

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC032069
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Praxis Care
Registered provider address	25 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 7AA

Responsible individual	Andrew Mayhew
Registered manager	Ruth Harrison
Inspector	Phillip Morris

Inspection date	21 June 2016
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

SC032069

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive a high standard of care, provided by a committed and skilled staff team.
- The registered manager and staff have developed effective partnerships with other agencies, which support and safeguard young people.
- Young people receiving short breaks at this service make progress in all areas of their development, especially in relation to various methods of communication.
- The registered manager and staff understand the challenges faced by parents and carers. In response, they have developed a support and information-sharing group.
- Young people's safeguarding needs take priority for the registered manager and staff. Consequently, young people are kept safe.
- Staff members receive training in all aspects of safeguarding and particularly on keeping young people with physical and learning disabilities safe.
- There are some areas for further development identified at this inspection. These are as follows: the registered manager has not reviewed and updated the home's safeguarding policy. In addition, young people are not asked their views following restraint, and the registered manager has not always ensured that there is adequate recording and review of the consequences and effectiveness of such an intervention.

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure— (2)(e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.	29 July 2016
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(vii))	29 July 2016
The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(c))	29 July 2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff in a supervisory role should ensure that the staff that they manage or supervise understand how to gain the information, advice and skills needed to provide a comprehensive, personalised service to children, and in particular to any child for whom they are a 'key worker'. This may include access to legal advice ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 13.3).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The provider is a registered charity. The home provides short breaks for children and young people with learning and physical disabilities and often complex healthcare needs, accommodating a maximum of eight children and young people at any one time. The home is divided into two separate units, each accommodating four children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10 February 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
2 November 2015	Full	Good
26 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
9 July 2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The staff team provides a very high standard of individualised care to young people receiving short-term breaks at this service. They create a homely and nurturing atmosphere so that every young person enjoys their break. During their stays at this service, young people make progress in all areas of their lives. One parent stated, 'It is brilliant. Very good. Since my son started attending the service he has made progress in many areas of his development.' The nurturing staff team has a detailed understanding of each young person. The staff team works hard to optimise the developmental potential of each young person. The registered manager and staff meet young people's care needs effectively. Care plans are detailed and comprehensive. To ensure that these plans are met, staff complete daily assessments of young people. They harness information from a variety of sources such as parents, carers, schools and health professionals. This daily assessment informs young people's plans. Updated care plans are conveyed to staff through daily meetings. This supports them in providing the best possible care for young people. Additionally, as a result of daily assessment, staff become aware of any worries, concerns or specific care needs that the young people may present. The registered manager makes every effort to ensure that, when young people attend the service for their short break, that they receive care from the same staff members each time. Additionally, the registered manager will endeavour to have the same group of young people staying at the same time. This can be challenging given the numbers of young people utilising the service, but the registered manager is aware of the crucial importance of young people developing consistent relationships. Young people enjoy the continuity of care and the strong relationships that they develop. Effective multi-agency working supports young people to make good progress. The registered manager maintains positive relationships with local special needs schools. This is noticeable through good communication, using methods such as daily communication books, regular reviews of the young people's care and working with young people to achieve targets set in education. Likewise, the service maintains good and effective communication with healthcare providers. GPs, occupational therapists and physiotherapists provide regular advice and support to staff. Staff members have also benefited from bespoke training courses provided by specialist nurses. Staff are trained to undertaking more specialist care tasks and emergency interventions, should this be required for young people with complex health needs.	

The development and promotion of young people's methods of communication is also a high priority for the staff. The regular use of Makaton, symbols and pictorial communication is reinforced. The managers and staff remain constantly aware that, for some young people with limited communication, developing skills in signing and using pictures and symbols will be crucial to their future and their ability to interact with those around them. A social worker stated, 'Each young person is treated as an individual. They make particular progress with their communication. Young people have choices and staff ensure they are all included.'

The staff ensure that young people have a fun and enjoyable short break. Young people experience a wide range of activities. These include going to the cinema, bowling, going out for meals, country walks and enjoying facilities at the home. Young people and staff have been working hard on a garden project, planting vegetables, which are growing well. Volunteers, supported by funding from a local business, have purchased and erected a summerhouse and outdoor equipment. This has created a very nice outdoor space for young people to enjoy.

