

Children's homes inspection – full

Inspection date	26 April 2016
Unique reference number	SC028460
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Valerie Campbell
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	26 April 2016
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	Good

SC028460

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- This home is a family-run business and it feels like a family environment. It is welcoming, friendly and inclusive.
- There is an effective manager. She has run the service since it opened, and many of the staff team members have been working here for ten years or more.
- Staff know the young people well, take time to listen to them and to be interested in what young people are doing.
- Young people contribute to their risk assessments and behaviour management plans. They are aware of what staff are worried about in relation to keeping them safe. This has allowed further safety planning work to take place.
- The registered manager has employed a psychologist to support the therapeutic needs of young people and for staff consultation. This is helping to broaden the scope of meeting young people's emotional needs.
- Placements are stable and outcomes for young people are good. Young people say that they are happy living here and feel well supported by staff.
- The registered manager completes a comprehensive review of the quality of care at the home every six months. Although detailed these lack a focus on how to improve weaknesses.
- Disruptive incidents and behaviour are managed well by staff. The registered manager must ensure that appropriate notifications are made and that any restrictions of liberty are recorded as restraints.
- The home has an updated statement of purpose. However, amendments made to it are not always sent to HMCI as required.
- Young people have access to an excellent children's guide and know how to complain. At this time young people do not receive written outcomes to their complaints.
- The registered manager is working hard to ensure that all the members of the staff team receive good-quality training. Three staff members have yet to complete the required level 3 diploma for residential childcare by the relevant date.

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 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 must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
40 notifications The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child, which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(b)).	20 June 2016
32 staff training The registered person must ensure, by the relevant date, that the individual has attained the level 3 diploma for residential childcare (England) ('the level 3 diploma'). The relevant date is, in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016 (32(4)(a)(5)(b)).	30 June 2016
16 Statement of Purpose The registered person must notify HMCI of any revisions to the statement of purpose and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of revision (16(3)(b)).	31 June 2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that

particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the quality standards every six months. Registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4).

- Ensure that staff understand their responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views specifically in relation to writing to young people with the outcome of complaints ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10).
- Ensure that any restrictions of a young person's liberty of movement are recorded as restraint, in particular reference to preventing young people leaving the premises, when staff fear for children's safety ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.42).

Full report

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
11 January 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22 July 2015	Full	Good
5 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15 December 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people have positive and secure relationships with staff. A strength of this home is its family approach. Young people say that they feel as if it is a family and that staff really care for them. For example, staff say that some of the young people affectionately call the responsible individual, 'Grandma'. The staff team respects young people's individual identities, cultures and backgrounds and promotes these. For example, by inviting local community members to cook specific dishes and by ensuring that young people remain involved in their own cultural practices. Staff also support family connections, encouraging visits as supported by young people's plans and welcoming family members to visit the home. Young people have easy access to primary health services to ensure that they stay healthy. Staff actively support young people's health needs, for example, by reminding them of appointments, helping them to complain about health services and persuading them to attend hospital when needed. The home employs a psychologist to support the therapeutic needs of the young people and to offer staff consultation on managing behaviour. This worker started at the beginning of March and currently visits the home one evening a week. She is currently building up relationships, and this will be a helpful resource for young people. Staff work hard to engage young people in education. All young people living at the home are on roll at a school or college. Some young people attend a mix of work experience, college and home tuition. Staff regularly promote attendance and support young people by ensuring that they are up in time and have the necessary equipment that they need. Young people make good progress from their starting points. One young person has 100% attendance at school. This young person has made such progress that they were accepted to undertake the three A-level courses they applied for this coming summer term. Another young person who has been out of education for some time has started a college course. The tutor said 'Attendance is for the most part good.' Young people are encouraged to make choices, provide feedback and offer compliments or complaints. One staff member takes responsibility for ensuring that	

residents' meetings happen. An agenda is set in consultation with young people and shared prior to the meeting. For example, recent discussions included growing vegetables, a date for the annual barbeque, shower curtains to choose and activities that young people wanted. This meeting provides a positive forum in which to share views and encourages young people to take responsibility for what happens in their home.

There is good networking between staff and the professionals involved in the young people's care. For example, the manager has invited local professionals to the home to talk to young people about missing from care and cannabis use. There is also a plan to invite the local police community worker to the home's annual barbeque. A range of professionals and parents spoken to gave overwhelmingly positive reports.

