

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC010699
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Mrs Dawnette Legister
Inspector	Mr Barnaby Dowell

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC010699

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people feel safe and are proud to live in their home. The home is well maintained and in a quiet, secluded part of the borough which is free from any gang-related issues. They live in their home without any sense of fear or worry.
- Behaviour is excellent. There have not been any incidents of young people going missing from the home and there is no use of restraint. Young people have a close relationship with staff and engage well with key work sessions.
- Young people get along well in their home. There is a real sense of community where they encourage and motivate one another. Young people enjoy activities outside of the home together.
- Young people are kept safe by a safeguarding culture which is consistently reviewed and promoted with training opportunities for staff. Young people recognise that staff work very hard on their behalf and respond accordingly.
- Young people are encouraged to express their own identities. Respect for each other is openly encouraged, irrespective of culture, gender or sexual orientation. This helps to ensure good behaviour in the home.
- Young people benefit from staff consistency. The home is a family-run business and provides a warm caring environment. Staff are invested in achieving positive outcomes for young people.
- Young people make excellent progress from the point of moving into this home. They all attend education and are excited by their college courses which are due to start in September 2015. Young people are genuinely grateful for the help and persistence of staff during their recent examinations.

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

Statutory Requirements

Requirement	Due date
In order to meet the quality standard in relation to the appointment of a manager. The registered provider must appoint a person to manage the children's home if she is not, or does not intend to be, in day-to-day charge of the home. (Regulation 27 (1)(b) (iii))	10 August 2015
In order to meet the quality standard in relation to the statement of purpose. The registered person must keep the statement under review and, where appropriate, revise it. (Regulation 16(3)(a))	10 August 2015
In order to meet the quality standard in relation to children's case records. The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each child which are kept up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(b))	10 October 2015
In order to meet the quality standard in relation to the protection of children. The registered person must 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. (Regulation 12(2)(a))	10 October 2015
In order to meet the quality standard in relation to the employment of staff. The registered person must ensure that all employees- have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(4)(c))	10 October 2015

Full report

Information about this children's home

- The home is owned by a private provider and is a family-run business. The Registered Manager is also the registered provider. The home provides care for five young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
29/05/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
05/12/2013	CH - Interim	Inadequate Progress
04/04/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people are extremely happy in their home and feel valued. One commented, 'Staff, are great, they keep pushing you just about enough, I would not have finished my exams without them, and I don't want to leave here.' They are aware that the staff team are consistently advocating for them and pushing them to achieve their best. Educational attainment is promoted and celebrated in the home; recently a school presentation ceremony was followed by a congratulatory meal for young people. Young people openly support and encourage each other. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that the appropriate level of education support is provided. They work closely with teachers and support young people with their homework. One teacher stated, 'Staff, consistently go the extra mile to support young people; they are always available for professionals meetings and get young people to come to school.' Young people feel safe and settled and do not go missing. One social worker commented, 'They feel really comfortable in the home, staff strive to support them.' Young people achieve genuine change in this home. Prior to arrival, some young people experienced problems with gang association. Key workers have promoted an alternative lifestyle and there is now a strong emphasis on education and developing skills in budgeting and cooking. Staff work hard to prepare young people to move on from their home. One young person now works part-time, acting as a source of encouragement to others. This represents real progress and he enjoys the financial independence that it offers. Behaviour management is good. Young people respond well to the rewards-based system in the home. They earn extra money by performing house hold tasks such as mowing the lawn. This promotes self-esteem and an understanding of the value of money. There is positive peer group pressure in the home. Young people encourage one another to better themselves and progress. The young person in employment consistently urges his peers to follow his example.	

Keyworkers encourage young people to maximise their potential. In one case, an interest in marine biology has resulted in exploring the possibility of volunteering abroad. One young person commented, 'I can do anything I want if I try.'

Contact with friends and family is promoted and information shared accordingly. Young people are proud to show their home to others. One parent commented, 'I know he is safe there they are doing all they can for him, when something goes wrong they ring me.' Young people feel at ease and comfortable knowing that their parents are working in partnership with professionals from school and the social services.

Healthy living and constructive activity for young people is prioritised. There is currently a health drive in the home with staff and young people urging each other to eat healthily and maintain regular exercise. Staff attend the local gym with young people and a juicing machine has been purchased to ensure healthy eating. This is a common interest for staff and young people and promotes positive relationships in the home.

