

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC014235
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Lioncare Limited
Registered person address	Lioncare Ltd, 186 Forest Road, Loughton, Essex, IG10 1EG

Responsible individual	Matthew Vince
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Suzy Lemmy

Inspection date	10/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC014235

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people are supported to make progress socially, educationally and emotionally by a committed staff team. Transitions to and from the home are well planned.
- Staff encourage children and young people to communicate openly and to resolve conflict. They actively participate in daily group meetings. They discuss issues affecting them personally and relationships within the home.
- Staff develop positive relationships with parents and professionals, stakeholders value the service. A Social Worker reported, 'I am very pleased with the home and the communication with staff'.
- Recruitment procedures are robust, newly appointed staff receive structured and in depth inductions. Training is extensive and includes the therapeutic model used by the home.
- Children and young people are suitably protected from risks relating to internet safety because this is effectively monitored and where necessary, restricted.
- The measured and thoughtful use of appropriate sanctions and consequences teaches children and young people to start to think for themselves and to make better choices.
- Recent management changes have resulted in some shortfalls. These include inconsistent monitoring of records on occasion. Some records of incidents of physical interventions do not include circumstances leading to the use of the measure and this has not been picked up by monitoring.
- Supervision records do not demonstrate sufficient challenge and oversight of staff practice. One supervisor is insufficiently experienced and has not had training in order to assist them to be effective in the role.

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
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	30 April 2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure that restraint records enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 49, paragraph 9.59).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It offers a therapeutic approach to the care of children and young people. It is operated by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/11/2014	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2014	Interim	Good progress
07/11/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children and young people make measurable positive progress in most areas of their lives. One young person has become more responsible, empathetic and a positive role model to others in the home. A Social Worker reported that a young person 'reflects on his behaviour and how it impacts on others, he wasn't able to do this before'. Key work sessions are effective. Children and young people talk about and reflect on their feelings with staff who have the skills to support their emotional development. These sessions help children and young people to better understand their emotions and the impact their behaviour has on others. A parent reported, 'my son has a good bond with his key worker, the staff have done brilliantly with him'. Children, young people and staff have respectful and trusting relationships which allow staff to address challenging behaviour quickly and appropriately. This helps children and young people make reparation for their actions and builds their resilience for the future. All children and young people attend educational provision. They make good progress towards their educational goals. Staff have supported and engaged with the wider professional network enabling two children to make successful transitions to more academic classes. They are adapting well to the higher expectations staff hold for them. This helps prepare them for the future. All children and young people receive the health services they require, including access to child and adolescent mental health services. They have therapeutic support to promote their emotional well-being and are more able to express their feelings and empathise with each other. Children and young people are actively involved in planning activities. They are engaging in new clubs and participating in social events such as drumming, street dance, free running and army cadets according to their personal interests. This promotes positive peer relationships and their engagement in the local community. Staff are committed to promoting good relationships with family and friends. Parents speak favourably about the impact this has on their children. A parent said 'he has settled in well and is a lot calmer'. Children and young people benefit from these improved relationships. Transition into the home is well planned. Children and young people visit prior to	

admission. Personalised bedrooms help them to settle in and develop a sense of belonging. Staff clearly record their history and plan accordingly, placement planning meetings are held prior to the child or young person moving into the home. This enables staff to understand their needs. While in the period of assessment, risk assessments and behaviour plans are not always completed. This resulted in staff not having clear guidelines for a child who recently moved into the home.

