

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>7 June 2016</b>                                                         |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC034953</b>                                                            |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                                                                |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Children's home</b>                                                     |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council</b>                             |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>Northgate House, Northgate,<br/>Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1<br/>1UN</b> |

|                               |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Anne Tully</b>       |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Aaron McLoughlin</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Pauline Yates</b>    |

|                                                                                                 |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>7 June 2016</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Outstanding</b>             |

## SC034953

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Through living at the home, young people make good progress from their starting points. This progress includes attendance at education, reduction in missing-from-home episodes and increased social confidence.
- The staff at the home provide strong, nurturing relationships. These relationships help young people to develop trust, seek advice and talk about what is difficult in their lives.
- Staff and the manager work well with other agencies and professionals to secure the services and help that young people need. They act as strong advocates and provide appropriate levels of challenge when service provision is not meeting the needs of young people.
- The manager and staff are committed to continuous improvement in the care that they give to young people. They actively listen to young people's views and respond appropriately to requests and suggestions.
- Young people feel safe living at the home. The boundaries and expectations that they are given are clear and support their emotional development. Young people are actively encouraged to reflect on behaviour that may not be socially acceptable and may be harmful to their physical and emotional health.
- Young people become increasingly safe through living at the home. Staff take a robust and thoughtful approach to managing risks that some behaviours from young people present.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered person 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 must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Due date     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <p>The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure, and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate, and within five days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure (Regulation 35(2)(b)(i)(ii)(c)).</p> <p>In particular, when the registered manager has been active in the measure of control, the registered individual, or someone authorised by them, should complete these requirements.</p> | 1 July 2016  |
| The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there (Regulation 40(4)(c)).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1 July 2016  |
| The independent person must produce a report about a visit ('the independent person's report') which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and whether the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being (Regulation 44(4)(a)(b)).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 31 July 2016 |

### Recommendations

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

- Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.9). In particular, they should provide advice and support with regards to the safe use of the internet.

- The importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life story work, or other direct work. Staff in children's homes should play a full role in work of this kind ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.14).
- Staff need to have the knowledge and skills to understand each child's education and training and tier next steps for learning ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.11).

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date  | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 3 February 2016  | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 25 November 2015 | Full            | Good                    |
| 2 February 2015  | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 8 August 2014    | Full            | Good                    |

## Inspection judgements

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Through the individualised care and attention that young people receive, their self-confidence and sense of self-worth grow. As a consequence, they are better able to manage relationships and to understand the impact that their behaviour may have on others. Young people over time learn and understand how to repair relationships that have been temporarily broken through disagreement. They begin to resist negative peer pressure and to choose activities that positively build upon their life experiences.</p> <p>One social worker commented, 'When he came here, he was very withdrawn and he actually started to trust the staff and started to anchor.' Another social worker said, 'He has really good relationships with the staff. The staff are very caring and consistent, and he knows where he stands. There is lots of humour, laughing and joking and it is definitely his home.'</p> <p>The staff actively listen to young people. Young people's confidence to express their opinions and to contribute to the running of the home increases and is encouraged by the positive responses of staff. There is regular individual consultation with each young person and requests responded to include having branded cereals to eat rather than supermarket makes, staff arranging activities with young people's friends in the community rather than with other young people at the home, being trusted to take individual days out to the seaside, going to watch Manchester United football team and having jammy wagon wheels to eat. In addition, the registered manager adjusted the young people's behavioural contracts following consultation and feedback with young people. This created a greater sense of fairness for the young people.</p> <p>Good routines are established with young people. They are actively encouraged and supported to attend education and to develop their personal interests. Although some young people's attendance can fluctuate due to conflict with teachers, staff have successfully resolved these situations. When young people unexpectedly arrive home following these incidents, staff take an inquisitive approach with the young person as to what may have happened. This technique allows young people space to reflect, to re-engage with school later in the day and to talk to the teachers about what occurred. The restorative way of dealing with problems, gives young people positive experiences of resolving conflict. However, not all staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the educational levels that young people have achieved or are working towards. This limits the input of staff into young people's academic progress.</p> <p>Young people are given opportunities to experience fun and exciting activities,</p> |                 |

alongside more everyday leisure pursuits. For example, young people have saved 'points' and experienced helicopter rides, indoor sky-diving, and had driving experiences in luxury cars such as Lamborghinis.

Planned admission of young people to the home is thorough and young people's strengths and vulnerabilities are quickly understood by staff. This ensures that they are kept safe, their immediate needs met and their interests supported. One social worker commenting upon a very recent admission said, 'The manager was very proactive. They collected lots of information and I was really impressed. [Name] says he likes it at the home.'

