

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	03/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC031410
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, St. Annes Crescent, LEWES, East Sussex, BN7 1UE

Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Helen Simmons
Inspector	Stephen Collett

Inspection date	03/12/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC031410

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Managers and staff have a thorough understanding of young people's needs and deliver a high standard of care. Young people experience security and stability in their lives.
- The majority of young people make good progress in terms of their emotional resilience, education, social and independence skills, taking into account their abilities.
- The home is well managed. Staff feel supported and demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the needs of young people.
- The wishes and feelings of young people are prioritised. Young people improve their communication skills and begin to participate more in day-to-day decision making.
- Robust safeguarding practice ensures young people's vulnerabilities are identified and staff protect them from harm.
- The home provides a stimulating environment from where young people can safely engage in a range of activities which enriches their lives.
- Staff communicate effectively with external professionals in order to become familiar with young people's complex health and medical needs. This ensures they deliver safe and appropriate care.
- Positive working relationships with parents and carers are maintained and young people benefit from having well-planned contact with family members.
- Some shortfalls were identified relating to risk assessment, notifications to the regulator and use of the complaints process. These have not resulted in young people's welfare being compromised, and overall young people thrive at the home.

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to assessing risk, the registered person must ensure that staff: 12 (2)(a)(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	25/02/2016
Ensure the registered person notifies HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)).	25/02/2016

Recommendations

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

Only accept placements for children after fully considering the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children; specifically by ensuring impact risk assessments are undertaken prior to a new child being admitted. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Ensure children are able to take up issues or make a complaint with support. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.13)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by the local authority. The service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/07/2014	Full	Good
12/03/2014	Interim	Good progress
19/08/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive a very good standard of care. The majority settle well at the home and develop a sense of stability and security in their lives. They form trusting relationships with staff and this enables them to become more emotionally resilient. As a result, young people make significant progress, taking into account their starting points on admission and their abilities. The Registered Manager and staff have a thorough understanding of the needs of each young person. They have good knowledge of individual resident's learning disabilities and medical conditions. This knowledge and understanding is reflected in care plans which provide detailed guidance and strategies for delivering care and responding to young people's anxieties and challenging behaviour. Young people respond positively to the care they receive. One young person said she 'likes the staff and likes talking to them'. Staff were observed to be friendly, relaxed and at ease with the residents, while quietly but effectively maintaining boundaries. They are attentive to the needs of young people, offering reassurance and comfort if any become anxious. As young people settle into the home they display less challenging behaviour. One young person, described as having 'crisis episodes' in her life when she would demonstrate severely disruptive behaviour, has not experienced such an episode for over a year. An independent reviewing officer attributed young people's progress to the fact that 'staff keep young people at the heart of everything they do'. All young people attend school or college placements. A teacher for a young person who has been at the home for just over a year said 'he appears more settled and has made good progress in school'. The teacher further stated that staff had recognised he was more able than other residents and had introduced a 'personalised programme of activities', which had great benefits. Staff ensure young people are well prepared for school and that suitable travel arrangements are in place. They attend school meetings and contribute to the personal education planning process. Staff are familiar with each young persons preferred communication technique. Some young people respond positively to the social stories approach and this has enabled them to significantly increase their vocabulary. This provides young people	

with increased opportunities to express their wishes and feelings and play a more active role in day-to-day decision-making.

There is a strong commitment to encouraging young people to express their views. Independent advocates visit the home on a regular basis, and through observation and communication with young people are able to provide an informed assessment of how needs are being met. The advocates also prepare reports for looked after children review meetings, ensuring young people's views are represented in care planning forums.

Young people access a range of community based activities, such as youth and after school clubs. Staff support and encourage young people to engage in new and inspiring activities, such as horse riding. Risks are well managed, and this ensures young people's disabilities do not unnecessarily limit their experience. Holidays are arranged, and one young person recalled a number of exciting and memorable events while staying at a holiday resort.

Staff provide sensitive personal care; ensuring young people's dignity is respected. Residents are encouraged to develop their independence skills and some begin to undertake personal hygiene routines themselves. Young people make progress in carrying out domestic tasks. They are encouraged to make choices and some take increased pride in their appearance and dress.

The health needs of young people are prioritised. A healthy, balanced diet is provided and young people have plenty of opportunities to take exercise. Staff receive training in order that they can meet the complex health needs of some of the residents. Consequently, medical equipment is operated correctly, and the recording and administration of medication is safely managed.

Staff form excellent working relationships with parents and carers. They encourage them to be involved in planning young people's care where appropriate and include them in activities such as personalising young people's bedrooms. These supportive relationships contribute towards effective contact arrangements being made. This means young people and their parents' are more likely to enjoy quality time together.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Comprehensive policies and procedures for keeping young people safe and protecting them from harm are understood by staff and fully implemented in practice. This contributes towards young people's sense of security, and they say,	

or indicate, that they feel safe in the home. Some young people are able to verbalise which member of staff they would speak to if they had concerns or worries.

