

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC025395
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Nugent Care
Registered person address	99 Edge Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool, L7 2PE

Responsible individual	Liz Jackson
Registered manager	Sister Benedicte McKeown
Inspector	Pam Nuckley

Inspection date	20/10/2015
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	Requires improvement

SC025395

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- This home provides an exceptionally warm and caring environment to young people and children who have a range of complex needs. One child said, 'I feel wanted'. Another said, 'They are like family.' A parent said, 'It couldn't be any better' and a professional said, 'I would recommend this home to my colleagues.'
- Most young people and children have been at this home for a significant period. This has given them the opportunity to form trusting relationships and they report being happy, safe and having lots of fun. An extremely stable staff team know the children very well. Consequently, children and young people are progressing across all areas of their lives.
- Because of the excellent daily routines in place, there is little disruption within the home. All young people and children reported on the excellent activities. One child said, 'It stops us from being bored and getting into trouble.' Another said, 'There is always lots to do and staff are always suggesting things.' A young person said, 'I have to cook somethings and freeze them because I am so busy, I just don't have time to cook some nights.'
- All young people attend school, college or alternative educational provision. They have extremely high levels of attendance and they are working in line with their peers or at expected levels of their understanding. Achievements are fully celebrated and children proudly display their certificates within the home.
- Overall, young people and children are safeguarded. The staff and manager work closely with safeguarding professionals and take prompt action if there is a concern or incident. However, volunteers who work at the home do not undergo the same stringent recruitment procedures as staff.
- Several short falls were found in the young people and children's records. One young person did not have a care plan and the homes placement plan had not been signed, risk assessments were generic, some young people did not have transition plan, they did not have access to a private telephone and they did not have an independent person to talk to if they wished to raise a concern. Similarly, the homes records require improvement. The Statement of Purpose requires amendment, staff files require more verification and the manager could challenge other professionals to support young people. These shortfalls are mainly recording issues and have not negatively affected the good care given and the good outcomes achieved

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must 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. This is specifically in relation to ensuring they are individual to each child and have the appropriate strategies and actions for staff to take. (Regulation 12 (2) (a))	31/12/2015
5: Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In order to meet the engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met the registered person must ensure; If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 5 (c))	31/12/2015
16: Statement of purpose The registered person must compile in relation to the children' home a statement which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 16 (1) Schedule 1)	31/12/2015

14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that: A plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority. (Regulation 14 (b) (iii))	31/12/2015
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that: Each child is given appropriate advocacy support. (Regulation 7 (b) (iii))	31/12/2015
22: Contact and access to communications The registered person must ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private. (Regulation 22 (3) (a))	31/12/2015
36: Children's case records The registered person must maintain records for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3. This is specifically 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. (Regulation 36 (1) (a) Schedule 3 (19))	31/12/2015
32: Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each matters in Schedule 2. This is specifically in relation to volunteers working in the home. (Regulation 32 (3) (d) Schedule 2 (1) (3) (6))	31/12/2015

13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure that: Staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. This is specifically in ensuring staff have safeguarding training refreshed and undertaken safeguarding vulnerable adult training. (Regulation 13 (1) (3))	31/12/2015
--	-------------------

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children's case records are kept up-to-date, signed, and dated. This is specifically in ensuring that all parties sign children's placement plans. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Ensure that children are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents'. This is specifically in relation to the structure of the young people's files. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 58, paragraph 11.9)
- Ensure children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. This is specifically in relation to ensuring décor is of a good standard. This includes quickly redecorating areas of repair, removing mould from showers and baths, cleaning sinks and removing old bricks from the car park area. (The Guide to the Quality Standards page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

