

SC007608

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 three children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The acting manager has been in post since 18 October 2019. She has applied for registration with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 December 2019

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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/10/2018	Full	Outstanding
09/01/2018	Full	Outstanding
03/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Outstanding

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, the 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 health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10 (1)(a)(b)(c) and (2)(a)(i)) In particular, care plans should reflect the progress that children and young people make in relation to their health needs.	24/01/2020
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; and help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(i)(ii)) In particular, risk assessments should be kept up to date to help children and young people see where they are making good progress.	24/01/2020
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	24/01/2020

registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(c) and (e)(h))	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	24/01/2020
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to sexual exploitation; an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there; a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(i)(ii) and (e))	24/01/2020

Recommendations

- Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example undertaking life story and

other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 3.14)

In particular, take a consistent approach to recording one-to-one sessions and linking them to the placement plan.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people are supported by carers to develop and engage in hobbies and interests of their own choice. Hobbies include horse riding, sports and much more. Children and young people enjoy these experiences and speak with pride about their achievements. This means that children's and young people's confidence and self-esteem improve.

Education or work attendance and attainment are high and are well supported by carers. The successes of children and young people are recognised within the home and the school environment. This develops their self-esteem and promotes a keen sense of learning.

Family time is well supported where it is safe to do so. This helps children and young people to have a sense of belonging and enables them to have positive experiences and to maintain links with significant people in their lives.

Carers support children and young people to achieve good health from their starting points. Children and young people engage well in the services offered. As well as supporting children and young people to attend appointments, progress is made with their emotional well-being and self-care. However, care plans are not always updated to record the good progress that children and young people are making with regards to their health.

Children and young people benefit from regular key-working sessions that cover a wide range of topics to help them understand their histories and how they can gain control over their own lives. This helps children and young people learn how to keep themselves safe. However, key-working sessions do not show how they link to the care plans. This will help children and young people to see how their carers use care plans to inform the sessions and will help to develop their sense of ownership of the plans.

Children and young people have good relationships with their carers. A young person commented, '[Name] is like family to me. She properly helps me with everything. She is the best ever. I love her.' Feedback from other professionals confirms that the positive relationships which children and young people have with their carers is a strength of this home.

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

Children and young people are safe and are learning how to maintain their own safety, which will help them as they develop into adulthood. There are very few incidents of disruptive behaviour as this is managed through clear boundaries and guidance. Children and young people respond well to these. Children and young people are consulted when sanctions are applied, and they report that these are fair and have helped them to regulate their own behaviour. Sanctions are well recorded and demonstrate a restorative approach, which helps children and young people to reflect and learn how their behaviour affects others.

Physical interventions are rarely used and only as a last resort to safeguard children and young people. Recordings clearly document the steps taken to safeguard children and young people and the support offered to them following any intervention.

Carers respond swiftly to safeguarding incidents to ensure that children and young people are safe. Carers receive relevant safeguarding training to help them identify and respond to risks. When safeguarding incidents occur, carers follow the appropriate protocols. They contact the relevant agencies to ensure that all professionals are aware of the incident and can ensure that children and young people are kept safe. On two occasions, safeguarding incidents were not notified to Ofsted. Although this does not affect the care provided to children and young people, it inhibits the regulator's ability to monitor safeguarding practices.

Risk assessments clearly identify the known individual risks for children and young people. They detail the strategies that carers should follow to keep children and young people safe. These are shared with children and young people but are not always updated promptly to reflect where risks have reduced. Children and young people are aware that they are kept safe, but it is difficult for them to see the progress they are making when they are contributing to records.

Children and young people rarely go missing from the home. If incidents do occur or children and young people return late to the home, carers follow the appropriate protocols to ensure that they return safely. Children and young people are provided with opportunities to speak to an independent adult on their return. This helps them to develop trusting relationships as they are given the opportunity to share any concerns they may have.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The acting manager is highly experienced and suitably qualified for the position held. She has been in post since October 2019. This is the second acting manager in the home since the last full inspection. This has caused disruption for children and young people. Carers and the acting manager recognise the impact that this has had and are sensitively supporting children and young people with the introduction of another acting manager.

Mandatory training is up to date, but not all staff have received training in relation to trauma and attachment. This means there is an inconsistent approach to the evidence-

based model used in practice in the home. Therefore, children and young people experience inconsistencies in the care provided within the home.

The acting manager uses detailed agendas for team meetings and staff supervisions, providing a clear focus for discussions. Safeguarding incidents are discussed in staff supervisions and team meetings. This means that carers can continually reflect on safe care strategies in place that help to protect the children and young people. This is benefiting the children and young people as they say that they feel safe and they can describe how they have learned to keep themselves safe. However, the changes of manager have led to supervisions being irregular. This means that the staff team has not consistently had opportunities to focus on reflective practice, learning and development.

In addition to the areas of poor recording practice, such as not noting children's health progress and risk assessments not being updated, recordings detail opinion and third-party information. This is confusing and unhelpful for children and young people when they read their records to see how they are being supported by their carers. Recording practice has not been identified by the acting manager in her monitoring and reviewing processes and this has led to shortfalls in this area.

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: SC007608

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

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

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector

Catherine Heron: social care inspector

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