The staff promote age-appropriate levels of independence and self-care skills. Cultural differences in food choice is promoted and young people are encouraged to explore and practise cooking skills. Young people have been fully involved in the recent redecoration of their bedrooms and the construction of new furniture. One young person, when seeing the result, wrote on his feedback sheet 'looks sick' (really good).

Staff are sensitive to young people's previous life experiences and how these experiences may influence young people's current responses. However, individual direct work on young people's life stories does not take place. This limits their senses of identity and resolving past experiences.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Judgement grade |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Careful consideration is given to individualising young people's risk assessments. This approach underpins and informs the responses from staff in their approach and work with young people. Staff work hard at gaining young people's trust as to their whereabouts and activities when not at the home. This better informs staff perception of risk, and guides the work and advice given to young people to make positive choices. There is a balanced and informed approach taken to keeping young people safe alongside acknowledging young people's growing sense of independence and age.</p> <p>There is a robust and multi-agency approach to managing risks such as child sexual exploitation and missing-from-home incidents. This joined-up approach ensures that information and assessments are shared in a timely manner. The manager is quick to escalate and request meetings with relevant agencies, should there be a perceived increase in risk to young people.</p> <p>Young people say that they feel safe and are safe living at the home. Independent reviewing officers (IRO) and social workers share this view. Some young people,</p> |                 |

with a history of almost daily missing-from-home incidents, make good progress in making positive and safer choices. One IRO commented, 'He likes being at the home and when at the home he feels safe. He is now down to amber from red at being at risk of child sexual exploitation. Missing have reduced significantly and he has quite meaningful relationships with staff.'

When young people do go missing from home, staff are active in keeping in touch and searching for them until they are located. Protocols and risk assessments are adhered to by the staff and updated to reflect either an increase or decrease in risk. A social worker said, 'The home know exactly what is going on and are always chasing after him and asking him where he has been, but in a non-punitive way.'

Staff understand the risks posed to young people via internet use and appropriate use is agreed with young people when they join the home. However, individual or group work is not completed with young people on the internet's wider dangers. This limits young people's understanding of those risks and their skills to keep themselves safe.

Any allegations or suspicions of harm are promptly acted upon and referred to other agencies such as the local authority and police. However, there has been one allegation, which although appropriately investigated, was not notified to Ofsted. This weakens regulatory oversight and scrutiny.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| <p>The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified and has been manager of the home since 2013. He is committed to providing the highest possible care to the young people and seeks continuously to improve their life chances and outcomes. He has a thorough understanding of the young people and the progress they are making. He provides exceptional drive and enthusiasm to the staff in seeking to embed changes and improvements.</p> <p>The manager leads by example and is highly visible within the home. He is accessible on a daily basis to both staff and young people. The learning environment that the management team promotes provides for healthy challenge and the sharing of ideas and approaches with young people. The local authority therapist who supports the home on a regular basis said, '[The home] is a transitional learning environment. They are changing lenses and refocusing. They are doing that, and taking on board new reflections of therapeutic parenting. They [are] interested and energized.'</p> <p>Staff receive regular and focused supervision, and team meetings centre</p> |                    |

discussions on young people. The skill of the staff and the understanding that they bring to the care of young people are priorities for the manager. Recent improvements to improve these continuously have included embedding the model of care into the supervisory process. This has resulted in creating reflective supervision for staff, separate from case management auditing processes. This ensures that care practice by staff is refreshed and suitably challenged.

The manager and staff are effective advocates for young people, ensuring that their voices are heard and that they receive the services that they need. For example, the manager successfully represented one young person's views about not moving to a particular town. This young person has since been successfully placed with foster carers in an alternative town that he is comfortable living in.

The challenge that the manager provides to other agencies is persistent and unwavering in its focus on achieving good outcomes for young people. He is highly respected by other professionals. One IRO commented, '[The manager] has exceptional leadership skills. He runs a very tight ship. Communication is always open, and staff very much drag the other professionals on board. They are keen. They always want more for the young person.'

The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home, and there is a realistic and achievable development plan that seeks to address identified shortfalls. There are robust and thorough systems in place for monitoring the progress of young people, and this includes the use of independent visitor reports. However, these reports do not fully meet the requirements of the regulation.

Since the last inspection, one requirement and recommendation have been met. Case records and paperwork have been significantly reduced and streamlined, and progress for young people is more easily identifiable. The home has undergone significant refurbishment and fittings have been improved. One requirement, however, has not been met. This is with regards to 'designated person's oversight of physical restraint, when the manager was involved in the incident. Although the senior manager has signed the record, they have not spoken to the young person about the measure.

## 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 whom 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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