A charitable organisation operates the home over two houses that are in close proximity to each other. Care is provided for up to 19 children and young people. One house specialises in caring for children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and provides care and accommodation to young mothers and their babies. The other house cares for children and young people with learning disabilities and autism.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
28/01/2015	CH - Full	Outstanding
28/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
09/01/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people and children say this is an excellent home, were they are well cared for, happy and safe. One child said, 'I don't want to move I love it here'. Another said, 'It's great, it's fun, we do loads of things, what more could you wish for.' A parent said, 'They go above and beyond.' A professional said, 'This is the happiest he has ever been in care.' Young people and children are introduced to the home in a planned manner. Wherever possible, they have several visits and stay for tea. One young person said, 'I came to visit a couple of times. It was good because I wasn't worried when I moved.' She continued to say, 'I got a welcome booklet and staff went through it with me, so I understood the rules and I think it answered all the questions I had.' Several parents also commented on these good arrangements and said it made them feel included in their children's care. In addition to this, the manager ensures that she completes impact risk assessments on the suitability of the placement. This ensures that the home can meet the individual's needs. Staff work closely with young people, children, professionals and parents to ensure care is tailored to their needs. Young people and children complete a person centred plan that informs staff of how they wish to be cared for. This includes their preferred routines and their likes and dislikes. Care and placement plans are current and regularly reviewed. However, one young person did not have a care plan on file and although this was produced on the day of inspection by the social worker, he had been in placement for over a year. In addition to this, several of the homes placement plans were not signed by the author, staff, parent or social worker. This does not ensure that everyone is in agreement with the plan. This was further compounded by the amount of information held in young people's files. For example, one child had three placement plans on his file that covered different periods. This does not ensure that staff and young people and children have access to the most up to date information. Young people and children receive such nurturing care that they thrive and make steady progress in all areas of their lives. Because of the length of time most of the staff have worked at the home, they know and understand young people very well. As a result, young people and children said that they could identify staff who they could speak to if they had a concern. Therefore, they rarely raise formal complaints but said that if needed they were dealt with quickly and were happy with the outcome. The National Youth Advocacy Service now visits the home monthly. They talk to young people on a general basis. However, his social worker has informed	

one child that he will be moving and he does not wish to. Another young person will be moving into an adult provision soon and her views, wishes and feelings have not been discussed with her. This means that young people and children do not have someone independent to speak with or to raise a concern.

An outstanding area for young people and children is the individual daily routines in place. These incorporate clear expectations of morning, education, meal times, evening activities and bedtime's routines. As a result, young people and children fully understand the expectations of them. Attendance at school or college is excellent and they fully engage in a wide range of activities.

Staff place great value on education and liaise effectively with educational professionals. They support young people to be ready on time and with homework. They attend all educational activities such as parents evening, services, sports day and encourage young people to attend out of school activities. Some of the children proudly showed the inspector all their awards and certificates they had received from school. One young person said, 'I have the most. I have twenty one 'star of the week' awards. I am winning.' Another child said, 'I went to splash world because I got 'star of the week'. Other young people have received money or gone out with friends for meals because they have 100% attendance at school. All young people and children are progressing in line with their peers. They have access to educational materials to support their learning in the home and take part in educational activities out of school hours, which further supports their learning.

Another outstanding area of the home is the engagement of young people and children in a wide range of activities and hobbies. One member of staff said, 'We home in on their skills, likes and attributes. We encourage them to try different things and support them fully.' A child said, 'I go to taekwondo three times a week. I do lots of other stuff and I am always busy.' Another child said, 'I am learning to swim, I am in a football team and I like trampolining.' A young person said, 'I love music and I have private guitar lessons.' This young person also shares his music skills with the younger children on a Thursday evening, at music club. As part of this, they put on a charity evening and raised a hundred pounds. Another young person volunteers at a youth club that provides activities for children with disabilities. She said, 'I love it. I look after the six to seven year olds. It gives me a great sense of achievement.'

