

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	16/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC016600
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Bridge Communities Limited
Registered provider address	Sutton Dipple, 8 Wheelwrights Corner, Cossack Square, Nailsworth, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 0DB

Responsible individual	Joanne Scott
Registered manager	Sarah Womersley
Inspector	Nicola Lownds

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

SC016600

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff provide good-quality care to young people which helps them to progress and achieve. Young people start to make secure attachments to the staff and to the home, when this has previously been a challenge for them. The consistency provided by staff supports this, and staff are warm and caring in their manner.
- The team has established a unique ethos in the home that offers personalised care. Staff are very good at establishing young people's individual needs and develop care plans which support young people to build confidence and self-belief. This philosophy then supports young people to start to engage in learning and helps to establish creative personal education plans.
- Staff have good knowledge about how to safeguard young people. This knowledge includes helping young people to understand risks about self-harm, exploitation, going missing and substance misuse. These risk-taking behaviours decrease, the longer that young people live at the home.
- The registered persons build extensive links to services in the community that can support young people living here. There is a high level of joint working with the local police to share intelligence that will protect young people living at the home.
- The registered manager has improved the monitoring systems so that she has a greater insight into the quality of care provided to young people. These systems are effective, and help to identify learning and develop the home.

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

Recommendations

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

- Liaise with the local police force to establish procedures and guidance on police involvement with the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.40)
- Improve the staff's skills by ensuring that they can access training about radicalisation. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private children's home is registered for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home provides individual support and preparation for independent living and offers an educational outreach service to support young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/11/2015	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
12/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The registered persons have created a home that enables young people to be accepted for who they are. Staff respect young people's identity and understand the impact of their experiences before moving to the home. As young people settle in, they start to make good progress when, previously, this has been very difficult for them. A social work professional said, 'there has been some phenomenal progress made'. Staff develop care plans that are unique and clearly detail young people's personalities and interests. Young people establish trust with the staff team. They build relationships that enable them to engage and communicate any worries, as well as aspirations for their future. Staff listen effectively to young people and respect their views. The staff have good skills that enable them to support young people to make positive choices about their lives. Accessing education is difficult for some young people when they move in. With staff's support, gradually their attendance improves. Some young people are now attending college full time. Staff help to develop individual education plans with young people and the virtual school that build on their interests, skills and ambitions. Staff understand the importance of young people's family and friends. They help them to maintain these relationships, which includes helping them to access public transport or giving them lifts. Young people also have the opportunity to build relationships in the local community. Staff have very good knowledge of their local area and support young people to make positive choices about friendships and relationships. Staff serve freshly made meals and encourage young people to eat healthily. Young people have good access to health services in the local area such as general practitioners and dentists. These services are arranged when they move in and staff support any anxieties that young people may have about attending appointments. If young people have a specialist health need, then staff support them to access the appropriate services that can help them with it. All young people have an individual healthcare plan that clearly details their health needs. Young people have freedom to access the local area independently. Staff instil good boundaries in relation to knowing where young people are going and agreeing the times when they will come home. Young people go out to the cinema, bowling and shopping. Young people also go on mini-breaks or days out with the staff if they wish. This is encouraged to give young people new experiences.	

The staff support young people to move on very well. There is a clear transition plan for one young person who is due to move out imminently. Staff keep in touch with many of the young people who have moved on. They continue to support them emotionally and attend their special events, and they are welcome to come back to visit the home.

