

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032496
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Trafford Borough Council
Registered person address	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Quay West, Trafford Wharf Manchester M17 1HH
Responsible individual	Gerard Crowther
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	03/02/2014

Inspection date	09/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people are generally protected from harm because appropriate mechanisms are in place to keep them safe. Young people say they feel safe living here. Staff are aware of the home's safeguarding procedures which are usually implemented well. Recent behaviour by some young people has had an adverse impact on other young people's safety due to an increase in risk taking behaviours. Appropriate systems have been initiated to support all young people during this time.

The home is generally safe and is appropriately maintained. Risk assessments for fire safety are in place, but have not been updated following recent events. Young people and staff understand the fire evacuation procedures although young people new to the home have not yet undertaken a fire drill. The home is showing some signs of wear and tear, for example, damaged bath panels and mould in shower cubicles. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their individual tastes.

Monitoring of the home has not identified shortfalls in a number of records, such as the recording of consequences, care plans, health care plans and risk assessments. This impacts upon the quality of recording and information available to young people when they access their records now or in the future.

There is very good communication between the service and external agencies. This ensures a consistent approach is provided when caring for the young people. Social workers say the communication between them and the home is 'excellent' and means they can respond quickly to any incidents.

The home has recently appointed an interim Registered Manager and is in the process of recruiting a new manager. Young people are cared for by a committed team of staff who have high aspirations for them. Staff demonstrates in-depth knowledge and understanding of most risks young people face, and work hard to ensure risks are minimised and safely managed.

The interim manager and staff acknowledge that the emergency placement of some young people in the home has been unsettling for others in the home. The interim manager is working collaboratively with senior managers and social workers to resolve the issues. The interim manager is committed to addressing the issues contained within this report and as a result is already working with staff and senior manager to rectify these.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This Local Authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender from 11 to 17 years of age. The home is registered with Ofsted to provide services to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2014	Interim	good progress
05/06/2013	Full	good
04/02/2013	Interim	good progress
02/10/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
32 (2001)	the registered person shall after consultation with the fire authority shall ensure by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals that persons in the home and young people are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire in particular young people new to the home and the homes risk assessment is updated (Regulation 32 (1)(e))	07/11/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control of discipline a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose in particular any consequences imposed upon young people	07/11/2014

	(Regulation 17B (3)(a-j))	
5 (2001)	ensure the Statement of Purpose and young people's guide is kept under reviews and the HMCI is notified of any revisions within 28 days (Regulation 5 (a)(b))	07/11/2014
11 (2001)	ensure the home is conducted so as to promote and make proper provision for the safeguarding and welfare of young people accommodated there with particular emergency placements not detrimental to other young people. (Regulation 11 (a))	07/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home meets young people's emotional and behavioural needs as set out in the care plan in particular behaviour management plan are sufficiently detailed with regards to 'inappropriate' behaviours and the actions to take to support young people (NMS 3.7)
- ensure young people's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan, in particular health care are sufficiently details with regards to issues such as young people sexual health, identity and self-harm (NMS 6.5)
- ensure there are systems in place to monitor the adequacy and quality of record keeping and take action when needed, with regards to young people's risk assessments, the homes care plans, incident records, key worker records, missing from care risk assessments and young people are encouraged to sign and make comments on the records (NMS 22.1)
- ensure the Registered Manager regularly monitors in line with the regulations all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2)
- ensure the home is well maintained and decorated in particular the peeling paint in some corridors, mould in the shower cubicles and damaged bath panel. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are aware of their family history and background. Social workers say young people benefit from appropriate levels of contact with their families. They are well supported by staff who are very aware of their individual needs and vulnerabilities. Young people are able to contact families and friends on their mobile telephones or the house telephone. This helps them to sustain important relationship and build new relationships with their peers.

Young people are developing an awareness of their own health care needs. They are choosing healthier dietary options and are taking an interest in menu planning within the home. This means they are trying new foods and extending their dietary repertoire. For example, young people talk knowledgeably about being pescetarian and explaining to visitors that this means they only eat fish, while others explain how they have moved from being vegetarian to vegan. Young people take an active interest in helping to prepare meals for themselves and others. Staff say some young people are becoming very good bakers.

Young people are aware of the health support services available and how to access them, including for example sexual health clinics and help with smoking cessation. A number of young people choose to continue smoking, although they are aware of the associated health risks. Young people have access to and are engaging with a range of services, such as psychologists and child and adolescent mental health services to support their mental health and well-being. This means they are more able to deal with the challenges they face in their personal lives.

Most young people are in educational placements and their attendance is much improved. Young people who have moved on from the home are continuing with their college placements are doing well. Young people have a say in where they would like to attend school and where possible their wishes are met. Staff say that young people are doing well in their educational placements and they have made new friends.

Staff maintain close links with the schools to ensure that they are kept fully up to date with any developments. They effectively support young people's learning in the home by supporting homework and engaging them in fun learning opportunities. This provides consistency to the young people, aids in their preparation for adulthood and increases their life chances.

Young people's individual needs are assessed and addressed in a way that promotes young people's dignity and privacy; differences are acknowledged and respected. Staff provide effective support to young people, consequently young people have their needs acknowledged and they feel included and valued.

Young people are being appropriately prepared for adulthood, depending on their age and stage of development. They are confident about using public transport to visit family and friends and are able to manage their own finances. Young people are encouraged to undertake a range of household tasks, such as cleaning their bedrooms, budgeting and shopping for items for the home.

Quality of care

good

Young people enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with staff. They live in a very supportive home that promotes their welfare and enables them to achieve better outcomes. Staff have high but appropriate aspirations for young person to do well. This is echoed by family members who wrote, 'a big thank for the support X received, they are a changed person and it is thanks to the staff there who have never given up on them, even though they can try the patients of a saint'.

