

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	26/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC032496
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's Home
Registered person	Trafford Borough Council
Registered person address	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council Ground Floor, Trafford Town Hall Talbot Rd, Stretford, Manchester M32 0TH
Responsible individual	Gerard Crowther
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Maria McGranaghan

Inspection date	26/10/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
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

SC032496

Summary of findings

This children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from personalised care that helps them to address problem areas in their lives. Relationships with staff are strong.
- Progress is made in areas including health, education, confidence and self-esteem. Contact with parents and extended family members is maintained and improved.
- Young people are provided with appropriate educational support so that they can reintegrate back into the education system or maintain their current educational placement. On the whole, educational achievement is consistent.
- Independence skills such as cooking, budgeting, menu planning and shopping are a regular feature for young people with a plan of independence.
- Behaviour management systems are based on a 'nurtured heart' framework. This enables staff to focus on every positive action a young person presents. This builds confidence and enables the young people to feel valued and respected within the home.
- Healthcare management is good. The children looked after nurse frequently visits the home and works well with staff and young people to ensure that healthcare needs are consistently addressed and met.
- Impact assessments are undertaken for all young people becoming resident in the home. Evidence highlights that, in most cases, only young people who are matched to the current residents are offered a placement.
- Young people with a history of becoming missing from the home reduce this behaviour. Responses to young people being missing are consistent and effective.
- The home is managed by a suitably experienced manager who is awaiting registration with Ofsted.
- The home employs a permanent team of staff who have worked together for a number of years. There are no new staff, and no staff have left the service since the last inspection.
- External and internal monitoring of the home is good. Monitoring offers an honest and fair analysis of how the home is running, including the progress young people make.
- The manager reviews all the work undertaken in the home to ensure that it is reflective of the goals and targets of individual plans. This enables staff and young people to easily track their progress or identify areas where additional support is required.

Areas for further development

- Behaviour management focuses on awarding positive responses, particularly when negative behaviour has been apparent. However, this method does not always address the negative behaviour in a way that the young person can learn from. A recommendation is made to address this matter.
- When a young person's room is checked or searched, this is not always recorded in the appropriate log. A recommendation is made to address this matter.
- Since the last inspection, the home has accepted 15 referrals and has declined over 30. On occasion, the manager's decision not to accept a placement has been overruled. Consequently, not all young people are appropriately matched to the home, and this can cause young people to become unsettled. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. This is with specific regard to making emergency placements in the home during unsettled periods. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.6)
- Ensure that where an immediate search of a young person's bedroom is necessary, suitable records are kept. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20)
- Ensure that poor behaviour is consistently challenged, discussed and recorded. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority home providing care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/06/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/12/2015	Full	Good
18/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
27/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good
Since the last inspection in June 2016, three young people have successfully moved on to independent living and long-term foster placements. There are two new residents in the home. There has been pressure upon the authority to locate suitable provision for young people requiring care and accommodation. This has resulted in a number of emergency placements accessing the home's emergency bed provision. Despite a recent period of instability, the majority of young people are happy and settled in the home. Young people in the home say, 'I get on really well with staff and I really like it here. The food is amazing.' Young people benefit from personalised care. Clear and realistic placement goals are routinely agreed between young people and their keyworker. Plans are consistently reviewed for progress and areas for further development. Young people engage well with staff. They attend regular keywork sessions, specific drop-in seminars and groups held by external agencies on a regular basis. This enables them to make informed decisions and choices about their current life circumstances. As a result, young people feel more in control of their lives and futures. Young people's views and opinions are respected in the home. Young people are encouraged to provide written feedback on the performance of the home and to voice their views within the regular young people's meetings. One young person said: 'The staff listen to us here. If we really like doing something, like playing a guitar, they will make sure we can do it and have lessons to help us.' The majority of young people living in the home have a history of non-attendance or engagement in previous educational settings. On the whole, young people make good progress in their school, college and work placements. Staff work very well with external providers to ensure that young people are provided with an educational placement that is best suited to their individual needs. For example, some young people excel academically while others excel practically. Therefore, a range of services enable young people to gain the most from their educational experience, and this improves their life chances. Contact with family and friends is suitably supported in the home. Young people are helped to maintain contact with important people in their lives through visits, telephone contact and attendance on occasional family activities. A young person	

said: 'I see my grandparents and it is going well. Staff take me and pick me up, and staff always have a chat with them.'

Young people enjoy a range of in-house activities. A variety of fully equipped rooms offer musical equipment and lessons, computing, art, beauty, a gymnasium and study. The home has ample external gardens where young people regularly play football, or help out with building raised flowerbeds and planting their own personal tree. They also enjoy a range of external activities. Visits to the trampoline club, drama and singing classes and boxing are a sample of some of the activities young people enjoy. A young person said: 'I love singing and have private lessons. I perform all the time, and the staff and my family support me.'