The health needs of all young people and children are well met. They all attend routine doctors, dentist and opticians appointments. Some young people have limiting and/or diagnosed medical conditions. Staff work closely with health care professionals to ensure their dietary, personal and medication needs are robustly met. Some young people's conditions have long official medical names. The inspector discussed with the staff about the possibly of incorporating a pen picture of what this means and how this effects the young person. This would be useful for any new staff or volunteer. All medication is securely stored, recorded and administered. This means that young people receive their medication in line with

their prescription. Some young people receive extra support from the child adolescent mental health service. Staff say that they are very reluctant to share even the smallest amount of information in case it is a breach of confidentiality. But staff said that they struggle to support the younger children when the return from a session. Staff said that if they just knew the overall aim of the session or subject this would help them to avoid sensitive topics or understand anxieties. Although staff have raised this with individual counsellors the manager has not raised it formally. This does not ensure that all professionals are working as a team to support the care of a child.

Young people and children say they all get on very well with each other. When there are squabbles, they say staff will intervene and make sure that they discuss things sensibly and come up with solutions. As a result, they did not report any issues of bullying. One young person has been nominated as the 'anti bullying ambassador' for his school.

Some young people are of an age where they are due to move into adult provisions. They have been completing individual semi-independence plans that will assist them to enhance their skills. However, one young person will be moving soon and she does not have a transition plan in place. This does not ensure that the young person, parent, staff and professionals are in agreement with the plan and that they are all working towards the same plan.

Young people and children live in a very large, spacious and generally homely environment. Some minor elements of the home need attention to detail. For example, some young people's bedrooms have had small holes that have been re-plastered but are awaiting painting, some shower cubicles need mould cleaning, sinks need cleaning and there is a mound of used bricks in the car park. Young people and children's bedrooms reflect their individuality and most of them display posters, certificates and family photographs. They have toys and soft furnishings that reflect their ages. Young people and children say there is lots of room if they wished to have quiet time or privacy. However, one young person said that he did not have access to a phone, on which he could make calls in private. He said that they had to take and make telephone calls in the office or use their mobile phones. But he often did not have credit for his mobile phone. This does not ensure that young people can seek help or advice, in private, without staff recall to asking staff for access to a phone.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young	good

people are helped and protected

Young people and children receive care from an extremely stable staff team. Staff know and understand young people and children's achievements, dreams and vulnerabilities very well. Young people and children commented on staff 'being like family', 'being there for them', 'caring', 'loving', 'approachable', 'fantastic' and 'brilliant'.

The young people and children said that they felt safe, protected and well cared for. They all discussed staff in a positive light and acknowledge how they have helped them. One young person said, 'I wouldn't be this far without them. They have helped me be safe and regularly talk about lots of things with me. I often need reminding and they point things out when we are out.' A parent said, 'The excellent all round care protects my daughter. The best thing is they support and include family.' A professional said, 'This is an extremely safe environment that allows children to grow. Any issue or concern is raised quickly, efficiently and seen through to a satisfactory conclusion.' Staff are trained in child protection procedures and safeguarding young people. But some staff have not received refresher training. In addition to this, some young people are now adults. Staff have not had safeguarding training in protecting vulnerable adults. This does not ensure that all staff are aware of changing policies, procedures or legislation about protecting vulnerable adults.

Negative behaviour is minimised at this home because of the excellent routines in place. All young people and children have behaviour management plans in place that support staff in dealing with any incidents. However, the young people and children's risk assessments are generic. As a result, children as young as seven have been risk assessed for smoking, drinking alcohol, self-harming and taking drugs, when there is no history of these concerns. In addition to this, there is a lack of agreed strategies or action for staff to take, in the event of an incident. This does not ensure that risk assessments are individual to the needs of the child and that staff take a consistent approach.

Sanctions are discussed with young people and children and they are often given different choices to make things better. Therefore, they said they were fair. They talked about all the positive rewards they receive such as receiving trips out, personal items, toys and DVD's. One child had just received a fountain pen for good behaviour. He said, 'I love it. It will help with my handwriting.' Other young people talked about having incentive schemes in place for carrying out chores, independence skills and daily routines. They have received additional money; mobile top ups and trips to concerts. On occasions, young people have been held to ensure their or others safety. Staff are well trained in this area and it is only used as a last resort. Clear records show the reason why the action was necessary, they detail the incident and that young people and staff have the opportunity to discuss the event. Staff said this was important so they can learn from young people and each other.