A number of changes in the staff group created a feeling of instability and managers are experiencing difficulties recruiting reliable new staff. Some children and young people have struggled emotionally with the loss of close relationships. Professionals have expressed some concern about the effects that the staff changes have had; a Social Worker said 'the young person has been unsettled by staff changes'.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home works therapeutically with children and young people who present with challenging and inappropriate behaviour. This leads to incidents occurring within the home that have necessitated reports to the local authority safeguarding team. Staff work collaboratively with police and other professionals to help children and young people understand the potential consequences of such behaviours. Some children are supported to work with specialist teams such as 'Be Wise'; for others, key work sessions focus on strategies to manage their behaviour differently. Children and young people are becoming safer. The manager updates risk assessments, which identify the level of risk and the protective measures needed to minimise potential harm. Measures include constant staff supervision, changes to house rules and staff practices. Staff did not record a safeguarding incident affecting one young person in the safeguarding section of his file. This meant that this information was not easily available for review and monitoring purposes. However, the staff were aware of the incident and the need to monitor the young person's behaviour. Staff have training in child sexual exploitation as part of safeguarding training. They are fully conversant with of the company's missing from home policy. As such, they follow children and young people if they leave without permission, search for them, and report them as missing to police in accordance with agreed procedures. Children and young people are informed of their rights to independent return home interviews. The home liaises with placing authorities to ensure that the homes missing persons policy is consistent with the placing authority's	

protocol.

Staff recognise the current levels of risk for children and young people with regards to their use of, and access to, the internet. They promote safe use through appropriate supervision and restrictions on the use of wireless networks. Passwords are in place to ensure children and young people can only access trusted sites. The level of supervision and scrutiny is in line with the age and understanding of the children and young people placed.

The effective use of appropriate sanctions helps children and young people learn to take responsibility for their actions. Efficient monitoring by the manager ensures these measures are proportionate and make sense to the children and young people. Their ability to recognise why certain behaviours are not acceptable is increasing, as is their own impulse control and they are learning to find better ways of expressing their feelings of frustration or anger. This good monitoring practice is not always mirrored with regards to physical restraint records. These are variable in terms of the quality of their completion; for example, some do not always clearly indicate the circumstances leading to the use of restraint. Internal monitoring and analysis in this regard is not always robust. This risks potential trends, patterns or concerns going unnoticed.

Strong recruitment processes serve to protect the young people. Records demonstrate that care staff, including agency staff, are suitably vetted and checked prior to appointment. This ensures that only adults who are safe to do so work with the children and young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The service manager is currently supporting the newly appointed manager who has made application to be registered with Ofsted. She has a degree in Childhood and Youth Studies and is enrolled onto a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management. Having worked for the company for 13 years, including as a deputy manager in another of the company's homes for five years, the manager is already conversant with company policies and procedures and has gained relevant experience in supervision and performance management, commensurate for this role. Recent staffing changes have been unsettling for some children and young people. This has also impacted upon the home's ability to fully deliver some its aims and objectives described in its statement of purpose, such as staff supervision. Senior managers recognise the impact of this and an active recruitment campaign is in	

place.

All new staff benefit from a thorough and extensive induction period. They undertake behaviour management training prior to starting work with children and young people; they are quickly introduced to the therapeutic ethos and methods which underpin the home's practices. The effective staff training programme results in staff reporting that they are confident to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Staff proficiently implement their learning and training in their daily work. Practices such as settling children and young people at bed time and daily group meetings are effective in contributing to this therapeutic approach. Positive outcomes include children and young people learning to reflect on their behaviour and positively influencing each other.

Managers and staff have forged some good relationships with professionals. A Social Worker said that 'communication is good' and he has 'regular updates about incidents and receives regular reports'. Another Social Worker reported that 'staff manage the young person and help him to regulate his emotions'.

The organisation has introduced a new recording system that is yet to be fully utilised and embedded. Some records were not easily accessible. For example a safeguarding issue was not recorded in the safeguarding section of one young person's file.

Staff supervision meetings are usually regular but the records do not consistently demonstrate sufficient challenge or oversight of staff practices. One staff member has not received adequate supervision or training to assist them in their supervisor position and this restricts their ability to competently fulfil this role.

An excellent and informative area risk assessment allows staff to be aware of potential concerns for the children and young people in the community. The manager has plans in place for improvement of the home and the development of staff. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is keen to put systems in place to improve practice and to ensure that risks are further minimised.

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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