensuring that their wishes and feelings are taken into account.

A further area that the home could improve upon is in regard to promoting contact with young persons' friends and those important to them. The current arrangements do not sufficiently distinguish between adult visitors and young people's friends making informal visits. These arrangements should be reviewed in the light of promoting contact as a way of ensuring young people maintain connections with those important to them. Additionally, the home should ensure that the electronic surveillance arrangements continue to be regularly assessed in the light of the needs and requirements of the young people present at the time.

Two recommendations were made as a result of this inspection. These are in respect to the above points. Firstly, to regularly review security arrangements and secondly, to re-appraise the current visitor arrangements for young people's friends and other people who are important to them.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate and provide education for up to five children or young people. The provider is an organisation and a limited company, with a number of children's homes.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/10/2013	Interim	good progress
14/06/2013	Full	good
17/01/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
24/08/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that young people 'are supported and encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships, subject to any limitations or provision set out in their care plan, placement plan and any court order. Appropriate forms of contact are promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate visits to the child in the home' NMS 9.1
- The electronic security arrangements at the home are regularly reviewed to ensure the appropriateness of their use in line with Standard 10.3: 'Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel' (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The home is good at supporting young people to develop a positive view of themselves. Staff work hard to establish and maintain warm relationships and young people clearly feel comfortable talking to them. Staff members on shift sit with the young people in the comfortable sitting room provided and talk informally to the young people. This gives a family home feel, allowing staff to get to know them and to build rapport, encouraging young people to think well of themselves and to develop social skills. Young people were seen to be articulate and able to express their views confidently.

Staff take pride in their work and the achievements of the young people: 'we strive to achieve the best outcomes for our young people and I'm proud to be a team member at Clannad.'

Each young person is in education. The home has a small school on the premises and young people who cannot attend local schools can continue their education here. Parents value this facility and are pleased with the progress they are seeing: 'making really good progress and benefiting from the one to one attention'. All young people have made good progress in terms of education and a high number have sat GCSE's this year.

Young people are encouraged to have ambition and a plan for their future. They are proud of their achievements and staff reinforce this with praise. Young people have gained places at college, found part time summer jobs and made plans for their futures.

The home supports young people to attend medical and dental appointments and healthy eating is encouraged. A psychotherapist visits the home regularly and young people are able to use the service as well as staff. The service aims to promote good mental health outcomes by facilitating a greater understanding of a difficult past and by encouraging a positive self-view.

Contact with family is encouraged. Parents commented that arrangements for contact were supported by the home and the communication was good: 'they always let me know what is going on'. Other comments included 'staff are very kind' 'They do a difficult job but they really care about the young people'.

Young people can bring their friends to the home. The arrangements for when friends visit are at present rather formal with friends treated similarly to adult visitors to the home. A recommendation of this inspection is that this is managed in a way that promotes and encourages appropriate contact.

Transition to independence is managed in consultation with local authority social workers and the way this is managed in the home is dependent upon the requirements of individual pathway plans. Young people are encouraged to learn independence skills including cooking and budgeting. For instance, when meals are prepared young people are encouraged to assist and to work alongside staff. The home has also worked alongside the local authority so that some young people are successfully returning home to their families.

Quality of care

good

The home is appropriately located on a quiet residential street. It is a large detached house with a sizeable garden and set well back from the road, ensuring some level of privacy.

The home aims to provide a therapeutic setting in which young people can build constructive relationships. Staff are supported in this by weekly sessions with a psychotherapist who is also separately available to young people for counselling and support.

The delivery of this aim is highly dependent upon a family rather than institutional atmosphere in the home and upon positive interactions between staff and resident young people. In order to achieve this staff spend the majority of their time talking to the young people and sharing activities. Staff numbers are quite high to allow for this. Young people are also encouraged to take part in the preparation of the evening meal and there are regular baking sessions in the spacious and well-appointed kitchen. This involvement in day to day tasks serves to provide daily situations in which young people can interact with staff as well as opportunities to develop independence skills.

Staff report that they find the therapeutic approach gives a structure and purpose to the work and a high level of job satisfaction in that they can then see good results, such as young people settling down, achieving well in education, improving their self-esteem and sense of purpose. Parents report that the staff are 'considerate and caring' and the therapeutic environment is helping their children to make good progress: 'I don't think of it as a children's home'.

The home also provides a range of activities; drama classes and horse riding are regular activities for those that choose them. Holiday activities include a recent weekend trip to Thorpe Park as well as a holiday at Alton Towers. Educational outings to museums and places of interest are also organised at regular intervals.

