

SC025395

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 19 young people with emotional/and or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. It is part of a charitable organisation.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 27 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The nurturing and caring ethos of the home is evident in the young people's comments and in the good progress that they make from their starting points. One young person said, 'I would not be where I am today without them.'

- Members of staff instil a good structure and routine around education. As a result, young people have excellent attendance at school and they have ambitions for their future.
- Members of staff are very observant and know the young people well. For example, the observation of a young person's health identified symptoms that enabled a diagnosis of a previously unknown health condition. As a result, the young person now receives appropriate healthcare.
- Excellent planning and transition plans have enabled several young people to return to foster care. Members of staff continue to provide support to young people in their new home, which enables them to settle quickly.
- The staff team is well qualified, trained and supported. This means that young people receive informed care.
- The external and internal monitoring of the home is good. As a result, the home continues to develop and improve.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people's risk assessments can be further enhanced to include both the young person's views on the risk and the agreed strategies to reduce the risk.
- The manager must ensure that a young person's local authority placement plan has been updated prior to admission to the home, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- The manager must ensure that the home's statement of purpose is sent to Ofsted when it has been revised.
- Young people's documents and the records maintained by the home should be dated and have the signature of the author, the manager and the social worker, where applicable.
- Fire evacuation records need to have the member of staff's and young person's names to ensure that everybody has taken part in a fire evacuation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Good
24/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/10/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
12: The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to 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(1)(2)(a)(i)) This is in relation to ensuring that agreed strategies are identified and that young people can comment on their understanding of any risks they may be at.	29/12/2017
16: Statement of purpose The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	29/12/2017
36: Children's case records The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3. (Regulation 36(1)(a)) This is in relation to having a copy of any plan for the care of the child prepared by the child's placing authority, and of the placement plan. Specifically, that the plan has sufficient information on the child's history and routines and that the medical consent section is signed.	29/12/2017

Recommendations

- The registered person should build a strong safeguarding culture in the home.. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations and quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.8) This is specifically in ensuring that all young people and members of staff are taken through the emergency evacuation procedure
- Ensure that case records are signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations and quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3) This includes ensuring that the manager, professionals and parents have signed essential documentation.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people say that they are happy and settled at this home. They can reflect on how much progress they have made since moving in to the home. One young person said, 'I am much more independent.' Another said, 'I have really settled down and I am enjoying life.'

Young people are able to visit, stay for tea and join in an activity as part of their planned admission. When young people come on an emergency basis, members of staff go through the structure and boundaries of the home with them to make them feel welcome. The manager has identified that some admissions have impacted on the home and the young people. She said that she often receives six to 12 referrals a day, and that it is difficult to obtain accurate information. Therefore, the company now has a referral team. This means that unsuitable referrals can be identified quickly and extra information can be requested. The manager only views possible matches and can make an informed choice about their suitability.

Staffing ratios are high. This means that members of staff can spend quality time with young people and support them well. The young people said that they had very good relationships with members of staff and that they can identify someone whom they can speak to if they are worried or concerned. One young person said: 'My key worker is excellent. We talk about everything. Sometimes it is not what I want to hear, but I know she only wants the best for me.' Another said, 'We do not have to just go to our key worker – all the staff know everything, we can go to anyone and get help.' Young people all agreed that the relationships that they have with members of staff have helped them to grow in confidence and developed their social skills.

In the main, there are good local authority and personalised plans to help members of staff care for young people well. Young people complete a document called 'all about me' that identifies their likes, dislikes, dreams and aspirations. In conjunction with this, young people complete a six-point spider chart. This helps young people to express their goals. The chart has been successful in helping young people to work towards unsupervised contact, in making progress in education and in identifying foster parents. However, one young person's local authority plan has not been updated with a young

person's last placement history. Therefore, members of staff were not clear about why the placement broke down. This means that members of staff cannot pre-empt any issues that had brought about the ending of the placement. In addition to this, the medical consent section was not completed and the document was not signed by the manager or social worker. This does not show that everyone is in agreement with the plans and that consent has been given for emergency medical treatment.