The managers and staff promote positive and supportive relationships with the young people's parents and carers. The managers and staff understand the pressures upon families who care for young people with disabilities. They strive to ensure that both the young people and their families benefit from the service. The registered manager and staff have been proactive in meeting the support needs of families and have developed a support group for parents and carers. This group seeks to try to prevent families feeling isolated and raises awareness of available resources.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people receive good and safe care from a staff group that is adept at understanding their complex needs and that understands how to keep them safe. New staff members recruited to the home have been through robust vetting procedures. These have included previous employment history checks, verification of references, criminal history checks and identification checks. These measures reduce the risk of harm to young people. Staff receive training in safeguarding children and young people. They also undergo safeguarding training to an advanced level. This training, is supplemented with further training in meeting the safeguarding needs of children and young people with disabilities. Safeguarding training underpins the effective communication across the staff team via the daily meetings, where safeguarding matters are discussed. Staff members have a clear understanding of what action to take should a young person make an allegation against another member of staff. They understand the procedures for reporting concerns to senior managers, recording information and supporting the young person involved. However, there	

are some gaps in the knowledge of staff: some were not clear regarding who the designated officer is, or their role. Additionally, they were unsure about the process of child protection investigations. This prevents them providing a fully comprehensive, personalised service to young people for whom they are caring.

Young people enjoy a safe, comfortable and secure environment. The home is well equipped to care for young people safely. The home is personalised with photos of the young people. This makes for a comfortable and relaxed environment that is homely and welcoming. The registered manager completes a thorough location risk assessment. This further enhances the safety of young people.

The registered manager ensures that all young people have robust risk assessments. These in depth assessments cover all aspects of potential risk to young people, from considerations of mobility through to ensuring sufficiency of staff to provide for all the young people's needs. Behaviour management plans are rigorous and detailed, taking into account known and presenting behaviours. When there are changes in young people's behaviour, plans are reviewed and amended. The staff team understands and fully implement the behaviour management plans.

The use of physical intervention or sanctions to manage behaviour is not commonplace. At times when physical intervention has been required to keep staff and others safe, this has been proportionate to the circumstances. Staff members have all received training in how to undertake restraints in a safe manner. However, the registered manager has not recorded the effectiveness and consequences of the physical intervention or sanction in all instances. This hampers detailed analysis of the incidents, which may be helpful to prevent future recurrence. Also, young people are not provided with the opportunity to express their feelings about the incident. This again hampers the potential to learn from the incident.

The registered manager has not ensured that the service's safeguarding policy is regularly reviewed and updated. The policy, in addition to being out of date, lacks reference to current guidance issued by the Government in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. Additionally, a protocol for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns contains no review date or reference to any other supporting document. This means that staff do not benefit from high quality policy and procedural guidance, updated in line with national safeguarding practice.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A committed and experienced registered manager, qualified to level 4 in management of children's residential care, effectively leads the service. She is currently undertaking the level 5 diploma in leadership and management and has been working at the service since December 2013. The registered manager is well supported by assistant managers who are equally well qualified and experienced.	

The management team has a great deal of experience and knowledge, remaining ambitious and focused upon driving the service forward for the benefit of young people.

The registered manager responded quickly to a requirement made at the last interim inspection. Managers now ensure that young people's parents and social workers agree to any restrictions on young people's movements as part of their care plan. They also incorporate any restrictions into the young person's risk assessment and ensure that regular reviews take place.

Young people receive consistent care from a stable staff team. Few vacancies arise at this service, as staff members feel committed to their work with young people. Staff receive effective support. They receive professional and regular supervision. Their practice is appraised annually and they receive some excellent training opportunities. Effective and well attended team meetings take place regularly, guided by clear agendas. Staff demonstrate a mutual respect for each other. Their sense of fun generates a very positive atmosphere. Therefore, young people receive good care from staff who receive support, training and work together well.

The registered manager understands the strengths of the service and the areas for development. Monitoring occurs through the monthly visits of a challenging independent visitor. The visitor scrutinises records and the overall standards of care provided to young people. The manager uses this crucial management data to complete her own report on the functioning of the service. She highlights areas for ongoing development while recognising what is working well in the service.

Two complaints have been made since the last inspection. Both complaints were investigated fully and in a timely manner by the registered manager, and to the satisfaction of the complainants involved. The registered manager takes complaints seriously and wants to maintain high standards throughout the service.

The statement of purpose is detailed and accurate and was recently updated by the registered manager. This document provides stakeholders with a good level of information regarding the services provided. It provides detailed and up-to-date information about the staffing and management structure. This assists both parents/carers and professionals to decide if a referral to the service would be appropriate.

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 that 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'.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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