

## Children's homes inspection - Full

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>             | <b>03/11/2015</b>                                                        |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | <b>SC007608</b>                                                          |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>          | <b>Full</b>                                                              |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>           | <b>Children's home</b>                                                   |
| <b>Registered provider</b>         | <b>Pear Tree Projects Limited</b>                                        |
| <b>Registered provider address</b> | <b>Peartree House, Bolam,<br/>DARLINGTON, County<br/>Durham, DL2 2UP</b> |

|                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>David Bartlett</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Gillian Graham</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Steve Pearson</b>  |

|                                                                                                 |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>03/11/2015</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Requires improvement</b>    |

**SC007608**

**Summary of findings**

**The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people make very good progress at this children's home. This is a home for long term placements and children settle and develop positively in the homely and well-structured environment.
- The registered manager and staff enable young people to develop well in a wide range of areas. They succeed in education; their emotional and physical health improves; they gain self-confidence and become increasingly independent;
- Young people develop good social skills and gain fun and stimulation from enjoyable activities outside of the home.
- The atmosphere in the house is homely and comfortable. The property is spacious and provides good facilities with large grounds to play in, grow vegetables and keep pets.
- Effective arrangements are in place to promote young people's welfare and keep them safe.
- Staff develop caring and supportive relationships with young people and provided a strong sense of day to day continuity which enables young people to feel safe and secure.

## 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   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>The registered person must give notice in writing to HMCI, as soon as it is reasonably practicable, if they expect to cease to manage the children's home.</p> <p>(Regulation 49(a))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 06/11/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must implement a policy which sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. In particular this means implementation of that part of the procedure which directs that "if the allegation meets any of the criteria described in the policy, the named officer should report it to the local authority designated officer within one working day."</p> <p>(Regulation 34(1)(b))</p> | 04/11/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions in the statement of purpose and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. In particular this relates to notifying HMCI about the removal of the post of deputy from the management and staffing structure of the home.</p> <p>(Regulation 16(3)(b))</p>                                                                                                    | 05/12/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. In particular this relates to the provision of formal one to one supervision of staff (Regulation 16(5))</p>                                                                                                                                                                                              | 05/12/2015 |
| <p>The registered person must maintain in the home the records described in Schedule 4. In particular a record of the reason for any visitor calling to the home and a record in the staff roster of the hours worked by the registered manager.</p> <p>(Regulation 37(2)(a))</p>                                                                                                                                                                     | 11/11/2015 |

## **Recommendations**

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

- Clearly identify in the registered manager's quality monitoring reports any actions required for the next six months and how those actions will be addressed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.4)

## Full report

### 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 with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 26/02/2015      | CH - Interim    | sustained effectiveness |
| 24/10/2014      | CH - Full       | Good                    |
| 12/02/2014      | CH - Interim    | Good Progress           |
| 01/10/2013      | CH - Full       | Good                    |

## Inspection Judgements

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>As a result of good quality care, young people make excellent progress. Over time they come to feel settled and develop positively. One young person said, 'I'm a lot calmer since I came to live here. I've settled down a lot.' Young people benefit from a sense of routine and day to day continuity. This helps them feel secure. The staff and young people get on well together. One young person summed this up saying, 'I like living here and the best thing about it is the staff. They listen to us and help us sort things out.'</p> <p>Young people develop good emotional health. Staff benefit from a well-designed training programme which helps them to enable young people to recover from traumatic experiences. Young people also make improvements in their physical health and the registered manager and staff make good use of medical experts to achieve positive results in, for example, promoting physical health and dental health.</p> <p>Staff support young people with their school work and they have excellent levels of attendance at school and achieve well in education. Some have also gained part-time employment and have gained confidence as well as a sense of fulfilment and financial rewards. Arrangements for independent monitoring do not comply with the expectations of legislation. This means external evaluation of the quality of care may not be fully robust.</p> <p>Young people are able to have free time in the community where they benefit from a superb range of stimulating and enjoyable activities and experiences. This includes working with and riding horses, a trip to France to learn about the Second World War and holidays at a self-catering cottage. One young person said, 'I love the activities and working with horses. We had a good holiday on the moors.'</p> <p>Young people gain skills and knowledge that will be helpful when they are older and living independently. The staff teach them how to prepare and cook meals, how to take responsibility for their personal care and how to stay safe in the community.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff seek the views of young people about the quality of care and are responsive to their suggestions. Young people choose the décor of their bedroom and have personalised them with their choice of posters, pictures and furniture. Young people feel valued because the staff promote an ethos of listening to their views.</p> |                 |

