

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	21/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC034211
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Patricia Harding
Inspector	Heather Chaplin

Inspection date	21/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Ofsted issued a second compliance notice on 30/09/2016.
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	Requires improvement

SC034211

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Over the past six months, the registered manager and staff have achieved an impressive improvement in the quality of care for the young people and in every aspect of service management.
- The quality of the environment has improved considerably and the home is now a pleasant, relaxing and homely place to live.
- The outcomes for the young asylum seekers currently living in the home are very positive in comparison with their starting points. They are kept safe from harm and have begun to make new lives in this country.
- The manager and staff are very helpful and supportive in accompanying the young people to essential healthcare appointments. This has ensured that previously undiagnosed conditions have been identified and that the young people can receive any treatment and emotional support that they may need.
- The young people are very well supported to attend their places of worship. The staff help them to follow their religious beliefs and maintain their cultural traditions.
- The young people have made really good progress in learning to speak English. They are now receiving an education, their healthcare has improved and some are undertaking work experience.
- The young people have made positive links within the local community. They are learning new life skills and preparing for independence.
- The manager and staff are working very effectively with their social work colleagues and other agencies to promote the young people's care. Social workers are pleased with their young people's progress.

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
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, with particular reference to ensuring that care planning documents are kept up to date and that staff inform managers promptly of any significant changes to the young people's circumstances, the registered person must: (1) enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that – (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential (b) promotes their welfare (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	31/01/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered for up to four children and young people of either gender who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The home's remit is to accept short-term and emergency admissions and to undertake focused work with young people for no longer than 16 weeks.

The home is taking part in the Home Office's recent national initiative to accommodate young unaccompanied asylum seekers. All four current residents are in these difficult circumstances.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/09/2016	Full	Inadequate
30/06/2016	Full	Inadequate
23/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/10/2015	Full	Requires improvement

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The whole staff team has made very good progress to improve the home since the first full inspection on 30 June 2016. On that occasion, the inspector found serious shortfalls in the conduct of the home, resulting in a risk of significant harm to the young people who lived there at the time. The home was rated inadequate in all areas. Ofsted issued a compliance notice. This notice was monitored during a visit on 28 July 2016. Meanwhile, the local authority's responsible individual had developed an ambitious improvement plan for all their children's homes. Due to the magnitude of the task and a number of logistical barriers, by the second full inspection on 21 September 2016, there had been insufficient time for the plan to be fully effective. Consequently, that inspection found that there were still major weaknesses in leadership and management. The home was rated inadequate for the second time and a further compliance notice was issued on 30 September 2016. By the time of the next monitoring visit on 9 November 2016, the local authority's improvement plan had started to have an impact on the quality of the service. By then, many elements of the compliance notice were met, with a small number of residual shortfalls. None of these areas for development had a negative impact on the young people's welfare. The present inspection is the fifth visit to the home in six months. The focus of this inspection is on: ■ the outcomes for the young people, most of whom moved into the home after the full inspection in September 2016 ■ progress on the matters relating to the second compliance notice that had not been fully met at the monitoring visit on 9 November 2016 ■ the other requirements and three recommendations made at the second full inspection on 21 September 2016 that fell outside the scope of the compliance notice. The overall experiences and outcomes for the young people are very positive. The home is currently accommodating four young people from Iran, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Three of the young people arrived in October 2016 from a refugee camp in Calais. The fourth young person has been resident at the home for 18 months and	

is well integrated into the local community.

The staff say that they really enjoy working with the young people. They are particularly careful about keeping them safe, because they are very vulnerable in a new country. However, the team understands that as the young people move towards independence, they will now have to start taking some managed risks.

The team works exceptionally well to help the young people to follow their own cultural traditions. The young people attend their chosen places of worship and have made useful links in their own communities. A local community centre provides lessons in English, computing and maths, as well as enabling the young people to access free legal advice.

All four young people are now attending college and one is using his day off each week to gain some work experience at a friend's barber's shop. The young people's English-language skills have improved considerably and they are gradually becoming accustomed to the British way of life. The young people are regularly consulted, through an interpreter, about their views on the home.

The young people have easy-to-read pictorial timetables to help them to understand their weekly schedules. The staff take them out on activities individually and together. They have been to a Bollywood film, swimming and bowling. Some of the young people were invited to an Eritrean wedding in the local community. One young person went on a visit to London and really enjoyed this. The staff are planning a house trip to Winter Wonderland in Cardiff on the day following this inspection, which is eagerly anticipated.

The young people have been linked with a local bike project and have learned how to restore and maintain bicycles. They all now have their own bikes. During the inspection, they were taking the cycling proficiency test to help them to stay safe on the roads.

The staff have provided very good support for the young people to help them attend medical appointments. Some have undergone treatment for undiagnosed chronic conditions, while others have been referred to sources of psychological support to help with the long-term effects of previous trauma. Social workers commented on how helpful the staff have been in providing this high level of support and said, 'They've been fantastic...X [one of the young people] really values this and would like to stay there.'

The young people are already independent in many ways. They cook very confidently, go shopping with the staff and have started to use public transport to travel to and from college. Plans are now underway for the young people to move into their own shared accommodation. The home's deputy manager has accompanied the social worker to visit a house closer to the city centre and the young people's places of worship, which may be suitable for them to live together

independently. Although some work needs to be done to the property, this is a positive development.

