

Children's homes - Interim inspection

Inspection date	16/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC033120
Type of inspection	Interim
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	16/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained Effectiveness.	
The manager has met the two requirements and two recommendations set at the last review. Staff are receiving practice related supervision in line with organisational policy. This ensures that staff have opportunity to reflect on their practice and the needs of young people using the service. The managers have also implemented a supervision monitoring matrix to ensure that regular supervision is set and undertaken. This visual aid offers staff a quick reference guide to supervision dates and records their completion. As this home offers short break services to disabled young people, staff training mostly centred on understanding and managing disability conditions. Staff are now beginning to access wider child care training. Training on topics such as attachment and resilience, trauma, bereavement and loss has offered new learning and understanding for staff. This underpinning child care knowledge helps staff to be aware of and appreciate other factors that impact on young people's development and well-being outside of their presenting disability. Now started, the manager plans to continue to secure further child care training for the staff team. Young people continue to experience a stable, permanently employed staff team who offer familiar and consistent care. However, the manager has worked with professional colleagues in considering the employment checks undertaken when a potential new employee has lived or worked overseas. New processes are in place ensuring that robust checks are undertaken in relation to these new recruits to safeguard young people. The manager has undertaken a quality of care review which focusses on the service provided to young people and the impact this is having on outcomes and improvements for young people. She has employed the services of a nationally recognised advocacy agency to undertake monthly independent visits of the home. This independent visitor reports on the effective safeguarding of young people and on how the home promotes young people's well-being. The managers recognise	

how the robust reporting adds value to the development of the home and has implemented changes as a consequence.

During this inspection the manager demonstrated her awareness of the strengths and the areas for development in the service. The enthusiastic staff team continue to deliver consistent, thoughtful and dependable care to young people.

Since the last inspection the home has started to be transformed into a more homely, stylish living environment. Decoration is almost complete and furniture on order will tastefully finish the surroundings offering young people comfy living and practical play areas.

Young people continue to experience well planned transitions whether they are beginning to access the service or are moving on from it. From referral, staff work with parents, the young person, school and others as appropriate, to introduce the young person to the setting and develop a care plan. For the last young person accessing the service the manager creatively worked alongside him. She supported him and his friend in looking around the home to help smooth his transition. As a now current user of the service his parent commented that: 'It offers him an opportunity to be independent of me and I feel confident in the care he gets there.' It is also a similar picture when young people move on to a more appropriate resource. Staff work closely with the young person to help them understand the move and reduce anxiety. Staff frequently use social stories and other forms of communication to aid this. The dedication and skill of the staff team that makes the transitions out of the service as successful as it can be.

Managers and staff continue to work in partnership with professional agencies. They particularly work well with schools in meeting the educational needs of young people and with health professionals in meeting the often high levels of health conditions and needs. Managers have appropriately referred child protection concerns on to the statutory agencies ensuring that young people are adequately safeguarded.

At this inspection two shortfall have been identified. During this inspection period a young person went missing whilst on a community activity with staff. In most parts staff acted appropriately and in line with the homes missing procedure. However, staff had not followed all procedures as they had left the home without the young person profile and on his return no independent interview was considered.

Physical intervention by staff is not a common occurrence and if used it is generally staff guiding young people away from a situation. The manager does review and signs off the appropriateness of any action undertaken in these situations. However, on one occasion the manager had guided a young person away. In this situation it is not acceptable for the manager to also sign off the appropriateness of the intervention. Scrutiny of the action is required by a higher manager to ensure its appropriateness and that the wellbeing of the young person is not compromised.

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
05/10/2015	Full	Good
02/03/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
14/10/2014	Full	Adequate
13/02/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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 recommendation(s):

Ensure that the registered person specifies the procedures to be followed and the role and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45 paragraph 9.28)

Ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements into place to protect each child. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45 paragraph 9.30)

Ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and principles set out in 9.35 are respected. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 46 paragraph 9.36)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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

T: 0300 123 1231
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