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people live in a home that is safe. The staff are effective in promoting young people's safety and reducing risks.</p> <p>The registered persons have not responded appropriately to an allegation of a child protection nature. This was a rare incident and was subsequently investigated by the statutory authorities. The outcome of the investigation was a recommendation that professionals communicate better. The registered persons have reflected on the incident and have gained learning from it.</p> <p>In pre-inspection surveys young people said, 'I feel safe inside the children's home and outside it.' At the inspection, a young person summed this up saying, 'I feel safe. We get on well together and there isn't any bullying.'</p> <p>Young people are aware of how to make a formal complaint. Complaints are rare but when they do occur the registered manager responds appropriately. She investigates the concerns and comes to a judgement as to whether uphold the complaint or not. If upheld, the registered manager takes effective action to address shortfalls.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff assess hazards that may affect young people and record what staff must do to reduce risks further. Clearly-written policies and procedures are in place to advise staff what to do if any young person goes missing or is at risk of exploitation. Such risks rarely arise in this children's home.</p> <p>The registered manager and staff set clear boundaries which help young people feel safe and secure. Restraints are rare and only take place for appropriate reasons. An allegation of unsafe practice arose since the previous inspection. The registered persons did not follow their own procedures in contacting the local authority designated officer to discuss the issue with them. This is against statutory guidance and contravenes the registered persons' written procedures. It was a rare lapse in following procedures. A statutory agency did investigate the concerns and recommended that communication between the children's home and professionals in child protection agencies be improved.</p> <p>Young people take place in regular fire drills. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. This protects young people's safety.</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that staff recruited to work with young people are suitable and safe.</p> |                 |



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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <p>The registered manager has held the position since 2007 and is appropriately qualified for the role.</p> <p>The registered manager was due to resign three days after the inspection, having taken this decision three weeks earlier. Consequently the registered provider had appointed an interim manager to take over the management of the home. Due to a lack of forward planning, the registered persons had left insufficient time to enable the interim manager to become registered with Ofsted before the current registered manager left. This means the home will be left without a manager who is registered with Ofsted. Until Ofsted can register a manager there is a lack of assurance they have the knowledge, skills and experience for the role.</p> <p>Legislation requires a registered manager or registered provider to inform Ofsted in writing if a registered manager decides to cease managing a children's home. This did not happen and so the regulator was unaware of this significant development.</p> <p>The staff team provides good levels of consistency. The turnover of staff is low and the young people know the staff well. There is a clear sense of routine within the home and clear boundaries help young people feel secure. Staffing levels are appropriate. When asked about staffing levels, one young person said, 'There are enough staff on duty.'</p> <p>The home has a statement of purpose which sets out how the home operates. The registered persons have amended the statement of purpose because they have removed the post of deputy from the staffing structure. They did not inform Ofsted of the change which meant the regulator was unaware of a significant development.</p> <p>The registered persons are not following procedures described in their own statement of purpose. In the document it states that the responsible individual will give formal supervision to the registered manager and she in turn will formally supervise the staff. In practice, a registered manager from another children's home is supervising the registered manager as well as the members of staff. The contents of a statement of purpose, including the arrangements for supervision, are important to give accountability for how the home operates. It is therefore necessary for registered persons to operate the home in a way that is consistent with the document.</p> <p>An independent visitor calls at the home once a month to assess the quality of</p> |                             |

care. They look at all necessary issues and talk to young people, their parents and carers and to the staff on duty.

The registered manager conducts ongoing monitoring of the quality of care and compiles a report for Ofsted every six months in compliance with legal requirements. These reports are not fully useful as they do not incorporate an action plan to any address concerns or shortfalls. This weakens the capacity for continuous improvement.

There is a minor lack of accountability in the recording of staffing levels because the registered manager's start and finish times are not recorded on the rota. There is a minor shortfall in the recording of visitors because the reason for their visit is not mentioned.

The registered manager and staff have met the requirement and recommendations made at the previous inspection. Consequently there is greater accountability due to improved recording of restraints and consequences for unacceptable behaviour. The recording of risk assessments is better so that the staff can be clear how to reduce risks such as self-harm. The outcomes of care reviews are now recorded in each young person's case file immediately. This enables staff to be clear about the outcomes of the review. If the notes from the independent reviewing officer are late, the registered manager chases this up.

## 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 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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