

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC022464
Inspector	Marian Denny
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	PIC Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	2 North Street Haydock ST. HELENS Merseyside WA11 0TW
Responsible individual	Carol Fletcher
Registered manager	Mark Fletcher
Date of last inspection	24/02/2014

Inspection date	01/07/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	not judged
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
-------------------	-----------------

The overall effectiveness of the setting is adequate. This is because the home provides an adequate quality of care and promotes improved outcomes for young people. However, young people are only beginning to settle in the home and form trusting relationships with staff. Consequently, at the present time they have only made relatively limited progress and are struggling to achieve better outcomes for themselves.

Leaders and managers are increasingly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There are also plans in place to effect improvements in the home. However, quality assurance systems are not robust; for example, some records are not fully completed. The effectiveness of sanctions are not monitored and evaluated. The complex needs and demands of the young people in this home necessitates the need for increased managerial support, as this will ensure staff are able to effectively fulfil their roles and provide high quality service to the young people. Staff performance and development needs are routinely reviewed; these appraisals though do not take into account any views of the young people living in the home.

Young people though do feel safe and cared for in the home. They recognise staff are interested and concerned about their welfare. Staff are positive about the young people and show skills in helping them express their feelings and to make their

wishes regarding their life known. Staff work hard to develop relationships with the young people and do their utmost to support them. They are also knowledgeable about young people's specific vulnerabilities and as a result, young people's risk-taking behaviours have slightly reduced. The safety of the physical environment is effectively assessed through a wide range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home, which is privately run, provides care and accommodation for one young person with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2014	Interim	not judged
23/08/2013	Full	good
15/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
04/07/2012	Full	adequate

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
4 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose contains all the matters required under Regulation (REG 4(1))	18/08/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the manager examines trends or issues emerging from incidents or challenging behaviour. This specifically relates to monitoring the effectiveness of sanctions (NMS 3.21)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well

maintained and decorated, including the immediate outdoor space (NMS 10.3)

- ensure staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision (NMS19.4)
- ensure staff's appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for (NMS 19.6)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. (22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people are beginning to settle in the home and are making some progress in areas of their lives. For example, they are beginning to talk about their feelings, frustrations and anxieties. They are also beginning to express their views about matters affecting their lives, including issues in relation to the running of the home. However, they have not yet fully formed effective, trusting relationships with staff. They are therefore not totally accepting staff's advice and guidance. This has resulted in them making limited progress in their education, emotional development, ability to take responsibility for their health, develop leisure interests or independence skills. It has also meant that there has not been a significant reduction in the young people's harmful and risk taking behaviour.

Young people continue to struggle with their confidence in social situations and to make friends. They take part in some activities that they enjoy, including sports and are given opportunities to try new things. However, they find it difficult to sustain an interest in any leisure activity, so limiting their opportunities to build friendships. Staff are struggling to develop suitable strategies to encourage young people to stick at things to promote their personal growth. Consequently, young people currently do not have enough opportunities to take reasonable risks and learn from mistakes to help them to mature into confident adults. However, staff are currently struggling to enable young people to take risks so that they enjoy the same social experiences as other young people of their age and at the same time keep the young people safe. Consequently, young people are not developing the skills needed to build their resilience, or to understand how to manage risk and make good choices in their lives.

Young people enjoy seeing their families regularly and this is helping them to maintain positive relationships with the important people in their lives. Staff work very hard to ensure that young people's contact with their families is a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. Young people are visiting their families without staff having to be present.

Quality of care **adequate**

Young people are adequately cared for on a daily basis. The current young people in the home are new, having been admitted to the home within the last four months. The demands of the young people are such that the team has been strengthened through the use of agency staff. The agency staff used are consistent and have begun to know the young people well. Staff demonstrate a commitment to the young people and there is a clear desire to provide a good service. Staff have made efforts to create a supportive environment that provides young people with the routine and

structure they require. They care about young people as individuals and have aspirations for young people to do well, regardless of the challenges young people may present. Young people though, have not yet established sound relationships with all the staff. However, they do benefit from key worker sessions that provide opportunities to discuss their wishes, feelings and to share matters of concern openly with staff. They carefully listen to and take into account these matters and do their best to support young people, providing them with appropriate guidance and advice.

Staff work hard to develop relationships with all the professionals involved with the young people and try to ensure their plans are developed so that they receive the appropriate support. The home's individual plans for young people reflect their current needs and demonstrate how the setting is providing for their care and support. Their risk assessments are also up-to-date, comprehensive and reflect the young people's current needs. However, the placing authority's care plans have not been up-dated to reflect the young people's progress, experiences and changing circumstances. The home has ensured though that the level of supervision young people require to promote their safety has been reviewed. As a result, staffing levels have increased to two staff for each young person living in the home.

Staff encourage young people to address their health and emotional well-being. They also encourage the young people to have healthy diets and to get plenty of exercise. Staff also support young people to maintain good sexual health and to attend health appointments with their doctor, dentist, the local nurse for looked after children, the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). This ensures they have access to medical advice and treatment. However, staff struggle to ensure young people engage in these services and as a result young people's health and safety is compromised.

Staff try to encourage young people to engage in education. However, the young people have disengaged with the educational opportunities available. This threatens to undermine any possible educational achievements and does not prepare them for future employment.

Staff encourage young people to take part in suitable activities that promote their interests and development. However, young people are reluctant to engage in these. Consequently, they do not develop their interests, talents and skills to their best.

Staff's practice recognises young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. They ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs, background and identity. Staff discuss care plans with the young people in order to ensure young people are clear about what should be happening and try to make sure the plans are consistent and meeting the individual needs of the young person. Staff make efforts to talk to placing social workers and parents to ensure that the outcomes agreed in the care plans of each young person are achieved. However, such efforts are not always effective.