Staff develop constructive relationships with young people. They spend time with young people. They make every effort to find out what is important to individual young people, understanding their needs, culture, circumstances, talents and interests. Staff work with young people in an understanding and compassionate way. A parent wrote 'the staff have been a great help to me and my child, they have met all our needs and go above and beyond to hear both parents and children. I for one am a very grateful parent for the help I and my child received from the staff.'

Young people's views and wishes significantly influence the running of the home and the decisions affecting their lives. They feel that the staff listen to them, take their complaints seriously and help sort things out. Young people are confident to put forward their views and are pleased that their request for additional digital television channels has been agreed. Staff also help young people understand when it may not be possible to act upon their wishes. Young people know how to contact their social workers, independent visitors and Ofsted if they have concerns.

Health care plans are in place, but are not sufficiently robust. This is because they do not always highlight the specific issues affecting young people, such as their medical conditions or tendency to self-harm and they contain conflicting information about services young people are involved in or issues around their sexual health. The impact of this is reduced because staff are aware of the issues and act accordingly to support young people. Systems for the administration of medication are sound. This means young people receive their medication at the correct time.

Young people are encouraged to have a say in what happens within the home and to contribute to the decisions made about them. Young people are able to attend their reviews and other meetings. This means that young people are able to have their views heard and to understand the reasons behind the decision-making process.

Staff consistently work in partnership with schools, for example by attending

meetings at school. This means they are fully aware of young people's progress. Staff are also proactive in helping young people overcome barriers to their learning, including any lack of engagement for example by establishing routines that encourage young people to be up and ready for school. An extensive range of on-site facilities such as art room, beauty room and education room means even young people who are not currently in education are able to develop skills that support learning and improve their life chances.

Young people live in a homely, welcoming environment. The home is well resourced, it provides young people with a gymnasium, beauty salon, art studio and games room. Consequently, young people are able to access a range of positive, enjoyable activities. However, some areas of the home appear tired and are showing signs of wear. For example, damaged bath panels, peeling wallpaper and mould in shower cubicles. This detracts from the homely environment staff are striving to maintain.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are safeguarded because of staff's secure understanding of the home's safeguarding and child protection procedures. This means they are clear about the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person. Positive relationships with social workers mean staff are fully aware of any issues which may impact upon young people's safety or well-being. This enables them to take swift, appropriate action to support each young person.

Managers and Staff are extremely aware that the placements of some young people are having a detrimental effect upon the behaviour, welfare and safety of others in the home. A number of additional measures have been put into place to support the young people at this time, such as waking night staff. This is going some way to ensure the safety of young people. Young people have an increasing awareness of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe when using various technologies. This is because staff talk to them about the dangers and how to keep safe, such as discussing issues in the press with young people to highlight the potential dangers of using social media.

Young people do go missing and recently there has been an increase in young people being missing or absent from care. Staff are extremely aware of the issues young people face when missing and actively search the area for young people and try to contact them via mobile telephone. As a result young people are usually located quickly and return home.

Missing from care risk assessments are in place, but some do not contain the most up-to-date information on the young person. The impact of this is reduced because staff know the young people well. Staff work well with social workers and others to minimise the risks to young people.

Young people are aware of the home rules, although they do not think they are all fair, such as the times they have to go to bed. Incentive and reward schemes are in place and are working well to improve the behaviour of some young people. Behaviour management plans are in place, but do not always make clear what the 'inappropriate behaviour' is or the actions to take to support young people.

Consequences (sanctions) for poor behaviour are not often applied, but when they are such as supervised spends these are not recorded in the sanction book. This means young people may at times not understand the reason for this and also means they are not able to make comment upon the consequence.

The home is generally safe. Following very recent events the home has not updated the home's fire risk assessments, or contacted the fire officer for additional advice. Immediate action was taken during the inspection to address these issues. Additional fire safety measures are in place, but had not been recorded by staff. Fire drills are held on a regular basis. However these have not taken place for young people new to the home. Young people and staff are clear on how to evacuate the home safely in the event of a fire.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is thorough and protects young people from having contact with unsuitable people. Young people are also protected by the arrangements for vetting and supervising visitors.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager has recently left the home. The home is currently being overseen by an interim manager who has been in post since 15 September 2014. The interim manager has the qualifications and skills for the post. Staff say they are being well supported by the interim manager and senior managers. Staff morale is generally good, but they acknowledge that they have been going through a very difficult period with some young people placed in the home. This is echoed by senior managers and social worker who comment upon the commitment of staff when faced with very challenging behaviour.

Young people are looked after by a committed, caring and qualified team of staff. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure all staff attend the mandatory training courses. This equips them with the necessary skills to support young people. As a result, staff have a secure understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities. This means they are able to provide appropriate care and support to young people.

Records and documentation are usually well maintained and provide insight into young people's time in the home. Nevertheless, some records are not sufficiently detailed, signed or dated and young people are not always able to make comment upon them. This impacts upon how helpful these records are to young people now or when they look back on their time here. The home has a basic development plan in

place, which is to be reviewed by the interim manager.

The homes Statement of Purpose and young people's guide are generally informative. Both are provided to young people, their families and placing social worker's so that they have an understanding of the care and support. Revised copies of both documents have not been sent into Ofsted within 28 days of the revisions.

Monitoring of the home is carried out by a representative of the authority and the manager. While monitoring identifies if records are in place it does not always identify any patterns or trends as a result the shortfalls in the recording from this inspection have not been identified or acted upon. Effective systems are in place for notifying the appropriate persons of any significant incidents within the home. This means young people are appropriately supported during difficult periods.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.