

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC007608
Inspector	Michele Hargan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered person address	Toy Top Farm Houghton Bank, Heighington Darlington County Durham DL2 2UQ
Responsible individual	David Anthony John Bartlett
Registered manager	Gillian Graham
Date of last inspection	24/10/2014

Inspection date	26/02/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

Young people are cared for by a stable care team who know them well and who young people describe as 'good.' Young people said if they felt unhappy 'we could talk to any of the staff.' As a result young people learn to establish an appropriate level of reliance on staff, building trust and promoting feelings of security.

Young people live in good quality accommodation set within it's own grounds which is well maintained, safe and appropriately secure. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms reflecting their individual interests and hobbies. This approach promotes feelings of self-worth and belonging by young people.

Staff place a great deal of emphasis for young people on promoting a healthy life style and participating in outdoor country pursuits. Young people said, 'We've been fishing at the farm'. Also, 'I won first place in show jumping and cross country.' A senior member of staff said, 'we are going to start planting some vegetables again in the spring.' This approach develops young people social skills, increases self- esteem and promotes their physical wellbeing.

Staff encourage young people to spend regular time reading and this is also a primary focus at Pear Tree school. A young person said, 'I won the reading cup for most improved reader and third place for accelerated reader and this is the second time'. Rewarding achievements such as improved reading increases young people's self esteem and furthers their interest in academic accomplishments.

Young people receive support from staff during contact with their families helping them manage difficult feelings that can arise at such times. This arrangement increases empathic understanding by staff about the emotional impact for young people of contact. This also enables staff to more effectively advocate any issues relating to contact in the best interests of young people.

A requirement made at the time of the last inspection not due to be implemented until June 2015 about training has already been responded to; the Registered Manager has attended training in attachment and the impact of trauma on children's development. This has increased understanding of young people's underlying needs. A senior member of staff said, 'It made me understand more about young people's fight or flight behaviour.' The provision of good quality training increases staff awareness of young people's individual underlying needs resulting in more tailored care practice.

A recommendation for staff not to require young people to sign for elements of their care has been carefully considered, markedly reducing the practice. Young people said, 'We don't sign medical forms, we sign for pocket money, don't sign for anything else, apart from key worker sessions, house meetings.' Another young person said, 'I think signing for things is boring'. Reducing practices that are institutional helps lessen young people's feelings of difference from their peers who are not looked after.

Some young people's looked after reviews and care plans are markedly out of date and a pathway plan is poor quality despite repeated requests to the placing authority for up to date documentation. Lack of this information disadvantages young people; this also undermines systems designed to ensure young people have access to all relevant information about their care and future plans.

A recommendation made at the time of the last inspection to demonstrate how the quality of care is improved for young people has not been responded to. A senior member of staff said, 'we thought this was made clear within young people's reviews.' This means opportunities to build on good practice and address any areas for development are overlooked, ultimately disadvantaging young people. A recommendation relating to risk assessment to make clear what action staff take to in the event of any self-harm behaviours is also still not clear. This omission potentially puts young people at increased risk.

Staff do not make clear within the sanction log details of young people's behaviour leading to the sanction or the name of the member of staff administering it. As a result it is difficult to discern any patterns or themes in relation to this and to measure the effectiveness of the measures used.

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to three young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is provided by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2014	Full	good
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
01/10/2013	Full	good
06/11/2012	Interim	good progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint, or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include details of the behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the name of the person using the measure, and of any other person present. (Regulation 17B (3) (b) (e))	31/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk

assessment. In particular, make clear within risk assessments that in the event of any self harm type behaviour by any young person what effective measures are to be taken in consultation with other professionals to reduce the risk and keep the young people safe. (NMS 4.5)

- ensure the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified. In particular to ensure where reviews and care plans are not received after repeated requests to the social worker that this is raised at a senior level with placing authorities (NMS 25.8)
- ensure there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. In particular, reports relating to review of quality of care clearly demonstrates improvements in the quality of care available to children. (NMS 21.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

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.