Young people share their views, wishes and feelings openly and they are taken into account. This takes place through general discussions, young people's meetings and through individual one-to-one sessions. Staff members consult young people on aspects of their care, including care planning and changes in the home. For example, menu planning, education, activities and family contact.

Young people benefit from the support they are given to build and maintain positive contact with their family and friends. This helps the young people to keep in touch with people who are important to them. As a result, young people have a clear sense of identity and are able to establish support networks with their immediate and extended family and develop community links.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment. Overall the house is clean, suitably decorated, reasonably well-maintained and meets young people's individual needs, personalities and tastes. The quality of the furnishing and decoration at the home is generally good. However, the bathroom door is slightly damaged and is in need of repair. There is a small area around the kitchen window and on the utility wall, which is damp and in need of attention. The outside area is in need of attention, specifically in relation to the walls, which require painting. Staff though, take suitable health and safety measures to ensure that the home is free from hazards. The location of the home provides young people with access to a broad range of local community facilities and recreational opportunities.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say that the home is generally a safe place to live and that staff work hard to protect them from harm. Staff are trained in safeguarding and keep young people's safety at the forefront of their practice. They are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, including issues in relation to young people's personal circumstances, and know what they need to do to protect young people.

Since the last inspection two issues have emerged relating to safeguarding. Both issues were raised by the young people, who were well versed in the complaints procedure, knew how to complain and were confident that staff would effectively address these matters. These allegations were effectively addressed in line with the safeguarding procedures and appropriate action taken.

Staff have been proactive in addressing young people going missing from the home and as a result, these incidents have reduced. There are good staffing and risk management plans in place to prevent this from happening.

Young people feel safe in the home. Clear risk assessments are recorded to help the staff understand what action to take to minimise identified risks. This develops young people's understanding and the reasons adults are concerned. Staff ensure plans for

young people's safety are put into practice and address young people's needs. They are knowledgeable about young people's specific vulnerabilities. As a result, young people's risk-taking behaviours have slightly reduced and they state that they feel cared for and protected.

The ethos and culture of the home is to work through challenges and difficulties, positively rather than punitively. Consequently, staff use a minimal amount of sanctions. These are relevant, appropriate and reflect the age and understanding of the young people. However, the system in place to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of sanctions is not completed. As a consequence, this severely limits the system's ability to monitor the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed. Young people are ambivalent about the fairness of the sanctions, though are able to understand the system for rewarding good behaviour. Staff are clear that physical intervention is not used in this setting. There have been some behaviour management incidents and as a consequence, young people's individual strategies are kept under review and adapted as required.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough. This ensures only people with suitable experience and competencies work at the home and that children and young people are protected. There are also suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised.

Young people are protected from hazards by a wide range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has been registered with the organisation for a number of years and registered with Ofsted since 03/07/2007. He brings a number of years' experience as a Registered Manager. He is suitably qualified to undertake his responsibilities and has a level 7 in strategic management and leadership. He is therefore suitably qualified, competent and has considerable experience in the Registered Manager role. Currently, the manager manages three single placement homes, which are in close proximity. However, the young people in these homes have very complex needs and the demands made by them on staff and the Registered Manager does appear to have had an adverse impact on the running of this home.

During this inspection, some shortfalls were identified in the management of the home. For example, quality assurance systems are not robust, as demonstrated by the fact that the supervision book has not been checked by the Registered Manager

since one young person was admitted to the home. In addition, the record relating to actions in the supervision book had not been fully completed. Similarly, there were shortfalls in relation to the records relating to sanctions, for example, the section relating to young people's comments regarding the sanctions imposed contained no information, nor had the young person signed the sanction record. There was also no evidence of staff evaluating the effectiveness of the sanctions in relation to the young person. There were also issues in relation to staff support and the level of supervision provided, given the intensive demands placed upon them by the young people in their care. As a consequence, at times some staff were struggling to provide the care and support required to meet the needs of the young people in their care. To address this, some changes had been effected in the staff team. This had resulted in a stronger, more experienced team, who were clearly very committed to meeting the needs of the young people living in the home. A senior residential worker was also doing some work in the home in order to provide additional support to staff.

The home is operated in accordance with the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. However, the Statement of Purpose has not been updated to reflect staff changes and amendments in the Children's Homes Regulations. This means that social workers and parents do not have accurate information about the staff within the home and their ability to meet the needs of the young people who they are thinking of being admitted to the home. The Statement of Purpose does though provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of the home and of the services it delivers. The young people's guide is very clear, informative, contains all the required information and is relevant to young people's lives.

The leaders and senior managers of the organisation are increasingly aware of the shortfalls in this home. They have recently commissioned another independent person to undertake a robust monthly monitoring of the home and have developed an improved reporting system. The leaders and managers also have a very clear plan for developing the home, which identifies the actions required and sets target dates for their achievement.

Staff are very committed to improving the quality of service provided to the young people living in the home. They demonstrate a good understanding of their needs and have the knowledge and skills to work with them. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people. The leaders and the manager work hard so that the deployment of staff promotes continuity of care and provides opportunities for young people to form positive attachments with familiar staff. Staff performance and development needs are routinely reviewed to enable their continued professional development. However, these appraisals do not take into account any views of the young people, who are living in the home. Staff though, have access to comprehensive and qualitative training, which enables them to develop their individual skills and knowledge relevant to the young people, whom they are looking after. They also have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their learning, for example, in team meetings and are able to consider how to develop their practice to improve outcomes for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.