

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC034922
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Fashion Corner, 57-59 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1XL

Responsible individual	Mr Paul Marshall
Registered manager	Mr Shane Heywood
Inspector	Miss Ceri Evans

Inspection date	22/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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

SC034922

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- A particular strength of the home is the stability of the team, they are very experienced and have high aspirations for young people.
- Relationships within the home are strong and young people are supported to develop meaningful attachments with their caregivers.
- Staff have the best interests of young people at the heart of all they do. Young people spoken with confirm they feel listened to, respected and valued as individuals. They thrive in the knowledge that their interests, talents and individual characters are enthusiastically supported and recognised by staff.
- Young people have made good progress from their starting points in relation to their education, social interaction, physical and emotional well-being.
- Staff encourage and support young people to have age appropriate experiences. They have benefited immensely from participating in a range of activities which promote their interests and social development.
- Young people who have experienced trauma, chaotic and unsettled lifestyles quickly move into a more settled and satisfying life. They understand the routines and boundaries and enjoy the rewards earned for their good behaviour. As a result they are steadily making safer choices and are learning to manage their feelings better as they settle and progress.
- The home works effectively with birth families and partner agencies such as the police, and safeguarding agencies. This ensures the young people's needs are fully met for the duration of their placement.
- This inspection was led by the assistant manager. He is suitably qualified and has worked in social care settings for many years. The current Registered Manager is leaving the home in October 2015. Appropriate interim management arrangements have been agreed in advance. This will minimise any potential disruption to young people.
- There are a few areas of practice that require improvement. This includes, ensuring that the admissions and matching processes are robust, reviewing and updating policies and procedures, ensuring that young people have return interviews following missing from home episodes and gaining the views of young people for staff appraisals.

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
The registered person must keep under review and, as necessary, revise the home's child protection policies. This specifically relates to updating policies and procedures to ensure they accurately reflect current legislation. (Regulation 34(6))	06/11/2015
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure that staff - (2)(b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. This specifically relates to the admission of children whose needs have been carefully considered, and the impact on children living in the home is evaluated and carefully risk assessed.	06/11/2015

Recommendations

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

- The missing from home return interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. This should be an in-depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (i.e., someone not involved in caring for the child) who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge. (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, page 14, paragraph 32)
- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with

the staff member over the year and children in the home's care. (The Guide, page 61, 13.5)

- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the homes location and strategies for managing these (the guide, p64 15.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
25/07/2014	CH - Full	Good
12/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
09/10/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
This home has made a difference to the lives of young people who currently live there. Staff are good role models and have a parent-like approach to their care. They are intuitive and treat each young person with unconditional positive regard at all times. This enables young people to experience childhood in a safe, caring and nurturing environment where they can start to address past difficulties and move on positively. Young people make good progress as a direct result of the care they receive in the home. They confirm that they feel happy and have good relationships with staff. One young person stated: 'I'd give this place ten out of ten, staff are brilliant and I am listened to.' This demonstrates that staff respect young people and show a great deal of care and consideration towards them. There was clear evidence throughout the inspection that young people have forged trusting, mutually respectful and fun-loving relationships with staff. The views, wishes and feelings of young people are integral to all aspects of service delivery. Staff are in constant dialogue with young people about what they want, what is important to them and help them influence their future plans. One of the main strengths of this home is the staff's ability to create an environment which replicates 'family life'. The home has a warm and caring atmosphere and this has undoubtedly helped young people to settle and become more confident over time. One staff member stated : 'this is not a unit, this is a home and we do our very best to ensure young people have happy childhood's.' Young people are learning new skills on a daily basis and are encouraged and supported by staff to achieve their academic potential. Staff are persistent with young people and make sure they attend education resources regularly. They have high aspirations and do their utmost to help young people fulfil their potential. Some young people have made excellent progress gaining good qualifications and moved on into their chosen career pathways. This is testimony to the staff's ability to help young people have high aspirations and reach their goals. Young people's physical health has improved because they are encouraged and supported to take pride in their appearance, eat healthily and take lots of exercise. Young people are encouraged to go on walks and bike rides with staff and some have recently joined a local gym. Staff ensure that young people have good access to information and guidance on all health issues. This enhances their awareness of risks associated with smoking, drugs, alcohol and sexual health matters.	

Young people benefit from living in an inclusive and non-judgemental environment. Placement plans are child-focused and provide a good overview of young people's needs; never losing sight of their individuality. Staff ensure that the views and opinions of young people are crucial to the development and review of how their care is delivered. This is achieved through regular meetings and consultations with staff. Young people are steadily becoming more confident and are given every opportunity to contribute to decisions being made about their lives.

The home has established links with community groups so young people can enjoy a range of activities and opportunities. Most young people are passionate about sport and are supported to participate, they enjoy mountain biking, football and going to the gym. Staff take an active interest to learn about young people's hobbies and ensure they have every opportunity to try new things and develop their individual interests and talents. This has had a considerable impact on young people. They have become more confident in making friends and are developing their individual characters and talents.

