

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC028505
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Chris Peel

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
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 last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The home is set up to provide young people who have lived in one of the provider's other homes to move here and have the opportunity to focus on preparing for independence. The manager has improved the process for admissions into the home so that impact risk assessment are now completed that demonstrate how staff will address potential risks. The welcome given to young people has been a strong feature for some time, with the chance to meet existing staff and residents on preliminary visits, being presented with a welcome pack and enjoying a special meal when they move in. Young people spoken to appreciate this, as it marks their introduction to an environment where they have increased freedoms and privileges in keeping with their age and progress. Young people appreciate peers acting maturely and the house having a calmer atmosphere than they have experienced in other places they have lived. The majority respond to this by adjusting quickly to the increased responsibilities and follow fellow residents' standards of behaviour. As a result, they have greater opportunities and are better prepared for life in the community when they leave care. For most, progress is strong across a range of areas, including reducing the risk of reoffending, learning independence and personal care skills and improved social interactions and educational attainment. When this is not the case, the manager and staff put remedial measures in place and extend placements for as long as possible. This means young people have the opportunity to make progress within the support offered by the home and access to therapeutic assistance. Young people's aspirations, and those of staff for them, are high, including opportunities for educational attainment and successful careers in chosen fields. Staff work extremely well with local colleges to ensure young people access courses pitched at an appropriate level. They offer support including staff working in classrooms, close liaison with tutors, arranging work-experience opportunities and support for young people with homework or research.	

Staff help young people to benefit from facilities in the local community, including clubs, activities, shopping and entertainment venues. These opportunities are carefully selected, based on each young person's interests, suitability and safety considerations. A young person, responding to Ofsted's online survey, commented, 'Staff try and promote all boys to do activities as it is the one way they can see if you are making progress and how you interact with the public.'

The manager and staff expedite openings for young people, such as part-time jobs, and most thrive on the opportunities this affords them. However, the manager and staff are swift to take appropriate action if concerns arise over a young person's behaviour.

Social workers sign consent for off-site activities but written agreement from someone with parental responsibility is not always obtained for young people who are accommodated rather than placed under an order of the court. Where a young person is old enough to give their own consent this should also be documented.

Young people report feeling safe, with occasional difficulties dealt with effectively so that they do not escalate. They believe that safeguarding is a high priority in the home. Responses to the online survey included the comment, 'If I feel unsafe the manager would want to know straight away so that he can make me feel safer.' Also, 'They keep an eye out and if they see that we are struggling then they do their best to move away from the stimulant and distract us in any way possible.'

Young people learn how to develop skills to be able to live with less support once they leave the home. They take turns to cook for the others, or are responsible for their own meals, from menu planning through to preparation of food from ingredients bought by themselves. As young people progress through several levels in an independence programme, they learn how to do their own laundry, about kitchen health and safety, budgeting and how to administer first aid – among a range of other essential skills. The manager is adding an internet safety module to the work staff already do in this field.

The organisation has adopted new development plans that adopt a 'SMART' format, resulting in clearer actions for the home and timescales for them to be achieved in. They mirror the successful care planning documents for young people that provide an assessment of current progress and future objectives. Young people's views are included in the plans, promoting their engagement in the work being done.

Key workers record sessions held with the young people they have responsibility for. Although agendas are not formally drawn up, the narrative does demonstrate that young people raise issues and contribute to the discussion. However, staff do not routinely share the records and young people rarely sign them. This prevents a young person from making amendments where they might be appropriate or from seeing that their views are accurately reflected. The opportunity to be reminded of discussions, decisions and actions to be taken is also missed, but made up for by

monthly key work sessions, which review work done and goals set. One young person commented, 'The sessions are very helpful on a personal level' and cited challenges he had faced at college his key worker had helped with.

House meetings are effective forums to address numerous issues, from planning joint activities to problematic conduct or relationships. Young people give feedback to their peers that can be instrumental in moderating attitudes and behaviours.

The manager and staff are very committed to the young people; one member of staff said, 'I don't like the boys to go without a regular member of staff [on a shift]' so he takes on as much overtime as necessary. Staff who are brought in to cover vacancies, whether bank workers or from an agency, are known to young people.

Young people spoken to said they had positive relationships with staff. One commented, 'They can have a joke and laugh but know when to be serious' and another, 'I get on with them all, I appreciate them all helping me out [and in return] I make them a lot of teas and coffees.'

Incidents of young people going missing or requiring a sanction are rare and physical interventions have not been needed. Staff log measures of discipline and the views of the young person are recorded, often written and signed by them. However, logs do not currently record that the member of staff who implemented the measure has been spoken to about it and, if that staff member is the manager, a senior manager does not monitor its appropriateness within a reasonable time.

There is a greater emphasis on encouraging positive behaviour, than on sanctions, exemplified by a young person's reply to a question on the online survey, 'Staff will pick up on the good things and make sure that it is recognised.'

Room searches are very rare events. The only one to have occurred since the last inspection was not recorded on the young person's case file and there is no separate log of searches.

The manager has recently introduced 'moving on' files that evidence the work done to help young people make the move in or out of the home. This is an excellent development as they gather information about the rationale for decisions made, documents the plans made to assist a young person and show how they have been implemented. This evidences the exemplary work being undertaken and complements the key work session records that demonstrate how young people are also prepared emotionally for the step they are taking.

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 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All young people have access to the organisation's specialist therapeutic service and education establishment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/10/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/05/2015	Full	Good
05/01/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/06/2014	Full	Good

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
The registered person must ensure that a record is made within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control or discipline within 48 hours that the user has been spoken to about the measure; and signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days an addition is made to the record that the child has been spoken to about the measure (Regulation 35 (3)(a-c)). In particular records must show that these timescales have been adhered to.	31/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17 paragraph 3.20). All room searches and their outcomes should be recorded in case files and logged.
- The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31 paragraph 6.5). Written consents must be obtained where necessary from those with parental responsibility.
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the general principles for behaviour management in children's homes are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46 paragraph 9.36) When the home's manager has implemented such a measure the scrutiny should be undertaken by a senior manager.
- Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations

including the quality standards', page 58 paragraph 11.19)

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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