Upon arrival, young people are provided with a personalised welcome pack. The pack includes a young person's guide, complaints procedure, external support contact numbers, toiletries and notepaper and pen. Staff work hard to ensure that young people feel at home. They encourage young people to personalise their bedrooms in a colour of their choice and with posters and decorations reflecting their personality. When a young person moves on from the home, they are presented with a memory box full of photographs, memorabilia and good luck cards from staff. Consequently, young people invariably leave the home with happy memories and ready for the next stage in their lives.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people come to the home with a history of risk-taking behaviours. Staff work with them to develop clear and consistently updated risk assessments. This ensures that staff take appropriate action to reduce any potential risks and includes direct keywork work sessions and support from external services. When risks are identified, immediate action is taken to safeguard the young person. The home operates a 'nurtured heart' approach to the management of behaviour. Staff focus on consistent positive reinforcement and praise linked with individual behaviour management plans. However, there are occasions when behaviour management is inconsistent. For example, some behaviours are not challenged in accordance with the home's approach. The service manager said: 'This approach needs to be balanced between giving positives to young people while also enabling them to address negative behaviours in a structured way. We have recognised the	

inconsistencies and are planning a training session.’ Consequently, some behaviours are not consistently addressed in a way that is helpful to the young person. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Staff focus on de-escalation and redirection techniques in order to defuse situations between young people. This has proven successful. There has been no use of physical intervention in over 12 months.

On the whole, privacy and dignity is respected in the home. Young people are encouraged to respect each other and the staff team. When concerns arise warranting a search of a young person’s bedroom, young people are informed of the reason for the search and can be present during the process. Although this measure is minimal, records do not always reflect that a search has taken place. For example, one room search is recorded in the home’s daily log book, but not recorded in the dedicated room-search log. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

Young people are protected from online predators. Staff and young people receive up-to-date training on matters of online safety, including the risks of child sexual exploitation. Electronic equipment is regularly updated to ensure that safety measures are not tampered with and that they remain suitable for young people.

Young people are rarely missing from home overnight. However, when young people are late or there is a concern, appropriate action is taken. Staff waste no time in searching for young people and making direct contact with known associates. When risks have been established, the home works closely with external safeguarding agencies in order to suitably safeguard young people. The missing-from-home co-ordinator said: ‘All the staff work consistently and share important information. I am always provided with up-to-date information.’ As a result, young people’s safety is suitably managed and monitored in the home.

On the whole, young people are supported to live together and respect each other as individuals with different life experiences, needs and opinions. Young people are enabled to learn about behaviours such as bullying, both from a victim and perpetrator prospective. Keywork sessions, young people’s meetings and seminars from guest speakers take place regularly, and this empowers young people to recognise the impact of bullying and take the appropriate action to make it stop. However, a recent increase in the use of the home’s emergency bed has resulted in a period of instability. As a result, bickering, name-calling and a push to establish a pecking order has created tension in the home. Young people have targeted each other using racially and sexually abusive language. Staff take the appropriate steps to address these behaviours including the discharge of inappropriately placed young

people. The service manager said: 'We are under pressure to take young people within the authority where there are no other beds available. We complete impact assessments and have been consistent in refusing young people who are not a good match. However, sometimes placements are made without prior notice and when the home is unsettled, and that creates additional difficulties.' Consequently, unplanned placements destabilise a group of young people already learning to live together. A recommendation is made to address this matter.

The physical environment provides a safe and secure home for young people. It is maintained and decorated to a high standard and provides ample space both internally and externally.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is currently managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. An application to register the manager has been received by Ofsted. Young people live in a home that is managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose, and young people, social workers and families are clear about the service and support that the home provides. Internal and external monitoring systems provide the home with a good approach to the overall monitoring of care. Detailed information highlights areas for development, and the manager's action plan details the methods used to enhance the service. Staff state that they receive good support from the manager. Records of supervision demonstrate that staff meet with the manager regularly and that training and personal development targets are addressed. An annual training package ensures that staff receive up-to-date training which is specific to meeting the needs of the young people accommodated in the home. The manager and staff demonstrate good overall child-centred practice tailored to the individual and personal needs of young people. The effectiveness of this approach is measurable in the progress that young people make, particularly in education, a reduction in risk-taking behaviours and social integration. Placement plans are clear and realistic and work together with keywork sessions and	

seminars on specific areas for development. They are reviewed regularly by staff and young people and updated accordingly.

The home employs a committed staff team with the majority qualified at NVQ level 3 or 4. Young people's records are appropriately stored and are regularly updated in order to capture the essence of young people at a given time.

The manager is aware of the procedures for notifying Ofsted of all incidents under Regulation 40 and since the last inspection has been consistent in doing so. This practice ensures that information is shared with the regulatory agency in order that actions and outcomes for young people can be suitably assessed.

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 children looked after 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 that 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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