There is a calm and friendly atmosphere in the home. The kitchen is the heart of the home, and young people spend time in here as staff are cooking and making drinks for them all. The home is clean and tidy, and young people have everything that they need in terms of clothing, furniture and toiletries. Recently, there have been some home improvements which young people were involved in, including a display of one young person's artwork.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff develop good, individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans with young people. In addition, staff include information gathered from families and local authorities relating to potential risks. The positive relationships with staff enable young people to talk to them about how they can support them with these risks. This approach contributes to young people making safer choices. Behaviour support plans provide clear strategies about how to help young people when they become anxious. Two physical interventions have taken place since the last inspection and these were to protect young people from each other. Records detail what happened and the registered manager has monitored these incidents effectively. Sanctions are not punitive and relate well to the behaviour that warrants the sanction. Often, this relates to reducing the amounts of money given at any one time to prevent young people from putting themselves at risk by buying illegal substances or going missing. Staff discuss the reason for this intervention with young people, and records show that they understand why it is in place. Staff understand their responsibility to protect young people from harm. They have a good understanding of child protection policy in terms of managing risks and reporting concerns. Staff understand the local area and know where the potential areas of risk are. If staff are concerned about a young person and their associates, they take the necessary action to protect young people. This includes working closely with the local police force and sharing intelligence about the local area. Staff talk to young people about risks such as substance misuse, going missing or self-harm, and help them to understand these behaviours better. Young people can also access more structured support by engaging in education-based worksheets or	

by accessing local support groups. Staff discourage young people from misusing substances and make every attempt to find out where they have sourced them from.

Access to services that support young people's emotional well-being is good. Staff place great emphasis on this and young people respond well to the services provided to them. Staff have the skills to support young people emotionally. The training programme has a focus on emotional well-being and includes supporting young people who self-harm, and understanding attachment. Some staff are trained in counselling skills and are due to have training in understanding personality disorders. A social work professional said that 'access to support for emotional well-being is positive'. Young people self-harm less, the longer that they live here. In addition, the nature of the self-harm also decreases in severity. Young people seek out staff to support them when they have self-harmed.

When young people go missing from the home, staff search for them extensively. Missing protocols are clear, and include the expectations about what actions staff should take when young people are missing. The local police have copies of these protocols. Records about missing incidents provide a concise chronology about staff actions when the young person is missing. Staff work closely with families, local authorities and the police to try to find the young person as quickly as possible. The registered manager recognises patterns and trends, including signs that young people may be being groomed or exploited. In these circumstances, a meeting with the relevant professionals is swiftly convened to protect the young person. Young people receive an independent return home interview.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is suitably qualified for her role. The responsible individual supervises the registered manager, and both of these managers have a high level of input into the care that the young people receive at this home. Their performance is independently scrutinised by the independent visitor. The registered persons develop good-quality relationships with young people and prioritise their needs well. They manage the referral process to ensure that the impact of any new young people moving in is assessed, taking into account the needs of everyone in the house. There is a small team of staff employed to ensure that the needs of young people are met. Staff retention is high and thus provides young people with consistency. Staff feel supported, and supervision is regular and effective. Staff appraisals are due, so that they can reflect on their performance and identify any new training needs. New staff go through a thorough induction and probationary period to ensure that they are suitable for their role. There have been no new staff recruited	

since the last inspection.

The training programme includes a variety of training that is essential to develop staff so that they can provide high-quality care to young people. The registered persons are proactive at sourcing training when a new development need arises. The workforce plan does not yet include training about radicalisation, and this is a recommendation from this inspection.

The local police officer visits the home regularly on an informal basis, which maintains a collaborative relationship. However, the registered manager has not yet established written guidance about police involvement in the home. Although it is rare, the police have been called to support staff with behaviour management since the last inspection.

The registered persons utilise the relationships they have built with other agencies to benefit the young people. A social work professional said, 'there is good communication with me'. These relationships enable her to challenge more effectively when services to young people need improving.

Effective monitoring systems give the registered manager good oversight about the care that young people receive. There has been a significant improvement in these systems. As a result, the registered manager is able to identify learning, concerns or positive strategies that improve the experiences of the young people in the home. The registered manager has a strong knowledge about what is going on in the home, as she is there on a day-to-day basis. The development plan focuses on the experiences of young people and how the team can continue to make them safer and engaged in learning, as key priorities.

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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