There is a reward system in place, the purpose of which is to encourage positive behaviour and reduce the need for sanctions. The reward system is based upon tokens (in this case marbles) and each token is worth a small amount of money which is then distributed as extra pocket money. Staff report that this is highly

effective and has become a source of good humoured competition amongst the young people. Certainly, the young people at home at the time of this inspection were observably taking a keen interest in the amount of marbles in their respective jars. The success of this system is evidenced by the absence of sanctions and restraint situations occurring at the home (none since the last Ofsted inspection).

The home holds regular weekly house meetings and the minutes of these indicate that young people are invited to have a say in the planning of activities and menus. Nonetheless, the structure of these appears formulaic and it is a recommendation of this inspection that some thought is given to ways in which young people's views can be included into other aspects of the running of the home.

How to make a complaint information is clearly available and in fact there is a telephone booth in a secluded area of the kitchen corridor in which young people can make calls in reasonable privacy. Information about how to make an internal complaint, children's rights, Ofsted telephone numbers and other useful information is available within the booth.

The home has a security system which alerts staff in the office when anyone leaves or enters a bedroom. It is a further recommendation of this inspection that the need for this system be reviewed in light of the needs of the young people resident at the time.

Overall, the home aims to provide a safe therapeutic setting in which young people can re-establish attachments and develop pride in themselves and their achievements. This is achieved mainly through nurture and encouragement. There was only one minor complaint from a young person and only a very few sanctions. The home relies mostly upon rewarding positive behaviour rather than sanctioning. This is consistent with the therapeutic emphasis of the home and the belief that young people thrive and learn best with encouragement and a high level of individual positive attention from adults.

Keeping children and young people safe good

All young people spoken to during this inspection confirmed that they feel safe and that they can speak to any member of staff should they feel bullied or at risk of harm in any way. Young people reported that staff are responsive to their needs, readily available and that there are sufficient numbers on each shift that they feel protected and cared for.

The vetting and selection process for staff recruitment is done centrally, but the registered manager is part of the interview and selection team. Only one new member of staff has been recruited this year.

There have been no allegations of harm within the home since the last inspection but there are clear policies and procedures in place and these inform the practice of the staff and managers. All allegations of harm are appropriately and thoroughly investigated and the results are recorded on file. Accidents and incidents are all recorded accurately and in enough detail to explain what occurred and what steps were taken to remedy the situation and to reduce future risks wherever possible.

Young people's files are stored safely and securely in a locked cabinet in the office. Medication is also stored appropriately within a locked cabinet. Dosages are recorded as they are dispensed. These records are kept in a medications book and each entry is signed off by two members of staff.

Young people do sometimes go missing but when they do, steps are taken to ascertain their whereabouts and to ensure they are safe. Phone calls are made to young people's mobiles and relatives and friends are contacted. These steps are clearly recorded on files and a thorough analysis of the possible triggers is undertaken in each case. There is a close relationship with the local police missing person's unit and staff at the home ensure they receive advice and support in cases where there are concerns as to the safety of young people. Managers and staff take part in strategy meetings and other briefings as and when required and actively liaise with social workers and other professionals involved with the young person.

The local safeguarding officer was contacted in the course of this inspection with no safeguarding concerns relating to the home noted.

Leadership and management

good

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by a suitably qualified manager.

All concerns and complaints since the last inspection and from monthly independent inspections have been acted upon. For instance, the independent inspector recently suggested that young people who go missing should have the benefit of an independent advocate to speak to upon their return. The home has followed this up and engaged the services of independent advocates for those young people who want them.

The home has had one external complaint since the last inspection. This was from a neighbour and concerned the behaviour of some young people at the home. This was addressed with the young people and the manager met with the resident and discussed the situation. Since then there have been no complaints and in fact a number of neighbours, including the local neighbourhood watch representative responded to an invitation to attend a recent 'open day' held in the garden at the home, praising the manager for her good management of the home.

The manager is able to demonstrate the impact that living in the home has on

resident young people through monitoring progress and outcomes. In this regard, she is able to discuss the success of the young people in education and in improved physical and mental health.

The home makes good use of the psychological services resources that are available. The manager is able to use group sessions with staff as an opportunity to discuss ways of developing the therapeutic aims of the home further and to ensure that the ethos of the home remains on track.

Parents and social workers report good communication and young person's files indicate that overdue reviews are chased by staff and young people are encouraged and supported to contribute and have their views heard.

Staff report that they are offered good quality training and supervision and consider that they are well supported by the manager. One staff member reported that she enjoyed working at the home and found it rewarding and satisfying because she could see the difference in young people from the time they arrived to the time they were ready to move on. Working here feels as if 'it's my own home'. There are high staff to young people ratios and this allows staff to spend a good proportion of their time on shift with the young people.

Notifications of significant incidents and events are made to the appropriate authorities in good time. Monthly monitoring reports are also received on time and the manager acts upon suggestions and requirements made. Three monthly managers' progress reports are also forwarded to Ofsted in good time and are of good quality, containing relevant analysis of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.