Staff are dedicated to preparing young people for independent living. As well as the practical tasks such as shopping, cleaning and cooking, staff undertake direct work with young people to prepare them emotionally for this significant transition. One social worker commented: 'staff have undertaken lots of independence work. They continually aim high and (name of young person) has been well supported and prepared for the next stage of his life.'

The making of placements and the assessment in relation to the impact of admission has not been robustly managed. The home does not clearly demonstrate that they have fully considered how they plan to manage the group dynamic and there is no evidence to show how the admission of young people may impact on the risky behaviour of others in the home. To date, this has not impacted negatively on the current mix of young people; largely due to the skill set of staff. However, lack of clear planning weakens their ability to make well informed decisions about matching and admissions.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people benefit from living in an environment where they feel safe and are safe. They feel able to express their concerns and are confident that any issues they do raise are dealt with effectively by staff. Staff manage the group living	

arrangements well and young people know what is expected of them. There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying and young people are helped to understand how to build and sustain respectful relationships with their peers. On occasions the local police community support officers have intervened at the home's request. This has proved to be very effective in raising young people's awareness about discriminatory behaviour that could lead to them being criminalised.

Behaviour management strategies employed by staff are based on open and honest dialogue, negotiation and guidance. Staff challenge negative behaviour and consistent practice is helping young people self-regulate and articulate their feelings in a more socially acceptable manner. Documents reviewed during this inspection highlighted the minimal use of sanctions and there have been no reported incidents of restraint. This was confirmed by a young person who stated: 'there are never any restraints in my home staff calm things down before that stage.' This further evidences that young people are taking increasing responsibility for their actions and are more able to cope with their emotions in a constructive manner.

Incidents of young people going missing from care have reduced. However, when young people have left the home without permission, staff respond quickly and make efforts to locate them and ensure their safe return. The home has forged good links with other professionals to address missing from care concerns. One police officer stated: 'In my opinion due to the close working relationship with both staff and young people we have reduced the number of missing/absent incidents. In fact it has been commented upon by staff on division that it is rare there are any issue calls at the home.'

While it is extremely positive to see that missing from home incidents have reduced, the arrangements for missing from home return interviews is less robust. Not enough has been done to ensure young people have had the opportunity to speak to an independent person following their return to placement. This is a missed opportunity to support young people and to help uncover information that could protect them in the future. The manager has acknowledged this shortfall and is currently reviewing the referral process for return interviews.

The home's location risk assessment has not been completed with sufficient rigour. It lacks detail, and is unclear regarding the responses required by staff to minimise those risks. No consideration has been given to the potential of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and some pages have been left blank. To date, this has not impacted negatively on young people. This is because staff know the young people and area very well. That said, the manner in which the assessment has been completed needs review and improvement.

The home itself provides a safe environment for young people. A range of health and safety checks are completed to assess whether there are any hazards which could pose a risk to young people. Young people and staff take part in regular fire

drills to ensure they know how to evacuate the home safely in case of an emergency. These measures help ensure that young people continue to live in a safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Assistant Manager facilitated this inspection as the current Registered Manager has handed in his notice and is due to leave in October. Appropriate interim arrangements have been made and plans are afoot to recruit and appoint a suitable person for the role. Currently, the Assistant Manager and another experienced manager are overseeing the day to day running of the home. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that the change in management has impacted negatively on young people or the overall operation of the home. Leaders and managers demonstrate clear determination, energy and motivation to improve the home, which is an ethos the staff team embrace. The team are enthusiastic, motivated and provide consistent support that meet the individual needs of young people. One staff member stated: 'the staff really do care for the young people in placement and continue to support them as individuals to help them achieve. Staff take pride in what they do and it is more that 'just a job' the manager does not ask staff to do anything he wouldn't do himself. He's transparent at all times.' The home is well resourced in terms of staffing. The team have a broad range of experience and skills to meet the everyday challenges of caring for young people. Staff confirm that are effectively supported and value regular supervision and team meetings which ensures they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff's competency and performance are routinely monitored on a daily basis and is formally reviewed in annual appraisals. Appraisals offer a good level of detail in relation to aims and objectives but fail to reflect the views of young people, families and professionals who come into contact with the service. This means that the review of staff practice is subjective and does not provide a holistic overview of performance. Young people's records present a good overall picture of their experiences in the home. Records are well maintained and are monitored monthly, which ensures all the required information is present and up to date. Young people can access their files with support from staff; to help them understand their history and this plays a key role in making plans for their future.	

Leaders and managers do not routinely review the home's policies and procedures. This means that policies are not in line with legislation and are out of date with key aspects of research and findings from case reviews. However, because staff are efficient in their roles, this shortfall has not impacted negatively on young people. Nevertheless, it has the potential to weaken the overall effectiveness of procedures and could lead to outdated practice in the home.

The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the home to ensure it operates in accordance with the Statement of Purpose. Leaders and managers have a realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and promptly address areas where improvements can be made. The home continues to use a detailed development plan to drive forward further improvements. This ensures that young people remain at the heart of the home and they receive the best possible care.

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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