

SC028505

Registered provider: Bramley Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate four young people. The home is privately owned and is one of four children's homes run by the service provider. The home is a semi-independent provision that offers a service to young men who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. All young people have access to the organisation's specialist therapeutic service and education establishment.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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Date of last inspection: 20 December 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Young people make exceptional progress. They benefit from spending time in a home that provides them with a safe and nurturing environment. It enables those who have experienced troubled histories to establish predictable routines,

which support them to reflect and develop life skills and strategies. In this environment they thrive.

- Individually tailored interventions and packages of support are delivered by a proficient team of staff and therapists who have the right skills and attitudes to influence and bring about positive change in young people's lives.
- Young people enjoy the company of the staff who care for them. Leaders have embedded a culture and atmosphere of mutual respect. This ensures that everyone feels they have an active, valued and important role in their small community.
- The depth and quality of relationships formed between young people and staff are long-lasting and can be life changing. The quality of these relationships means that a high number of young people keep in touch once they have left the home.
- Carefully considered admissions to the home and a well-thought-through transition process enables young people to settle and the group's stability to be maintained.
- Young people make remarkable progress, especially when bearing in mind their previous experiences and challenges. The development of independence skills is an area in which the young people particularly thrive. This prepares them for adulthood and to take responsibility for their futures and behaviours.
- The registered manager has high expectations, and has ensured that clear lines of responsibility and accountability are in place. All staff embrace a culture of providing the young people with the best of care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager and staff team need to continue to bear in mind the demands made on them and potential compromise in quality of care if they are continually expected to work in other homes run by the organisation.
- The use of personal mobile telephones by members of staff to provide support to the young people needs to be more clearly monitored and subject to a clear policy.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/12/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/07/2016	Full	Good
29/10/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/05/2015	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
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse or neglect and sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect. (Regulation 34 (1) (a) and (b). This is with particular reference to writing a policy and procedure regarding the use of personal mobile telephones belonging to members of staff to provide support to the young people.	30/11/2017

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. This includes redecorating and maintaining the home as required. (The Guide to Quality Standards, page 16, paragraph 3.9) (This is with particular reference to ensuring that the repetitive problem of mould in the young people's bathroom is addressed in a more effective manner.)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4) (This is with particular reference to ensuring that records relating to a young person's progress on his targets are kept up to date.)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

This is a home which is highly focused on achieving the best for young people. As a

result, they make excellent progress relative to their starting points and the time they have spent living here.

Experienced, skilful and committed staff provide excellent care, with the young people at the forefront of all they do on a daily basis. The unconditional support, which the young people, receive helps them to develop trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Regular appointments with therapists assist the young people to consider their behaviours and histories. The young people appreciate this and report that they find the sessions very helpful. Consequently they are able to reflect honestly and openly with their carers and therapists, and they learn to implement strategies to manage their risk-taking behaviours.

The open communication, which is an established part of the routine and ethos of the home, enables the young people to develop social skills and abilities to communicate their opinions and feelings. This means that they are able to resolve issues and conflict with their peers. The focus on resolving differences and problem solving at an early stage has also meant that no formal complaints have been made by young people regarding their care.

The goal of this home is to enable the young people to develop coping strategies related to their past behaviours and to learn independence skills in preparation for moving on from care. Each young person has a carefully developed plan, which outlines what their targets are and how they are achieving these. The young people are actively involved in developing their plans and this means that they feel valued and involved and that they have a meaningful influence on their futures. This motivates the young people to aim high in their aspirations for their future lives and means that they feel the staff will do their utmost to support them.

It is of note that ex-residents continue to contact members of staff to seek advice or just to keep in touch. This is a clear indication of the impact that the care has had on the young people, and the strong and long-lasting relationships which have been formed.

Advocacy provided by members of staff for the young people is excellent. The support they receive is unconditional and effective. One young person was supported by the registered manager to maintain his placement at the home despite his placing authority initially recommending that he moved on. This was done in conjunction with an advocacy service and the young person's family. The efforts made by the staff and the close working with his family and other professionals has concentrated on achieving the best outcome possible for the young person. As a result, the young person is feeling more settled and confident about his future.

Young people are very well prepared to move into this home. The registered manager and members of staff make sure that young people are known to their peers prior to admission. This makes sure that relationships begin to form and that the dynamics in the home are not overly disrupted. It is achieved through prospective young people visiting and having meetings with their peers so that the culture, expectations and boundaries are clear right from the start. This has been a very successful process; there have been

no emergency discharges or sudden endings of placements for the young people since the last full inspection in December 2016. This further enhances the feeling of stability and equilibrium for the whole community; young people and staff alike.

Members of staff provide excellent support to the young people in maintaining contact with their families. This support is carefully prepared and supervised, and clear expectations are in place for the staff to follow to ensure that everyone's well-being is promoted during these visits.

All the young people have full-time education placements and some have part-time jobs. Attendance at school or college is excellent, and the young people have made remarkable progress in their academic achievements. They have also been able to expand their circles of friends. Some of the young people require support at college. A full-time member of staff, employed by the home but working primarily on the college site, provides this. The young people appreciate this support and the member of staff also provides an excellent conduit of communication between the staff at the home, members of staff at the college and the young person. This means that plans are amended if needed and concerns are shared promptly. Therefore, each young person is supported to the level they need.

Young people take part in activities in the community and this enables them to test their social skills and coping mechanisms. The process is very carefully planned and an incremental approach ensures that the pace is at a rate that the young person can cope with. Initially, these activities are arranged with members of staff giving direct supervision and support. However, as young people's skills and confidence grow they are able to take part with no staff supervision. This is a significant part of each young person's care plan and a measure of their ability to put in place their new skills and strategies. All young people have made excellent progress in this area.