Young people and children rarely go missing from this home. One young person who had a history of being missing, prior to this placement has significantly reduced these incidents. This is down to the exceptional work staff have done with her on being safe and building her confidence and self-esteem. She has recently given a presentation to the local authority on what it is like being in care. When they do go missing, staff follow the agreed protocol for each young person and search the local grounds and community. They remain in close contact with the police, professionals and family until their safe return. The manager ensures that the local authority completes return interviews. This means that young people and children have an opportunity to discuss their reasons for leaving with their social worker.

The selection and recruitment of staff is not sufficiently rigorous. Volunteers do not complete the same paperwork as paid staff and therefore, are not subject to the same scrutiny. For example, there was no proof of identity including a photograph, no full history of employment or an account of why they left their last employment or copies of their qualifications. Further to this, the manager had not explored gaps in some of the permanent staffs' employment history. This does not ensure that young people are fully protected from potentially unsuitable adults.

Young people and children often practice emergency fire evacuations. They are confident that they would be able to exit the building safely in the event of a fire. Good attention to health and safety issues and renewal of certificates ensures all parties are safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The Registered Manager has been in post for forty-four years. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience, which she uses to support staff well and to ensure that the home runs smoothly. Similarly, staff have been working at this home for a significant amount of years. The longevity of staff and minimal new appointments has significantly influenced the excellent relationships made with young people. This in turn allows them to settle, progress and to sustain relationships. The home has been judged outstanding over the last two full inspections. The overall judgement at the time of this inspection is good with this section of the inspection requiring improvement. This is due to the number of shortfalls across areas inspected. Some of these are documentary shortfalls that are having little	

impact upon children and young people. Others have the potential to impact upon young people, for example the lack of robust recruitment of volunteers, although there is just one in this home.

The Statement of purpose requires updating; this is because it does not accurately reflect the service on offer, for example; the document has an age category of 0-18 years, states that it can accommodate children with a sensory impairment; this is not included in the conditions of registration certificate.

Care planning practice is good, however one child has been in placement in excess of eighteen months and the home have failed to obtain a care plan. This is not affecting the care delivery due to the homes attention to detail and closeness of relationships..

The manager has not formally challenged poor decisions made by professionals or advocated for young people and children when they are not happy about these decisions. In addition to this, they have not been proactive in getting a young person independent advice, to represent their views, wishes and feelings around moving into an adult provision. This means that the home is not sufficiently engaging with the wider system on behalf of children.

The quality of care is well monitored by an independent person from the home. There is good consultation with young people, children, parents and professional bodies to ascertain their views about progress and any concerns they may have. The Registered Manager uses this information well, takes any positive or negative comments on board, and reflects upon them in her development plan. She is in the process of undertaking the Regulation 45 report that has been seen in draft at this inspection. The document is very good it is objective and insightful.

Staff say that they are very well supported by the leaders and managers of the home and have had training that enables them to meet the children's needs well. However, one young person has reached 18 years. There are gaps in the training of staff in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, the Mental Capacity Act and the process of 'best interests meetings' and it is not clear which staff in the home are qualified and experienced to deliver care to young mothers and their babies.

The strengths of the home are clearly understood. The home delivers an exceptionally nurturing environment and experience for children living there. Feedback from other professionals, parents and extended family members is universally excellent. Social workers comment very positively about the home saying that they would recommend the service to colleagues, that they have placed young people here before and that the current child has told them that they love it here.

The manager and staff have very warm professional relationships with the children and young people; this has undoubtedly contributed to the progress of children

whilst in this home. The nurturing care given is exemplary; it is evident that children do like living here.

The home's track record with regulators is good. They have a good history of taking remedial action upon the findings of inspections. The management team demonstrated openness and transparency throughout the whole inspection and a willingness to demonstrate development is in the best interests of the children and young people using the service.

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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015