

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	03/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC007608
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Paula Kelly
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	03/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. All of the young people continue to make good progress supported by an effective, knowledgeable staff team. The young people see this very much as their home and contribute to the running of it on a regular basis. An example of this is a room in the house that is being turned into a 'chill-out den' for the young people. They have contributed to the design and decoration and have been clear about what they want included. The home is described by one professional as: 'One of the best homes I have worked with.' The young people all have individualised plans that enable them to develop socially and experience life outside of the home and school. They are all involved in individual and group activities as well as those activities undertaken together with other young people from the home. Those young people attending school all achieve 100% attendance, as does the older young person who attends college. Behaviour is managed effectively in the home with minimal sanctions being used, as a restorative approach has been adopted when dealing with issues that arise. There have been no episodes of going missing since the last inspection and no requirement for physical intervention. The young people are safe in this home and the staff team has a proactive approach to safeguarding welfare and to teaching the young people how to keep themselves safe. Key-worker sessions are well planned and address group and individual issues. The last session centred on online safety. All of the young people have completed a relevant course in relation to online safety. In addition, the manager has been innovative in her research around aspects of safe use. She has developed a fictitious situation on social media to show the young people the effects of having no privacy settings. This ensures that the young people improve their knowledge about how to keep safe and in turn become more self-aware when using social media. The inspirational registered manager works well with other agencies such as education, health and placing authorities to ensure that young people's needs are met. The manager and the team work successfully with parents and families and	

strongly advocate on behalf of the young people. This improves the emotional well-being of the young people and allows trust to develop. A social worker said: 'The manager has sound communication skills and keeps me updated. I feel very involved in the progress of [young person].'

The home is large, comfortable and well maintained overall. There is an issue with signs of damp on the downstairs wall at the rear of the home and this has been present for some time. While the area affected is not regularly used by the young people, the issue does need to be addressed.

The monitoring within the home is clear and effective. The manager ensures that records are maintained and up to date. Supervision of staff is carried out monthly. Records demonstrate that reflective practice is used regularly to explore issues and concerns to improve learning. In addition, staff meetings are held monthly and act as group supervision as well as addressing general business. The agenda for such meetings should include safeguarding as a standard item replicating the individual supervision agenda. This will further enhance the culture of safeguarding within the home.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/09/2016	Full	Outstanding
17/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
26/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

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

- Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child. In particular, safeguarding should be a standard item on the staff meeting agenda. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc.); specifically, address the issue of damp at the rear of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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