

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	16/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC013553
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bramley Care Limited
Registered provider address	Bramley Care Limited, Nicholas House, Enfield, Essex, EN1 3FG

Responsible individual	Barbara Sharp
Registered manager	Gemma Fletcher
Inspectors	Ruth Coler Paul Taylor

Inspection date	16/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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	Good

SC013553

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have positive relationships with staff who support them to make good progress.
- Young people's good behaviour is celebrated and rewarded well, and there are appropriate sanctions should they misbehave.
- Safeguarding practice enhances young people's safety, and staff respond appropriately to child protection concerns.
- Staff work as a team and are skilled at supporting young people to learn the skills that they will need for living independently.
- Staff identify, anticipate and manage problems well.
- Care is taken to ensure that when young people come to live at the home, or to leave it, this happens in the best way possible.
- There are some good monitoring systems in place. However, greater attention and urgency is required for others.
- Although staff supervision and appraisal has not always occurred as frequently as it should, it is now occurring regularly.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
33. (4) The registered person must ensure that all employees— (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. In particular, any staff who supervise others must be appropriately experienced to do so. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	30/01/17
45. (1) The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— (a) the quality of care provided for children (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. In particular, the registered person must ensure that the systems in place for monitoring and reviewing provision are adequate across all areas of practice, especially in relation to staff training and actions taken in respect of external bodies' reports, such as the fire department. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a)(b)(c))	30/01/17

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should review how daily routines are suitably structured to support young people to develop the skills needed for home study. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of four operated by the same private provider. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to nine boys who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The provider has a separately registered school which young people attend. They also employ a range of therapists who provide individual and group therapy sessions for the boys.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
20/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make good progress in all aspects of their lives. They build warm, helpful relationships with staff, based on respect. This enables young people to speak about difficult subjects, such as prior abuse, and how this affects them. External partners speak positively of the progress that young people make and the good work that is done to help young people to develop positive behaviours. One young person wrote in a questionnaire: 'Each time someone tries to wind me up the staff are there to help me and now I am a boy who does not have anger issues.' Admissions are sensitively and carefully managed. Young people say that they are supported well when they arrive and helped to understand the routines of the home. Young people generally stay at the home for at least a year and move to one of the provider's other homes. This helps young people to develop greater independence yet maintain a sense of permanence. Transitions out of the home are successful because young people have come to understand and recognise the positive changes that they have made while living at this home. When a transition is not in the young person's best interests, managers ensure that they make their opinions known. In one case, this effected the decision to move a young person to another provider's home, when it was unclear whether this was in their best interests at the time. Well-structured routines assist young people to learn to self-manage their behaviours and to discuss what they are feeling and thinking. There are one-to-one and group therapy sessions as well as daily meetings with staff. Boys spoke positively about the therapists and the time they spent with them, even the occasions when they had found it difficult to talk. Staff have a good understanding of young people's strengths and needs, and how to support their progress. They are vigilant and careful in their care of young people; they continually reassess what young people are doing in order to understand them better and help them further. As one member of staff commented (of an activity), 'I do not watch the film, I watch the young people to see how they react and act during the film so I can learn more about them and prevent problems from developing.' Education attendance is 100% for all young people. The company has its own school, based on another site, which all young people from this home attend and which young people say that they enjoy. They learn well. For example, some young people took external examinations ahead of schedule. Home study occurs daily	

when young people return from schools, but the arrangements are a little institutional. For example, all young people sit round the kitchen table to do their homework, which is given out by staff rather than young people being given this at school. This detracts from the progress young people make regarding self-study, which is a key feature of further education.

Young people are in good health and their health needs are identified and met appropriately. Meal times are enjoyable social occasions in which a healthy balanced diet is provided. Young people participate in the daily routines of the home and talk about things which affect their daily lives, such as what to eat and where to go on trips.

Independence skills are supported in line with the placement agreement. Young people learn about daily living skills through helping staff with chores around the home, such as washing up and laying the table. The support given to one young person learning how to arrange and manage a bus trip was observed to be excellent. The young person was given the opportunity to develop skills in a structured and safe manner. For example, he was able to discuss things he did not know about public transport and to gain confidence because he followed a step-by-step process which increased his independence over time.

The premises are homely, well appointed and spacious. There are plenty of different communal areas for the young people to use. These are congregated in one part of the home, which helps to allow appropriate levels of supervision of all young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people unanimously agree that they feel safe living in this home. Some say that they feel safer living here than where they lived previously. Positive behaviour is rewarded and celebrated by staff and peers. For example, young people get rewards for additional things that they volunteer to do in the house, such as helping to clear up after dinner when it is not their turn. Individuals develop a sense of achievement and learn that positive behaviour can benefit them. Young people have numerous opportunities to reflect on their behaviours and to consider and address the reasons behind these. They are able to call meetings with their peers, meet with key workers and consult with their therapists on a weekly basis. These help young people to develop an understanding of their behaviours	

and opportunities to develop positive coping strategies.