Independent living skills for young people, such as budgeting, cooking simple meals and keeping their own rooms tidy, are encouraged and promoted by staff. Staff also encourage young people to apply for a bank account and ensure that they have a national insurance number and a passport prior to leaving the home. This approach helps to prepare young people for their lives as they progress toward adulthood.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Risk assessments are started prior to young people's admission to the home and are regularly updated. The registered manager has created a front sheet to the risk assessment, which shows the regular updates clearly in one place. This approach enables staff to quickly understand risk and manage the needs of young people. Young people contribute to their behaviour management plans. This helps them to understand why staff are concerned about their risk-taking behaviours. Some excellent safety planning work has taken place as a result. The home has recently updated its children's guide, and young people are aware of how to complain. Young people have made a few complaints since the last inspection. Processes for complaints are appropriate, recorded outcomes are clear and they meet regulations. Currently written responses are not provided to young people. In recent months, the home has experienced a higher level of disruption than usual. This is due to the mix of young people in placement, some of whom have complex needs. The experience of staff and their expertise has ensured effective	

management of behaviours during this time. The registered manager does not always ensure oversight of the incident log or routinely sign this off. This resulted in one notification not being forwarded as required.

Despite recent disruption, young people have positive relationships with staff and a high level of respect for them. For example, one young person said, 'I love it here. The staff are lovely. It's a nice environment and I know being here will help me achieve my full potential, because all I really want is a normal life.'

Young people say that they are happy at this home and that they feel safe. For example, one young person wrote a comment following an incident, stating, 'I like what you did (staff name). You are always trying to keep the unit safe.'

Staff rarely restrain young people and try to avoid this if possible. On occasions, staff restrict young people's liberty to ensure their best interests. These restrictions are not recorded as a restraint. An example of such a restraint is staff blocking the doorway to prevent a young person from placing themselves at risk.

A strength of this home is its response to young people who go missing. This has resulted in a reduction of missing episodes for most young people. The home has established excellent networks with relevant professionals. For example, the police missing from care coordinator, the child sexual exploitation lead for the police and an independent person from the Children's Society. Records kept are clear, detailed and regularly updated. The staff keep all relevant professionals updated and remind them of their responsibilities, for example, that of offering an independent person interview when young people return. Staff from the home maintain regular telephone contact with young people when they are absent and frequently go out looking for them in the community.

Recruitment processes are sound, and appropriate checks confirm if there are any reasons why candidates should not work with young people. The registered manager ensures that agency workers identify themselves by producing photographic identity at their first shift. All these processes protect young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home.

Adequate precautions prevent the risk of fires. Safety equipment is in place, and there is evidence of regular compliance checks and fire drills taking place.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
An experienced and competent manager runs the home. The registered manager	

holds a level 4 diploma and is currently taking her level 5 award. This is due for completion within the required timescales.

The registered manager provides good, strong leadership. She has maintained a committed and consistent staff group over many years. Many of the staff have worked at the home for five years and some for over 10 years. Young people confirmed to me that they know all the staff well and that there are rarely agency workers at the home. The manager uses the same agency staff, if needed, to provide consistency for young people. One young person said, 'The agency don't seem like agency because I know them all so well.'

Of the 13 staff working at the home, 10 have achieved the NVQ level 3 qualification. Three of the staff are undertaking this, and are due to complete this summer. Despite this oversight, staff training is given high priority. All staff recently completed the Channel General Awareness e-learning course, which provides guidance on how to identify people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Some staff completed drug and alcohol and gang awareness training recently and shared their learning within the team meeting. The manager keeps a training matrix to ensure that regular update training is completed. All the above ensure that staff have the necessary skills to undertake their jobs effectively.

Staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisals, and attend regular team meetings and hand-over meetings. Staff say that they feel supported by leaders and managers. For example, one member of staff said, 'If we have a bad shift, we always debrief and then discuss in supervision later.' Staff do not always agree, but feel that there is an opportunity for open discussion within team meetings. Staff said that they feel valued. Examples of this include:

- The manager 'will text and support staff.'
- 'We had a raise following appraisal.'
- 'We get paid for extra hours.'

This home has a history of stable placements with good outcomes for young people. This is generally due to careful matching on admission of new young people into the home. The current mix over the past few months has not been positive and has led to more disruptive behaviour and more recorded incidents. Leaders and managers have recognised the impact on existing young people and acted appropriately. Despite the difficulties encountered, the staff and managers ensured as smooth a transition as possible.

Young people benefit from clear care plans and are supported by staff to attend important meetings about themselves, to ensure that their views are heard. Leaders and managers know young people well and work well with placing authorities. For example a commissioning authority said, 'They have had flexibility and stickability and despite serving notice they continue to help (name of young person) to move on in a planned way.'

There is good external monitoring of the home. An independent visitor regularly visits and seeks feedback from young people, professionals and parents. These reports allow for an objective view on the progress made or on any improvements needed.

The manager completes a quality of care review every six months. These reports tend to be a description of what is happening in the service, as opposed to an analytical tool that sets actions from the review. Despite this, the home has developed an ambitious development plan. This sets good objectives and shows that the manager is thinking about the service and planning ahead.

The home's statement of purpose has recently been updated and is a good working document. Staff are familiar with the ethos that the home attempts to promote. Recent updates to the statement of purpose were not notified as required.

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 children looked after 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 that 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 whom 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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