

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	25 April 2016
Unique reference number	SC007290
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Deborah Pacquette
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	25 April 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
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	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC007290

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have a strong voice. They feel listened to and respected. They effectively contribute to the planning of their care.
- Young people receive highly individualised, integrated support that meets their needs and promotes their life chances effectively.
- Young people make good progress across different aspects of their welfare and development.
- Staff are highly skilled at forming positive, trusting and secure relationships with young people.
- The home effectively provides young people with an emotionally secure base. Young people experience consistency of relationships and stability in their lives. The multi-agency joint working on promoting placement stability and effectiveness is excellent.
- The home's risk management process is collaborative and effective at keeping young people safe. Through educating young people about the risks, staff enable them to become increasingly safer.
- The registered manager successfully fosters a learning culture. The practice relating to reflective placement discharge summaries is commendable.

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Fitness of workers (1) The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. (2) The registered person may only— (a) employ an individual to work at the children's home; or (b) if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). (3) The requirements are that— (d) full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2 (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3)(d) Schedule 2).	1 July 2016

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff have good opportunities to gain the required qualification ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.12).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private home provides accommodation and support to up to four young people who are between 11 and 17 years old and might have emotional or behavioural difficulties or a mild mental disorder.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30 December 2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10 September 2015	Full	Requires improvement
25 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15 December 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff are highly skilled at being able to quickly form positive, trusting and secure relationships with young people. As a result, young people have very positive experiences of living in this home. Some young people, who came in an emergency, did not want to leave. One young person was unable to settle in other places and insisted on coming back. Having been in various homes, he said that this one was the best. Another young person asked to return after a failed reunification with her family. For her, this home was clearly a place of safety and support. One young person had nine placement breakdowns before settling with ease in this home. This is the young person's description of the home, 'It is a loving and family-orientated place. The staff genuinely care for young people and want to work here. The manager is really helpful. They are all like mothers to me. There is a good atmosphere. It is about the vibe of the place. It is so very special.' Young people understand why they are in care. They know what the care plan for them is and feel enabled to contribute to it. They are aware of their rights and know that their voices count. They feel that adults around them listen and respond positively. They are pleased to see that staff work closely with their families, social workers, teachers and therapists. Young people experience highly individualised, integrated support that meets their needs and promotes their life chances effectively. Young people get a comprehensive introduction to the home. They are clear about the house rules and their responsibilities in relation to those. They know what is expected from them and what they can expect from staff. They live in an emotionally and physically safe environment that provides order, structure, stability and steady rhythm to their lives. They know that they can depend on staff to reliably provide them with the support that they need. They experience consistency and stability of relationships. They have developed a sense of safety and feelings of trust. Staff instil in young people the importance of having good manners, enjoying positive relationships and engaging with education. Some young people display challenging behaviours only when they are outside the home. This demonstrates their respect for staff and appreciation of the support that they receive. The positive experiences and newly learned behaviours in the home are something that they then extend to other people and situations. For one young person, the home is the only place where she feels safe enough to explore her difficult feelings. These feelings, at times, result in challenging	

behaviours. Her therapists see this as a great step forward. Staff work in close partnership with mental health support services to make sure that they understand young people's emotional needs and promote their well-being effectively.

The level of the young people's educational attainment is varied. To address the barriers to young people's educational engagement and progress, staff work very closely with the schools, colleges and alternative educational provisions. One young person receives a curriculum that is individually tailored around her specific needs. The bespoke programme is delivered flexibly in different environments, such as the home, community and school. She receives extra support to build on her confidence and motivation to return to the full-time mainstream education. Another young person feels that the staff have enabled him to engage in an apprenticeship. This was after many years of his non-engagement in any kind of structured learning. Another young person who was recently granted an asylum is happy to have the opportunity to learn the English language and about the British way of life. He is particularly pleased at how the staff respect and support his religious and cultural needs.

Young people have good opportunities to engage in a range of leisure activities inside and outside the home. This helps their social integration and development of social skills and confidence. The arrangements for delegated authority are effective at promoting young people's friendships, enjoyment and independence.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The registered manager does not demonstrate that she has always followed robust procedures when recruiting staff members. Some staff files do not contain all required information, such as identity checks and full work histories. Without this information, it is difficult to ascertain the validity of the references. In addition, the registered manager has accepted some references without following them up by telephone. The gaps in the recruitment procedure compromise the safeguarding of young people. The weak practice in relation to staff recruitment is the sole reason for judging how well young people are protected as requires improvement. All other aspects of safeguarding are strong. Staff have received comprehensive training on safeguarding and child protection. The recent training sessions and team discussions included issues such as anti-oppressive practice, restorative justice, going missing from education, e-safety, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. The home has recently developed more specific written guidance on some of these topics. Individual staff members have taken key responsibilities for the implementation of the policies on child sexual exploitation, e-safety and radicalisation. The enhanced safeguarding roles include making sure that up-to-date information and resources that promote good safeguarding practice are easily available to staff and young people. Posters and promotional literature in the	

communal areas serve as constant reminders of the risks and the specialist support available.

