

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	05/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC033120
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Luton Borough Council
Registered person address	Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, George Street, LUTON, LU1 2BQ

Responsible individual	Joanne Fisher
Registered manager	Christine Ali
Inspector	Jane Partridge

Inspection date	05/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC033120

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Managers and staff establish and maintain good working relationships with the families that access the service. Parents report that their children are safe and well cared for.
- Managers and staff work together with both the professional team and parents to deliver a personalised service that meet young people's needs.
- Young people accessing or leaving the service benefit from considered and appropriate transition planning.
- Young people report that they enjoy the time they spend at this short break service. Makaton and widge symbols are used to gain the views and experiences when accessing the service.
- Robust risk assessments and care plans ensure that young people are safeguarded and their welfare promoted when at the home.
- Parents report that they have excellent communication with the home and that the home delivers a flexible service to meet their family needs.
- A committed, skilled and diverse staff team work together to meet the individual needs of young people placed.
- Multi-lingual staff have been recruited, this enables better quality communication with young people and their families.
- Staff have not accessed training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the specific experiences of some young people in placement.
- Some staff have not received professional supervision in line with organisational policy.
- The recruitment processes are not clearly documented in the homes recruitment policy.

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
13: The leadership and management standard. In order to meet this standard the registered person must ensure that staff have the skills to meet the needs of each child, in particular undertaking training to gain specific knowledge to meet the individual needs of some young people in placement. Specifically, the impact of domestic violence, neglect and mental health.	06/02/16
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice- related supervision in line with organisational policy. (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	16/11/15

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

- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They should ensure that recruitment processes are clearly documented within the homes policy. In particular, obtaining checks where people have lived or worked overseas. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should undertake a review that focusses on the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64 paragraph 15.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides short break care and accommodation for up to five young people of either gender aged between 0-18 years. A local authority owns and operates this setting.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/03/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
14/10/2014	Full	Adequate
13/02/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
15/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The home offers a number of services to young people with additional needs and their families; these include day-care, outreach, clubs and tea visits. The home also provides planned overnight respite care and can support and accommodate young people placed in an emergency. Robust and considered planning occurs when young people initially access the service. This includes meeting the young person at home and in school. Close working with parents and the professional team inform the care plan and the service provision. Young people are introduced to the service at a pace appropriate to ensure a smooth transition and engagement with the service. A very real strength of this provision is how well they work with families. Parents report excellent communication between themselves and staff. They also feel very much part of the care planning process. Parents note how their children have benefitted from their attendance at the home. Some describing how the staff help their children work on independence skills, enable peer relationship to be maintained and have got their child involved in a physical or community activity. Young people themselves also communicate their happiness about using the resource. Young people attending a club reported that: 'We do lots of fun things and play games. We like it here'. Others views are captured individually by staff using engaging methods of communication such as Makaton and widget symbols. Young people's likes and dislikes are captured, the activities they wish to engage in and how they experience the service. These views also feed into their individual six monthly reviews. Generally, young people report having a positive experience. Where a young person reports they are unhappy with the service, action is taken to rectify their particular unhappiness. If the service is no longer meeting the young person's needs, a planned ending is agreed. For young people leaving the service or moving onto a more appropriate resource, staff engage in robust and considered planning. Working with the young person, their parents and as part of the professional team, a smooth transition plan assists the young person to move on and engage positively with the new resource. The majority of parents whose children access this service do not have English as their first language. In order clarify and maximise the flow of communication, the home has recruited three multi-lingual members of staff. These new additions to the team have improved communication with young people and their families. A	

social worker reported how the home has worked hard to establish and maintain a trusting relationship with the Asian community who now use this much-needed service.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff team during their stay. Observations made saw a staff team who were knowledgeable of young people's individual needs and who responded accordingly. Individualised packages of care consider all areas of the young person's life.

The short breaks nurse in collaboration with the wider health team completes health assessments. Medication is stored and administered in line with health plans. Healthy eating is promoted and dietary needs accounted for. Specialist installed equipment enable staff to meet the personal care needs of young people. The team work successfully with a wide range of medical professionals. This ensures that young people experience good health whilst accessing the home.

Young people continue to attend their educational placements during their short break stay. Good communication exists between school and the home with the educational family worker providing a key link between the two. The homes individual development plans identify the specific areas of ongoing work for the young person to achieve.

Staff have a good understanding and are knowledgeable about the young people accessing the service. Should they be concerned about any aspect of a young person's presentation they will raise the matter with the appropriate individual to ensure young people's welfare and wellbeing is maintained.

