

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	18/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC028460
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Valerie Campbell
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	18/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has sustained effectiveness since the last full inspection and it continues to offer a good service. Some notable achievements have been made. For example, young people have achieved GCSEs; passed exams in functional skills, mathematics and sports; completed youth offending orders; stayed out of trouble with the police; reduced missing from home episodes and cooperated with professionals from a number of preventative services, such as drug workers, health workers and counsellors. A strength of this home is the commitment shown to creating a family environment where young people are supported to participate and be accepted. The staff do not give up on young people and continue to support them by encouraging different ways of participating and improving. For example, engaging mentors for young people from the local premiership football club and seeking a music therapist to come to the home and provide young people with music lessons and therapy. Not all young people are making the good progress that staff would like to see. A number of factors have influenced progress, such as ill health, changes in educational establishment and patterns of young people being missing from the home. Despite these factors, staff have worked extremely hard to support and help young people and try to keep them consistently on track. For example, one social worker said, 'They work well with young people, they have conversations and support is there for young people. Unfortunately some are not ready to take this support.' When young people struggle to engage and accept services which can support them, the leaders and managers request placement stability meetings, with regular reviews. This helps to engage young people and other professionals in thinking about strategies and services to try to prevent placement breakdown, missing episodes and moves. No young people have left the placement since the last inspection, although some young people have regular placement stability meetings due to concerns about progress. One young person has moved into the home since the last inspection. The	

managers considered the impact that this admission would have on the existing young people living in the home and managed this transition carefully to allow the young person to settle into the home. The staff team gained extensive information to help this young person to settle well.

An independent person visits the home once a month and writes a report, which takes into account the views of young people, parents and professionals. The service also employs a counsellor, who visits the home weekly and is available to meet with the young people. Both these professionals allow the young people's voices and views to be heard through feedback, which then supports the development of the service.

Young people know how to complain. They do not always feel that the outcome of investigating complaints is fair and they believe that it is sometimes biased towards supporting staff. Records seen on inspection showed thorough investigation, with young people informed of the outcome in writing as recommended from the previous inspection report. Young people still have a sense of concern about the outcome of complaints and their perception is that they have not been listened to. A further requirement about the complaint processes and a recommendation that young people have information about advocates to support them in making a complaint, are made to address this.

Young people raised a concern that the kitchen has been routinely locked overnight for health and safety reasons. Young people must be able to access all areas of their home and there are no apparent health and safety issues which immediately suggest that access should be restricted.

Managers and staff expect that young people will attend some form of education, employment or training. Young people's attendance and participation in education have declined since the last inspection. However, the staff work tirelessly to promote education and work well with placing authorities to find alternative options when placements are not successful.

At the end of last year there was an increase in missing episodes, although some excellent collaborative work with other professionals has resulted in a recent reduction in these incidents.

Staff support young people to integrate into the community and have organised a number of positive activities to support this. For example, trips to Thorpe Park and Center Parcs took place at the end of the summer. Staff also have links with the local football club, which provides mentors for young people.

Leaders and managers have provided a good response to improvement and have sustained effectiveness, despite facing challenges with school transitions, missing episodes and struggling to engage some young people in education. Leaders and managers have taken appropriate action to meet the requirements and recommendations made at the last full inspection.

The staff continue to strive to support young people, despite the difficulties, and positive relationships are evident. The staff have also built strong and effective relationships with parents, which has allowed positive contact and shared care agreements.

Information about this children's home

This home is a family-owned business, which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behaviour difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Full	Good
11/01/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must establish a procedure for considering complaints made by or on behalf of children. (2) In particular, the procedure must provide that no person who is subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate. (Regulation 39 (2))	31/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that there is further information about complaints and advocacy for children living in children's homes: see 'Get it Sorted: Guidance on providing effective advocacy services for children and young people making a complaint under the Children Act 1989' (2004)
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advocacy-services-for-children-and-young-people>) ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, paragraph 4.20)
- Ensure that children can access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made when this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.10)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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