During the inspection, young people talked to the inspectors about a book named 'the grumble book.' They said that they were clear about how to make a formal complaint, but that sometimes they did not want to take their issues that far. One young person said, 'We are a large group and we do not always get on with each other. We get on each other's nerves sometimes. Some young people are too loud. This book allows us to raise issues within the house, and the manager and staff will look at the book and help us sort out even the small things.' In addition to this, the young people identified a range of independent people whom they could talk to, if needed. This means that young people have several avenues to raise issues about their care.

The educational attendance and engagement of young people are excellent. When young people are out of education they receive short periods of tutoring at the home. The manager works quickly and closely with a range of educational professionals to identify suitable education provision. For example, one young person wanted to return to mainstream school, but an alternative provision was agreed. However, the staff team and manager supported her wishes. The young person has engaged well with her tutor and has shown that she can undertake the necessary level of school work. As a result, there is a plan in place for her to return to a mainstream school. Members of staff place great value on education and assist young people to do homework, take part in social activities and have additional educational materials at the home. Young people display any achievements or certificates proudly. Members of staff celebrate their accomplishments with treats, outings or personal gifts. One young person said that they wanted good exam results to follow a career in childcare, another wants to be a beautician and one would like to be chef. As a result, young people show a real desire to do well at school and have ambitions for their futures.

Members of staff are trained in medication procedures and in first aid. This means that young people receive their medication in line with their prescription and that any minor injuries are dealt with safely. Members of staff know the young people well and they are observant in looking for signs that a young person may be unwell. For example, when young people request tablets for a headache, the patterns and trends are recorded and observed. Health advice is sought and responded to. This has resulted in a young person receiving a diagnosis for an underlying condition. As a result, they will now receive the specialist healthcare that they need. Some young people receive additional support from mental health specialists. This helps to support their emotional health. Some young people have received therapy in the form of art, sand play and Lego building. Members of staff have seen the benefits of these sessions and are now training in similar courses to support young people further.

Young people have contact with their families, brothers and sisters and extended family

members, as highlighted in their local authority placement plan. Members of staff take some young people on these visits and supervise the meeting. They are able to do this safely because they have been trained, and understand their roles and responsibilities in this area. The staff team and manager work extremely closely with parents to help them to have meaningful contact. This includes being invited to the home, going out on activities and staying for tea. A parent said: 'It means everything to us. I can see how happy he is and he is doing very well.' Another parent said: 'They always make us feel welcome. It is not an ideal situation, but it is the best it can be.'

A range of stimulating and age-appropriate social activities are provided to young people. Many of the young people love playing or watching football. Some young people play in local teams and have received medals for their performance, such as for being the top goal scorer. Two young people were mascots for their football team at a recent match. Other young people follow pursuits such as horse riding, swimming and beauty treatments. Young people enjoyed a caravan holiday in the summer holidays and are looking forward to going again. Young people, parents and professionals all spoke about the active life and opportunities that young people have, and how this helps with their social skills.

Members of staff support and encourage young people to learn new skills which will help as they transition into adult life. This includes assisting in food shopping, cooking, cleaning and other tasks around the home. Some young people plan, prepare and cook a meal for the group one evening a week. This develops their skills, confidence and competence in this area.

An outstanding area of practice in the home is the transition plans for young people. From the moment that young people come to the home, members of staff work tirelessly on the plan for the young person. They offer a nurturing, caring environment that helps young people to focus on what they want to change and how to do it. This has meant that several young people have moved on to semi-independence successfully. One young person said, 'Although my behaviour was not the best, staff never gave up on me. I am blessed to have the support I was given. Staff are my second family.'