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

The young people say that they feel very safe living in this home. They feel able to share their thoughts and feelings freely with staff and therapists. This helps them to reflect on their behaviours and to develop safer ways of dealing with their impulses and risk-taking behaviour.

The embedded ethos of sharing concerns with each other in house meetings means that conflicts are openly and honestly addressed. Consequently, issues such as bullying or friction within the group are dealt with swiftly. This helps the home to have a settled and safe atmosphere where the young people readily support each other at times of anxiety and distress.

The emphasis on restorative justice and reflection means that behaviours are openly discussed, explored and resolved during the group meetings and individual sessions with members of staff. As a result, there is little need for any formal sanctions to be imposed. If these are required they are monitored and discussed with the young person, that member of staff who put them in place and the registered manager. This ensures that

sanctions are appropriate and not overused.

The settled atmosphere in this home, and the staff and young people's mutual respect of each other mean that there has not been an incident involving physical restraint in this home for a number of years.

Clear risk assessments provide members of staff with a very clear picture of each young person's vulnerabilities and areas where they need additional support and supervision. Staff keep these up to date and amend them when needed. The young people are also aware of their own risk assessments and meet with staff to discuss the strategies that they would find most helpful to manage any behaviours or situations which may cause them anxiety.

Young people earn unsupervised free time away from the home as part of their independence training. This process is very carefully planned and is incremental in approach. Therapists and key staff, including police officers, if needed, as well as social workers, are all involved in organising and overseeing unsupervised free time for each young person. This attention to detail and robust approach ensures that risks and support plans are in place and are understood by each young person.

There are very clear guidelines for staff to follow in the event that a young person goes missing. Young people are also aware of their individual protocols. Events of this nature are rare, with just one instance in ten months. All procedures were adhered to in this case and the young person returned home safely.

Access to the internet is strictly controlled and monitored in the home. Some young people have mobile telephones and, in line with their care plans, these are checked by members of staff on a random basis to ensure that their use is appropriate and safe. This approach is underpinned by key workers spending time with the young people discussing the risks associated with use of the internet, so that they have a thorough understanding of their vulnerabilities and responsibilities in this area.

The close support of the young people while they are out in the community includes members of staff using their own personal mobile telephones to stay in touch with young people. While this practice is in place to protect the young people, there are no written guidelines for members of staff on the use of their personal mobiles for work and the potential risks associated with this, for example allegations, inappropriate contact from previous residents and the potential for data protection breaches.

All members of staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding practice. They know what to do and whom to inform if they have concerns about a young person's welfare or behaviour. There have been no incidents which have had to be shared with safeguarding agencies since the last inspection.

A thorough recruitment process is in place, and this ensures that only staff with appropriate background checks and references are employed. The records confirm that it is standard practice to explore the reasons why staff left their previous employments

working with young people or vulnerable adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A very experienced manager provides excellent support to his staff team. All members of staff report that they really appreciate the support and guidance they receive. They speak highly of the enthusiastic team work and the strong sense of stability. The settled and keen staff team members enjoy their jobs and are motivated to work with the young people. This all helps to ensure that the young people feel valued, genuinely cared for and safe.

Members of staff receive regular training and supervision. Additional supervision in the form of therapeutic group sessions ensures that they are also able to explore and reflect upon the impact on them of working with this particular group of young people. This helps them to maintain their enthusiasm, analyse their practice and ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to carry out their work with sensitivity and insight.

Staff expect young people to make excellent progress, with challenging but achievable targets to achieve on their journeys towards independence and self-reliance. Leaders have firmly established these expectations as part of the home's culture and ethos. It is very clear that the young people buy into these aspirations, demonstrated by their active involvement in agreeing their own targets and writing their own care plans.

On occasion, due to staff shortages elsewhere the registered manager and staff members work in other homes run by the organisation. This has not yet compromised the continuity of care experienced by the young people but members of staff and the manager are concerned that this could occur if this practice continues.

Admissions to the home are carefully vetted and planned. The registered manager ensures that the resident's group is stable and resilient enough to cope with the changes in dynamics before a new young person comes to live at the home. Young people who have recently been admitted praise the calmness and settled atmosphere in which they now live. One young person said, 'It's calm here and that's very useful and helps you to get your head around things.'

The home is a sixteenth-century farmhouse and so there are restrictions, due to its listed status, on decoration and refurbishments. It is comfortable and, overall, well maintained. There is a problem with mould growing in the young people's bathroom and, despite staff attempts, this is an ongoing issue. The staff and manager agree that this needs to be addressed on a permanent basis.

Case records are of a good standard and provide a clear story of how each young person has progressed in the home. One young person's record of targets achieved had not been kept up to date. The young person concerned was keen to explain the document to the inspector and stated that he had achieved targets in certain areas. This was evidenced in other records, such as key-work sessions. This administrative shortfall has not compromised the young person's progress but the staff have not consistently used

the format used and agreed by the organisation which runs the home.

Good levels of communication are maintained with external professionals such as police officers, social workers and advocates. This ensures that plans can be adjusted and kept up to date and that any concerns are shared. A particularly excellent standard of advocacy is provided by members of staff and the registered manager, especially in cases where young people feel that local authority plans are not taking their needs into consideration. This has resulted in young people's time at the home being extended and with them feeling safer and more secure as a result.

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: SC028505

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Bramley Care Limited

Registered provider address: Bramley Care Limited, Nicholas House, Riverfront, Enfield, Essex EN1 3FG

Responsible individual: Barbara Sharp

Registered manager: Mark Riglar

Inspector

Paul Taylor, social care inspector

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