Generally, a high standard of risk assessment ensures young people's vulnerabilities are well documented and staff are provided with guidance and strategies to prevent young people coming to harm. In one case the potential for a young person, who is more able than other residents, to leave the home and go missing, had not been assessed. However, no such incidents have occurred.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's need for protection, and provide appropriate levels of supervision. This ensures that the potential for young people to harm themselves or their peers is minimised.

There are detailed behaviour management strategies recorded for each young person, providing staff with clear guidance on how to respond to challenging behaviour. Young people therefore benefit from receiving consistent responses and become familiar with boundaries and expectations. Pictorial messages around the home highlight the importance of respecting one another and forming positive relationships.

Physical restraint is used as a last resort when young people are in danger of seriously harming themselves or others. Staff are trained to use appropriate techniques, and all incidents are monitored by the Registered Manager. Consultation takes place with other professionals when there are concerns that a young person's behaviour escalates to the point where frequent or prolonged restraint has become necessary. This ensures practice is adapted to meet individual needs, and external monitoring provides an additional safeguard. Managers and staff are aware of the need to ensure young people have the opportunity to be medically examined following a physical restraint.

Young people's vulnerabilities are identified prior to admission, and excellent planning takes place to ensure their medical and support needs can be met. Any shortfalls in the knowledge or skills of staff to meet these needs are identified, and additional training provided. This ensures staff are able to provide safe care for young people.

Robust recruitment procedures minimise the risk of unsuitable adults being employed in the home. This includes detailed background checks. A thorough interview process determines the applicant's motivation and understanding of the needs of vulnerable young people. Good performance monitoring during the induction period helps ensure new staff are suited to the role.

Any concerns about staff performance are quickly identified. Allegations made against staff, including agency staff, are immediately referred to the local authority designated officer (LADO). Any actions agreed are fully implemented, and internal

investigations are thorough. The needs of young people are prioritised during this process.

Regular health and safety checks ensure potential hazards are rectified. Domestic appliances and installations are serviced and maintained and fire safety measures are reviewed. Young people have individualised evacuation plans which identify their support needs in an emergency. The Registered Manager is taking steps to ensure all staff attend regular fire drills to ensure evacuation plans are well understood. As a result of these measures, young people live a physically safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home has an experienced Registered Manager who holds the NVQ level 4 in care and NVQ level 4 in management. She leads a stable, experienced staff team who feel well supported and who are committed to providing high standards of care for young people. The use of agency staff is kept to a minimum, with the same staff being used wherever possible. Agency staff receive supervision from senior permanent members of staff in the home. High quality supervision ensures staff have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the needs of young people. Any safeguarding issues are always discussed. Staff feel confident to suggest new and creative ways of working with young people. This demonstrates their commitment to developing good practice and ensures they feel valued. Staff particularly appreciate the opportunity to have additional supervision when they are managing challenging situations. Team meetings ensure staff benefit from the mutual support of their colleagues and line managers. Practice issues are discussed; professional support and guidance from a clinical psychiatrist ensures staff are able to develop their knowledge of young people's needs and understanding of their behaviour. Staff are able to access a wide range of training courses, both on-line and classroom based. This ensures all staff understand how young people with disabilities are vulnerable in terms of child protection and the steps they need to take to safeguard them and prevent them coming to harm. The Registered Manager ensures additional training is provided to meet the specific individual needs of the residents. Some minor shortfalls were identified in terms of staff completing mandatory training on time. This has not impacted negatively on the young people, and action is being taken to rectify the situation.	

The quality of care is effectively monitored by the Registered Manager and an independent visitor provides an additional level of scrutiny. Monitoring systems are enhanced by obtaining feedback from professionals, parents, carers and young people where possible. The Registered Manager is continuously looking for ways to improve monitoring systems and identifies that more in depth analysis and evaluation of the information collected could improve the effectiveness of established systems.

There have been no complaints from young people since the last inspection, and one complaint from a parent. This was appropriately investigated and resolved. On one occasion a young person made negative comments about the care being delivered but this was not recognised as a complaint. Consequently the complaints process was not instigated.

Leaders and managers communicate effectively with professionals and develop excellent working relationships with parents. A social work Team Manager commented that the Registered Manager's attendance at management 'working together meetings' ensures the needs and progress of young people is understood by the other professionals working with the residents. This approach ensures effective partnership working and good care planning. Any concerns for a young person's welfare are shared in a timely manner with relevant professionals. However, an allegation made against an agency member of staff was reported to the LADO but was not reported to the regulator.

Overall, good planning takes place prior to a young person being admitted to the home. However, on one occasion the changing needs of a young person known to the Registered Manager and staff, were not effectively assessed before being admitted for a second time. In addition, no assessment was undertaken of the likely impact the young person's admission would have on the group dynamics. This resulted in a period when the home was less settled than usual.

The Registered Manager responded well to the situation and made rigorous representations to other professionals to ensure the young person's needs were re-assessed and alternative provision made.

The home is well maintained, and provides a comfortable environment for young people. Excellent facilities are provided to ensure the young people's physical needs are met. The home is well resourced in respect of providing stimulating recreational opportunities for the young people.

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 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 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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016