In the last three months, two young people have returned to foster care and another young person is moving imminently. The individualised transition plans keep young people at the centre of the plan. The foster carers and professionals complimented the staff team on its transition arrangements, its sharing of information, its sensitivity and continued support to young people throughout the process. These three young people had lived at the home together for a number of years and are good friends. Therefore, the staff team is continuing to provide outreach work. The staff take them on an activity together and invite them to important occasions, such as leaving parties. This means that they are able to sustain their relationships. A foster carer wrote, 'He will look back and see his time with you as a happy one, and one that is full of positive memories.' A professional said: 'He has enjoyed great consistency of care and he has felt loved and valued. The support he has received and your commitment to him have made this possible.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people say that they are safe at this home. They discussed with the inspectors how members of staff give them good advice on keeping themselves safe. Young people said that they have undertaken projects on 'stranger danger', bullying and internet safety. One young person said: 'I used to think staff were just moaning, but I now know the risks are real. I let staff know if I am going to be late, because I know they worry about me.' Another young person said, 'I do not share personal information, because I now know how dangerous that can be.'

Members of staff are fully trained in safeguarding young people. They have undertaken additional courses to complement this, such as on the issues of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and e-safety. This means that they are alert to any signs or triggers that may indicate that a young person is at risk. There are good procedures to follow if any member of staff has a concern about a child or adult. Members of staff confidently discussed their roles and responsibilities in sharing, recording and ensuring that swift action is taken if any concerns arise. The home has established excellent relationships with relevant safeguarding professionals, including the police, local authority safeguarding team and the designated officer. Police community support officers regularly visit the home on an informal basis. This builds positive relationships with young people and keeps them and members of staff informed of any community issues. A range of parents and professionals spoke highly of the continued efforts of members of staff in ensuring that young people are safe.

Staff are in the process of adding all young people's information onto a new computer programme at the home. The manager said that this will be more effective, as it will be paperless, seamless and not reliant on good handwriting skills. Last year, the staff team improved young people's risk assessments by including the young people's understanding of the risks and what strategies they would like the staff team to use to de-escalate situations. The new computer programme does not hold this information. In general, the staff team knows and understands each young person's vulnerabilities and the action to take to minimise situations. However, there have been three new members of staff and this does not ensure that everyone knows, understands and implements the agreed strategies to reduce risk. Although this has not affected young people, it has the potential to impact on the consistent level of care.

On occasion, physical intervention has been required to prevent young people from harming themselves or others. Members of staff receive training in de-escalation techniques and in holding young people safely. Young people have the opportunity to discuss with their key worker or an independent person their behaviour and the action taken. In team meetings, a discussion around all interventions takes place. This enables staff to reflect on the intervention and discuss different support strategies, if necessary. Young people said that sanctions are rarely imposed but that, if they are, they are fair. Young people told the inspectors that they often have the opportunity to make things right, undertake a chore or repair any damage. One young person said, 'I wrote a letter to say I was sorry because I was angry and didn't mean it.' This means that young

people can reflect on their behaviour and learn to express themselves differently. When young people are first placed, they often continue with previous behaviours, such as running away. Members of staff follow the local authority's protocol in reporting them as missing. They continue to search local areas and telephone the young people to encourage them to return home. Any information, such as about known or suspected addresses, is shared with the appropriate authorities. In addition, staff undertake individual work with young people around their safety and the risks that they may place themselves at when they are missing from the home. This ensures that they have the right information. In conjunction with this, the nurturing environment and high-activity programme allow the young people to invest in their placement. This has been highly successful for most of the young people. One young person said: 'I do not go missing anymore. I am happy here and I would miss my friends.' When this approach has not been successful, the manager has initiated several strategy meetings to assess the situation and the young person's safety. As a result, one young person moved to a more rural setting to ensure her safety. An independent service conducts return interviews with all young people. This means that young people have someone independent to talk to about why they went missing.

Since the last inspection, there have been three new members of staff. The company followed the safer recruitment guidance to ensure that suitable adults care for young people. The company has strengthened its recruitment procedures by having different aspects to their interview process. The manager said that candidates are involved in role-playing scenarios that test their ability, quick thinking and nurturing approach. The manager said that this has been successful and has produced three motivated and resilient members of staff.