The home's risk management process is effective at keeping young people safe. Staff have excellent understanding of young people's needs and vulnerabilities to risks. They work proactively with other professionals to make sure that the risk management plans holistically encompass different aspects of the young people's lives. Risk management planning and implementation of strategies are shared with partner agencies. Young people receive consistent and coordinated responses that effectively promote their welfare in situations that present them with high risks, such as when they are missing from education or care. Staff regularly review risk management plans to make sure that they are up to date and that the safeguarding strategies remain effective. Before making any decisions on admissions, the registered manager carefully considers the potential risks associated with the group dynamic and the locality risk assessment.

The home's risk management approach includes educating young people about risks. By holding discussion groups and talking with young people in private, staff enable them to become more aware of the risks. Young people have excellent opportunities to learn how to recognise and avoid risks and how to keep themselves safe. Staff give confidence to young people to explore new situations and build on their independence and resilience. After a house meeting that focused on online grooming and child sexual exploitation, a young person said that the discussion opened his eyes to some things that he had not been aware of. The recent workshops for young people covered online safety, child sexual exploitation, bullying, healthy eating, radicalisation, misuse of substances and going missing from education.

Staff work in close partnership with social workers and the police to effectively assess the risks to individual young people when their whereabouts are not confirmed. Young people receive consistent messages about the risks and protective responses from a range of professionals. As a result, they have become increasingly safer. There are no current child sexual exploitation or radicalisation concerns in the home. Staff remain highly observant and vigilant, always checking for any changes in young people's behaviours.

The home effectively provides young people with an emotionally secure base. Solid, positive relationships between young people and staff underpin the effectiveness of the behaviour management practice in the home. Several professionals highlighted the ability of the staff to 'hold young people's emotions' as a particular strength of the service. This has included feelings associated with intensive grief.

The practice relating to conflict resolution is effective. The registered manager favours a behaviour management approach that reinforces young people's positive behaviours through consistent praise and rewards. Staff show sensitivity towards young people, their needs and ways of communicating and expressing themselves. They provide clear and consistent boundaries. They firmly and gently guide young people towards adopting more constructive behaviours. Staff have not used

physical interventions since the last inspection. They use sanctions sparingly and with good effect.

Regular health and safety checks make sure that the environment is physically safe. Good fire safety procedures contribute to this.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A qualified social worker has been managing the home since it started operating 18 years ago. Her leadership is strong, visible and effective. Her vision of providing a safe and nurturing home environment and making a true difference in young people's lives has inspired and united the staff team. Staff are highly motivated individuals who competently deliver the home's statement of purpose. Clear responsibilities and accountabilities complement their sense of shared vision, teamwork and ownership. The registered manager models excellent social work practice through her direct support work with young people. She closely monitors the quality of care and its impact on the young people's progress and outcomes. An independent visitor adds external scrutiny and insightful evaluation of the service to the home's quality assurance processes. The home is committed to continued improvement and development. The team away day focused on the review of the home's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A clear written development plan and a comprehensive workforce training programme are being implemented. The team as a whole is stable, highly experienced and skilled. A social worker said that the staff were 'doing a stellar job'. Another social worker described the staff as 'always highly professional'. The staff members either have an appropriate qualification or are working towards it. However, one staff member who has been working part-time at the home for 18 months has still not enrolled on an appropriate qualification programme. The manager and staff have introduced a number of improvement initiatives into the service. They have reviewed and developed a number of new policies. They have incorporated the quality standards framework into the home's care planning process. In line with the requirements, the staff practice has become more clearly evidence based. The record keeping has improved tremendously. Young people's files are now very well organised. They provide a clear picture of their starting point, journey and progress. The records demonstrate good quality, integrated care planning and close partnerships that flexibly revolve around the young people. The creation of central logs of significant events has contributed to easier monitoring of	

trends.

The professionals who visit the home, including those from social care, education and health, unanimously give very positive feedback about the quality of the service. They have full confidence in the leadership, management and staff. They describe the quality of communication with the home as excellent, brilliant and 'second to none'. Professionals have also made positive comments about the homely atmosphere. Some of them described it as 'unique'. They value the service very highly.

The registered manager and staff tirelessly champion young people's needs and effective working together. The social workers receive regular updates on the young people's progress. The joint work on promoting placement stability has some characteristics of outstanding practice, such as flexibility, innovation and being deeply young person-led. Another example of the home's commendable practice relates to young people's placement discharge summaries. The registered manager writes and shares those documents with her team and the local authorities after each placement. This practice facilitates reflection and learning for all parties involved. It also contributes to a more insightful assessment of the young people's needs and stability of their future placements.

The registered manager successfully fosters a learning culture, both for young people and staff. The home acts as a learning centre and provides work placements for student social workers. Keeping up with social care research findings, excellent training opportunities, good quality supervision, annual performance appraisals and frequent team meetings contribute to a continued review, improvement and development of the staff practice.

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 looked after children 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 who 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

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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