The young people have a number of adults, internal and external to the home, whom they can approach for support and advice and to make complaints. Importantly, young people feel that members of staff know them so well that they can and do approach the young person if staff think that they are worried or concerned about something.

Routines are strongly adhered to, and they provide stability and structure for the young people. Rules, and the reasons for these being in place, are known and understood by the young people. As a result, young people feel safe, secure and protected.

A recent review of the sanctions has led to a reduction in their use. There is now an emphasis on reparation for poor behaviour. Young people are given opportunities to make amends for their behaviour rather than experiencing a punitive approach. Young people comment that the home is less strict now and that they feel more relaxed because of this change.

Members of staff are acutely aware of the young people's behaviours and the risks associated with these. Individual risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure that the measures to keep the young people safe are effective. The well-structured environment, underpinned by clear rules and routines, enables young people to learn trust and to practise strategies to self-manage their behaviours. As a result, they are able to have and extend periods of free time and unsupervised time away from the home as part of their longer journey to independence.

There is a good protocol to follow in the event that a young person is missing. The young people are aware of what staff will do and the implications if young people are missing or absent without permission. There has been one incident since the last inspection, and the members of staff implemented the process swiftly and effectively. This resulted in the young person returning to the home safely within an hour and a half of being missing.

All members of staff are trained in the method of restraint used. Records of restraints are recorded well and include debriefs involving the young people and members of staff. Additionally, managerial reviews consider the incident and will raise any learning points. This means that strategies and behaviour management plans can be adapted and changed to ensure that the young people are suitably supported and incidents of restraint can be minimised.

Close working relationships with local safeguarding agencies, as well as the police, support young people's safety and well-being. Any safeguarding issues are promptly investigated, recorded and resolved in a timely manner. All members of staff attend safeguarding training and demonstrated that they know what to do if they have a concern about a young person's well-being.

Sound recruitment procedures ensure that only adults with safe working histories are employed. All the necessary background checks are carried out before a member of staff commences work.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager will complete her registered manager's award in January 2017. She was previously the registered manager at one of the company's other homes and is in the process of registering with Ofsted for this home. She has good insight into the challenges of her current role. This includes knowledge of how to develop an effective team, support young people to progress well from their starting points and the importance of accurate, detailed paperwork. The statement of purpose is comprehensive and is being rewritten to reflect the recent changes in management and staffing. The manager appropriately challenges external agencies when she considers that they do not fulfil their duties. She champions young people's rights successfully. Equally, the home's relationships with appropriate agencies are well established and support the staff to meet young people's needs quickly and well. One parent wrote, 'Everything that is done is well planned and thought out, this gives the children reassurance.' Care planning is well organised, detailed and helpful. Records contain good information and provide a unique picture of each young person. Staff understand young people well. They use their knowledge carefully to think about what events and behaviours mean in order to help young people to progress and keep themselves and others safe. A few records contained inappropriate phrases which indicate a judgement about a young person that they may not have wished to portray, such as 'played the fool'. There were substantial changes to management and staffing last summer. However, these changes have not adversely impacted on young people or their behaviours. This demonstrates that priority is given to keeping young people safe and their well-being promoted. This is a notable achievement for the new management team. Staff have been recruited to fill the vacant posts, and the use of agency staff is decreasing. Supervision notes cover a wide range of topics appropriate to individual staff members' needs. Not all staff who supervise others have had formal supervision training, which may impede their ability to support staff appropriately. For instance, when one member of staff complained about the lack of support from a manager	

there was no detail of how this was explored or what action would be taken in the future. In addition, records relating to supervisions which took place before the new management team arrived did not evidence that they occurred in line with the home's policies. This impedes the management's ability to develop strong working relations with all staff. However, it is noted that these sessions now occur as required.

Appraisals for longer-serving staff do not occur annually. Recent appraisals undertaken by the new managers were more akin to staff self-assessment, as the report from their last appraisal is missing.

The manager's succinct development plan focuses on the most important areas for development at the present time: ensuring that young people receive appropriate, safe care; developing a skilled team; and maintaining paperwork appropriately. Her six-monthly review of care is in development and was due in October 2016. However, the change of management and the need to focus on other matters has impeded its completion. Monthly visitor reports (under regulation 44) give a good review of incidents and what young people and staff think about the home. Their conclusions highlight what is considered to work well and where improvements can be made. This assists managers to know what they are doing well and where they need to focus their attention on improvements.

Monitoring is accomplished well in some areas, for example premises repairs and reviewing records such as restraints; others lack suitable review. There is insufficient detail of what action has, and has not, been taken in respect of a fire safety officer's report from July 2016. The timeliness of actions taken are also questioned. For example, staff training on how to exit the staff sleep-in room safely, as highlighted in the report, occurred in October, two months after receipt of the report.

In addition, managers do not always check whether additional staff training is required to meet the needs of newly admitted children. No review of staff members' skills and knowledge had occurred in order to decide what level of skill the staff team had to support a young person on the autistic spectrum. In this instance some staff in the team have relevant experience and, therefore, this does not impact on the young person's care.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 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 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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