Health and safety checks are routinely carried out at the home. Fire evacuations are conducted periodically throughout the year. However, the record shows how many staff and young people were involved in the evacuation but not their names. Therefore, it is not clear whether the new members of staff have completed a fire evacuation. This does not ensure that everybody knows how to evacuate the building safely.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been managing this home for over 37 years. She successfully registered with Ofsted in June 2007 and has a relevant management qualification. She undertakes all refresher training alongside her staff team. This means that her knowledge is kept up to date. She is supported by a deputy manager and three team leaders. They work closely together so that members of staff are supported well to provide good-quality care. The manager leads by example, has a strong passion to improve young people's life choices and keeps the young people at the heart of the service. She is enthusiastic, motivational and has high expectations of the staff team. This leadership is evident and is seen in the progress that young people have made.

Members of staff say that the support, training and development opportunities that they receive are excellent. They confidently discussed with the inspectors that these things have helped them to care for young people well. One member of staff said that the manager's 'open door' policy enabled informal discussions to take place and that she did

not feel that she had to wait to discuss anything. Most of the staff team have been working at this home for a significant period of time. They all have a recognised childcare qualification. Some members of staff are pursuing further qualifications and some are undertaking courses that will assist them in their role, such as play therapy. Three members of staff have left due to personal circumstances or through development opportunities. The new members of staff are registered on an equivalent childcare course. This shows that a qualified, trained and supported staff team cares for young people.

The home has a development plan, a business plan and a workforce development plan that work to complement each other. These plans reflect the current service and the objectives for the coming year. The manager understands the strengths and weakness of the home and the service provided. For example, the home does not have a designated quiet room for young people to meet their social workers or visitors. Plans have started to build a designated annex that will provide this space. The staff team and managers understand the aims and objectives as set out in their statement of purpose. The statement of purpose was recently revised, but has not been forwarded to Ofsted as required by the children's home regulations 2015.

The quality of relationships between members of staff, managers, leaders and other agencies is very good. All professionals spoken with during this inspection reported very high levels of satisfaction and commented on the professional relationships that they enjoy with the manager and staff at this home. One professional said, 'I would recommend this service to my colleagues.' Placing social workers were very complimentary of the work undertaken with young people, the support that they receive and the commitment of the staff team.

The manager challenges agencies and services if she has concerns about the support or care provided to young people. Members of staff encourage young people to attend their reviews or represent their thoughts, wishes and feelings for them. As previously mentioned, the home is converting written information onto a computer programme. As a result, the young person's starting point is recorded at the end of the information and inhibits a clear understanding of their starting points and the progress that they have made. The responsible individual is currently looking at the system and how it can be further improved. In general, members of staff maintain good records. However, on some records the date and signature of the member of staff or the manager are missing. The manager said that this was an oversight, given that records are migrating to the new system. However, in addition, one restraint record did not have a date or the signature of the manager. Therefore, this information cannot migrate to the new system. This does not ensure that good, clear and accurate information is kept.

The home is decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people have personalised their bedrooms to reflect their individual preferences. They take pride in the achievements and display artwork, certificates and memorabilia around their lounges. This promotes their sense of belonging and they take pride in their home. All professionals and parents spoken with during the inspection commented on the homely, warm, caring and welcoming feel of the home.

The home is regularly monitored by an independent visitor and internally by the manager. The report is sent to Ofsted in a timely fashion. This means that Ofsted has good oversight of the home between inspections. The manager uses this information to further improve the home and the service provided to the young people. For example, there has been a significant improvement in consulting with young people and a range of professionals. This has led to a range of compliments, especially in transitions for young people. In addition to this, members of staff were able to distinguish between merely conducting a supporting guide away from an incident rather than recording it as a restraint. This shows that the monitoring of the home is effective.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC025395

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Nugent Care

Registered provider address: 99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 2PE

Responsible individual: Liz Jackson

Registered manager: Benedicte McKeown

Inspector(s)

Pam Nuckley, social care inspector

Chris Scully, social care inspector

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