

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	13/05/2015
Unique reference number	SC025664
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Ownlife Limited
Registered person address	Legion House, 75 Lower Road, Kenley, CR8 5NH

Responsible individual	Mr David Hastings
Registered manager	Ms Susan Cooke
Inspector	Miss Seka Graovac

Inspection date	13/05/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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

SC025664

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The staff are successful at making a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable young people who have very positive experiences and are happy to live in this home. They make good progress across different aspects of their welfare and development.
- The safeguarding practice is strong and is underpinned by the staff's ability to form trusting relationships with young people. The excellent relationships, clear boundaries and robustly-managed risks enable young people to make safer choices. The home's proactive safeguarding strategies are effective.
- Leaders and managers work in close partnership with other professionals. They contribute well to the care planning process and champion the voice of young people. They continue to challenge themselves and partner agencies to improve their practice and to have a greater positive impact on young people's lives.
- The areas for recommended further improvement relate to record-keeping and access to information technology both for staff and young people.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that children have access to a computer to support their education and learning. (The Guide, page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- ensure that records including those that are kept electronically can be easily accessed by anyone with a legitimate need to view them. (The Guide page 61, paragraph 14.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

- the home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may experience emotional and behavioural difficulties
- the home is privately owned

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/01/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
25/07/2014	CH - Full	Good
16/01/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory progress
18/07/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Staff have a deep understanding of young people who are looked after, and of their needs and vulnerabilities. Staff's empathy and skills in meeting those needs enable young people to quickly establish trusting relationships. Young people receive individualised care in a highly supportive environment. They feel valued for who they are and feel confident to express themselves. Young people are treated with dignity and their views are fully taken into account. Their identity is respected and enhanced. They are sensitively guided to leave the unhelpful patterns of feelings and behaviour behind, and to engage more openly with the opportunities for personal development. Leaders and managers are proactive at championing young people's rights. They are ambitious to close the gap between those who are looked after and those who are not. An example of this is negotiating with local educational services to implement a clear transition plan to enable a young person to return to full-time mainstream education. Other examples include supporting young people to engage with the wider network of professionals, such as mental health, sexual health, youth offending services and various apprenticeship schemes. The home works in close partnership with young people's families whenever that is possible, to support safe contact and to promote meaningful relationships. Taking into account their starting points, young people have made good progress across all aspects of their well-being. They say that they are happy to live in this home. Some young people have experienced multiple placements prior to living there. They now feel that they have found a place where they want to stay. They experience stability and develop a sense of belonging. In line with their care plans, they are effectively prepared to move to either a different kind of placement, such as fostering, or to live more independently. Their practical life-skills, such as budgeting and cooking, as well as social and personal skills have improved significantly. The staff appropriately celebrates their achievements.	

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good

Safeguarding practice in this home is good and is underpinned by the staff's ability to form trusting relationships with young people. The excellent relationships, firm boundaries and robustly managed risks enable young people to make safer choices. Young people feel secure in the knowledge that the staff are always there to help them with anything they need. They feel comfortable approaching staff and managers to share their views and concerns. They use the complaints procedure effectively. They are listened to, understood, respected and helped in practical ways.

Young people receive comprehensive and consistently good support to manage their behaviour and feelings safely. This has made a big difference in their lives. They feel safe and secure. Their confidence and self-esteem are growing. They have formed positive relationships with other young people who live in the home. There is no bullying among young people and they influence each other in positive ways.

Young people's behaviour has dramatically improved. They have stopped engaging in behaviour that in the past put them at risk, such as self-harming, stealing, smoking, being in exploitative relationships and going missing. There is only one occasion in the last 12 months when a young person went missing. This young person stayed in contact with the staff members, demonstrating the strength of their relationships. The home followed appropriate procedures in reporting this to social services and the police. Managers and staff work in close partnership with other professionals and agencies in line with the jointly agreed protocols. Effective working together ensures that young people are protected and that their safety is enhanced. They ensure that these concerns are always robustly followed up.

The low level of the incidents in the home is a result of good systems and proactive safeguarding strategies that are effective. The managers and staff remain vigilant to ensure that any vulnerabilities and risks are identified early and that comprehensive support is put in place to promote young people's health and safety.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager has many years of post-qualifying experience as a social worker and a manager. She had 12 years of prior experience as a Registered Manager in children's homes before July 2013, when she registered as the manager for this home. She provides strong leadership and has had a significant impact on the improvement of the social care practice in the home. She and the home's other leaders have continued to appropriately challenge partner agencies to keep on	

improving their practice and their contribution to young people's care.

Young people benefit from being looked after by the experienced, cohesive, diverse, consistent and caring team of staff. All permanent staff are appropriately qualified and have worked for this organisation for a number of years. They receive regular, individual supervision and good support from the management. Their training is in line with the appraisal of their performance and identified training needs. They have additional opportunities to discuss their practice and keep their knowledge up to date at the regular team meetings.

The home's sharp focus on making a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable young people is clearly enshrined in the Statement of Purpose. This focus pervades all aspects of the practice. Managers and staff are highly motivated individuals who have a shared sense of responsibility for doing everything they can to help young people to improve their lives. In partnership with others, they proactively drive the care planning process so that the views and the changing needs of the young people firmly remain at the centre of it.

A young person's advocate is impressed by 'the manner in which the staff and the social worker are working together'. The young people's social workers and independent reviewing officers receive regular monthly reports from the home. These reports capture young people's progress and identify any areas for targeted interventions. The on-going review of young people's outcomes and the timely sharing of information contribute to more dynamic, integrated and effective care planning.

Leaders and managers comprehensively monitor the quality of the provision and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses. An independent consultant has recently carried out an audit of the service in line with the legislative changes. The home has a clear action plan to continue to improve and develop further. In line with the requirements made at the last inspection, a location risk assessment has been finalised and the records relating to medication, staff recruitment and staff supervision have improved.

An electronic system for keeping records has been introduced to add more structure and consistency to the administration of the home. However, it still took a while for the managers to produce some records for the inspection. Some electronic records, such as weekly planners of educational and other activities for the previous weeks remain inaccessible. This was reportedly due to the data-system being locked by a staff member who was not on duty at the time. This has not had a negative impact on the care of young people. However, it impacts on the staff's ability to efficiently evidence consistently good practice.

The computer that is designated for the use of young people has not been working for over two months. The area manager took action to provide a different computer the next day. Access to other learning resources, such as books, libraries

and museums have been made available to young people to minimise the negative impact of the lack of internet access.

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 young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. They talked with young people, their families and social workers. They also spoke to the Local Authority Designated Person for child protection, the deputy virtual head and a young person's advocate. 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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