Young people benefit from planning activities with keyworkers and considering how best to spend their pocket money and activity money. There have been recent trips to Southend and the London Dungeon and a holiday to the seaside is planned for this summer. Young people engage in activities such as attending the local youth club and engaging with the activities provided by the summer university.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are well-prepared for their transition from the home. Semi-independence work is well practised and includes budgeting and cookery exercises. Young people really enjoy this direct work with keyworkers. For example, one young person is proud of how he had purchased, prepared and served a meal of fish and chips for the entire home. Safeguarding practice is strong in this home and staff advocate consistently for young people. Recently keyworkers made sure that a mobile phone clip showing an	

alleged assault of a young person was shown to police. This ensured that the correct child protection procedures were followed and created a feeling of trust between the key worker and young person.

Appropriate, safe usage of the internet and television is encouraged. For example, young people require a password to watch films rated above the age of 15. Inappropriate internet sites are blocked by the server and downloading is completed only with staff permission. Key work focuses on the risks posed by the internet and encourages young people to keep safe.

Behaviour is good. Staff use sanctions minimally and restraint is not used. Staff use key work sessions to work on anger management skills with young people. This helps maintain good behaviour. Staff mediate between young people where appropriate. They are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and avoid areas of conflict. Recently one young person received positive praise after walking away from a possible physical confrontation with another resident. This has raised his self-esteem and he now encourages other young people to behave in the same way.

Young people benefit from a sense of community and learn to accept and value difference. Recently, staff encouraged an interest in Albanian culture following the arrival of a new resident from that country. He was welcomed into the home and young people learnt about Halal food and Islam.

Young people access specialist support services provided by the local authority and support by key work sessions. One young person minimised his cannabis use through counselling. This has now decreased his sense of paranoia and increased his social skills. He is now able to join all of the house activities and recently completed qualifications in maths and English.

Young people are confident of their rights and aware of how to complain. Key workers help and support them in accessing advocacy. Following liaison with the allocated social worker and advocate a plan to move to foster care was abandoned. The young person remains settled in the home. The plan is for him to remain until he reaches the age of eighteen.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The home is a family-run business and employs four family members. The current Registered Manager has not been in management control of the home for three years and is seeking to retire.	

The statement of purpose outlines that the current acting manager is registered with Ofsted. However, no application to be registered has been received by Ofsted and the document gives a misleading impression of the management structure. It is important that this is finalised so that the current acting manager is given an opportunity to develop into the role.

Despite independent monitoring of the home, the concerns expressed in the last full inspection have not been addressed fully by managers. Case recording of key work sessions and risk assessments do not reflect the good direct work being conducted by staff. There is insufficient evidence of management oversight on care plans and risk assessments. Furthermore, staff appraisal and supervision have not been prioritised or monitored by managers. The acting manager offers a firm commitment to rectifying this. It is essential that the problems with case recording are addressed to ensure that service continues to improve and positive outcomes for young people are maintained.

The current acting manager has been open to feedback from the inspector and the young people. Following a request from the young people, a copy of the shift roster will be placed in the living room. This will allow them to be aware of which member of staff is on shift.

The acting manager is a constant presence in the home and is described by professionals as 'helpful and child centred'. He has an excellent knowledge of resources in the local area, such as the local youth club. The young people like and respect him.

Recruitment practices in the home are robust. All staff have up-to-date checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service and all references are verified prior to any person starting work in the home. This ensures that unsuitable persons do not gain easy access to the home.

Two new members of staff have recently been recruited and are presently going through induction and probation. They are begun to develop positive relationships with the young people and are described by them as being 'cool and easy to talk to'.

The acting manager ensures the stability of the home by a rigorous admissions policy. He has refused several recent referrals as admitting young people presenting with more difficult behaviours would be disruptive to those living in the home. He only accepts referrals that the staff team are able to deal with. This has ensured the stability of the home and is a key factor in young people not going missing and engaging well.

The home maintains a very positive relationship with the local authority. One social worker commented 'the home is excellent, we have no concerns'. Staff attend

training provided by the local authority. They attend regular sessions to keep up with key issues such as child sexual exploitation. This helps to raise awareness and inform decision making regarding admissions.

The home is a safe environment. Fire drills are undertaken on a regular basis, as are fire tests. Safety checks on fire, gas and electrical equipment are regularly completed.

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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