The team also helped another young person to locate a supported lodgings placement. For various reasons this turned out not to be appropriate for him, so the search continues.

All four young people are approaching 18 years of age, so the staff have had very little time to prepare them for their impending moves. They have risen to this challenge very effectively.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The young people's plans show that effective risk assessments are now in place to help the staff to provide safe care. Compared with their previous circumstances, the young people feel safe. The registered manager has designed a new incident report form, because the home did not previously have such a document. The young people show such exemplary behaviour that there has been no need to use it to date. The registered manager ensures that all the home's health and safety checks are completed in a timely manner. There are regular fire alarm tests and drills to help the young people to understand the need to leave the home quickly and safely in the event of fire. The accommodation has been completely refurbished. At the time of the last monitoring visit, major repair and redecoration works had been completed. This improvement has been sustained and the house now provides a relaxing, pleasant and attractive environment for the young people. The building was constructed many decades ago and remains fit for purpose. The manager has re-designated some areas of the home so that the best use is made of the available space. Before this inspection took place, the provider had voluntarily agreed to reduce the numbers of young people accommodated by the home from five to four. This means that the narrow, L-shaped room that had been used as a bedroom up until six months ago is not currently required for young people. It is now used as a storeroom and as additional office space. It will not be possible to return to having a fifth bedroom without structural changes to the layout of the available space upstairs.	

All the necessary repairs have been completed and there is no sign of the damage to the home that was still very much in evidence at the previous full inspection. The refurbished environment really values the young people and they are clearly very happy in the home.

There have been no behavioural incidents involving the present group of young people. They do not go missing, they have not come into contact with the police and there have been no restraints or consequences imposed. The atmosphere in the home is relaxed and happy and there have been no complaints.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
Leadership and management requires improvement because there are still problems with monitoring and updating the young people's placement planning documents. At the previous full inspection, the young people's key working and other records had not all been completed in a timely and appropriate manner. These records were not always accessible to all staff on duty. There is still work to be done with the team on how to record significant events and when to escalate them. One placement plan contains conflicting information about a young person's age. The actions from a review held some months ago had not been incorporated into the plans. This makes it difficult for the managers to ensure that recommendations are actioned before the next review. Although the registered manager has improved monitoring systems to help her keep track of developments in the home, an important piece of information which came to light during a key-worker session had not been escalated to her. This meant that the manager was unaware of this development. Failure to ensure that managers are fully aware of all significant developments in relation to the young people can result in misleading information being disseminated to the team. Furthermore, notifications to other professionals and to Ofsted may be missed. A requirement has been made. The home has made good progress on all elements of the compliance notice that were not met at the previous full inspection and monitoring visit. At the full inspection on 21 September 2016, there were still insufficient core staff available to run the service without the high use of casual, and sometimes agency, staff. Since then, staff who were on long-term sickness absence have returned to work and others have been recruited from another service operated by the local	

authority. Barring emergencies, there are now sufficient staff on duty on each shift to avoid the use of casual staff. This is a very good achievement and is likely to have had a major positive impact on the young people, who have already experienced so much change in their lives.

At the second full inspection and monitoring visit, there was still no system in place to monitor the casual staff team's supervision, although some meetings had taken place. Progress had been made on ensuring that all the casual staff received basic training in core skills, and they had been provided with a computer log-in so that some training could be undertaken online, but there was still further work to do.

There are now completed spreadsheets in place to show which staff have received particular training and supervision sessions. These show that the casual staff have all received the necessary training to equip them for their roles. Supervision notes are now recorded in much more detail than those seen previously, to provide evidence that practice, training and development needs have been discussed.

At the previous full inspection, the young people's key working and other records had not all been completed in a timely and appropriate manner. These records were not always accessible to all staff on duty. This area for development has been substantially actioned. Recording is much improved and although some records needed proofreading and updating with the most recent information, as described above, all the young people have effective, working placement planning documents available to support the staff's practice. This means that the compliance notice is now substantially met.

Previous requirements that were not subject to the compliance notice have all been actioned. These include the improvements to the quality of the environment (Quality Standard 6) and health and safety (Quality Standard 12) described elsewhere in this report. The final requirement was made in relation to notifications to Ofsted. These have been received when required, with the exception of one. In this instance, the manager had not been informed about the change in situation, so could not notify the matter. This has now been remedied.

Of the three recommendations made at the previous inspection, two concerned the home's physical environment and supervision records. These have been met, as described above.

The third recommendation concerned return home interviews. The local authority has a system in place to provide these interviews. This involves phoning the home to speak with the young person. Discussion took place about the importance of ensuring that a good effort is made to engage the young person, as it is all too easy for them to opt out of speaking with someone on the phone, particularly if they do not know them. The discussion was academic because no one has been missing for several months, so the home has not had the opportunity to put the system into practice recently.

Staff morale is very strong and although the team understands that the present residents' needs are not typical of some of the young people they have looked after in the past, staff members believe that the very positive changes in the home have provided a secure foundation that will enable them to cope with more challenging behaviour in the future.

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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