More recently, the home offered an extended provision for a young person whilst longer-term plans were put in place. The impact of the continuous care received by this young person saw significant progress in all areas, including communication, social and life skills and social presentation. This was a very successful placement and one that the home could readily demonstrate the progress made by the young person. Whilst parents and the professional team recognise the contributions the home makes on all young people's progress, the home's monitoring processes do not fully capture this information.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people report that they like the staff and each has an assigned key worker who knows the young person well. Parents report that the home is a place where their child is happy to go, they are well cared for and where they feel safe and protected. The home operates a range of risk assessments to identify potential hazards or areas of specific vulnerability. It provides care accordingly to ensure that young people become increasingly safe during their stay. The home provides a short break provision to a particularly vulnerable group of young people with significant learning and physical disabilities. Some young people also display significant challenging behaviours. Behaviour management forms part of each young person's care plan and identifies the possible behaviours, triggers and the techniques used to manage behaviour. This clear proactive process helps to minimise anxiety and stressful situations for young people and offers them a consistence and familiar approach by staff when managing situations. Staff work creatively with young people around the concerns of bullying. The home has devised an engaging worksheet set out with widget symbols to explore these issues with the young people placed. This works helps to protect young people and keep them safe. The use of a physical intervention by staff to manage a young person's behaviour is not a frequent occurrence. This is due to robust risk assessments, appropriate levels of staffing and a good knowledge of the young people. Where a physical intervention has occurred this has either been to release a young person's hold on a member of staff or as part of a distraction technique as the young person is gently guided away to another activity. Young people do not go missing from this home. Robust risk assessments and appropriate levels of staffing ensure a high level of monitoring is in place whether inside the home or outside on a community activity. The home has a missing policy in place and procedures that, due to the vulnerability of the young people categorise those as missing immediately should an episode occur. The clear prevention and urgent responses in place protect and safeguard young people. No young people accessing the service are believed to be at risk of child sexual exploitation. All staff have completed training in this subject ensuring they are knowledgeable in this area of child abuse to safeguarded young people. An experienced staff team offers consistency of care to the young people. They are motivated to deliver a good service and want to contribute to make a difference to young people's lives.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post for several years. She brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the post and holds a management qualification necessary to perform the role. The staff team also consists of many long-standing employees who have worked together as a team for many years. They complement each other on their skills and abilities and buddy up to mentor new employees. This system of working ensures that young people receive consistent, predictable care. Staff are carefully selected and vetted through robust recruitment checks. The home has sought input from young people into the recruitment process. This ensures that matters important to them are included in recruitment interviews. On-going monitoring ensures that disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks are always current. This ensures the suitability of adults caring for the young people. A shortfall of the service is that within the recruitment process the system for obtaining checks where people have lived or worked overseas is not clearly documented within the homes recruitment policy. A comprehensive organisational induction package introduces staff to this complex area of work. Staff receive appropriate on-going training giving them the skills and understanding to provide care to young people with a physical and or learning disability. Young people accessing the service do encounter other experiences or conditions alongside their disability such as episodes of poor mental health or neglectful parenting. To assist and support young people further in their development, staff should have access to a wider range of childcare training to expand their knowledge and understanding. Some staff do not have a current first aid qualification in place and report that there are delays in being able to access refresher training. However, there is always a member of staff on duty with the relevant first aid qualification so young people have not been adversely affected by this. Staff receive both formal and informal supervision. They report that they find supervision beneficial where they raise issues for discussion, receive feedback and consider personal development. Some staff had not had as regular supervision as required. The most common time is when a planned supervision has not taken place due to a period of staff sickness. The planned supervision is not rescheduled which results in extended periods of time between supervisions. Annual appraisals of performance are current and undertaken in line with organisational policy. The home has very good relationships with the parents and carers of young people who access the service. Without exception, parents spoke most positively about	

their experiences of working with the home. They report how the home delivers very full feedback to them about their child's stay. One parent added that: 'My child stayed for 5 consecutive days and each day we received a full commentary.' Parents also spoke of how they experienced an ease in communication, where telephone calls could be made and flexibility in the service which caters to their family needs.

The home also has close links with the dedicated short breaks nurse, health professionals, childcare social workers and education. These close links offer young people a joined up service where their needs are central to care planning.

The manager is aware of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. A home's development plan sets out a plan of continued improvement. The home is also due to undergo a much needed redecoration programme to offer the young people an improved living environment during their stay.

The home has an up to date statement of purpose that sets out the aims and objectives of the provision and reflects the services provided. The home also offers parents and professionals an abridged version, which highlights key aspects as a quick reference guide. Young people receive a young people's guide on admission. This informative and accessible booklet is adapted to meet specific communication needs.

The agency has updated policies, procedures and paperwork to conform to the 2015 regulations and quality standards.

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*.

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