

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC035154
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Northgate House, Northgate, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 1UN

Responsible individual	Mr Gary Pickles
Manager	Mr Aaron Mcloughlin
Inspector	Mrs Pauline Yates

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC035154

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- Requirements set at the previous inspection require embedding into on-going and maintained practice of the home. Recent historical improvements have not been firmly established to ensure that young people receive good quality care.
- Following review of care and changes in services to be provided to young people key documentation requires updating in a timely manner. This will ensure that all staff are aware and adjustments made in light of those changes.
- Activities provided to young people are repetitive and limited. They do not reflect the aspirations or requests from young people, nor offer diversity to provide enriching experiences.
- Staff understanding of adverse life experiences upon young people, especially in relation to attachment, remains limited.

The children's home strengths

- All of the requirements set at the previous inspection have been met and further improvements made.
- The new manager is providing strong leadership to drive forward cultural change within the home. Staff are committed to change and improving the outcomes for young people.
- Staff have clear and consistent expectations of young people's behaviour. Positive reward and praise is used to reinforce behaviour change.
- Young people have access to specialist services and a multi-agency approach is used to address young people's needs. They are consistently supported by staff to attend and achieve in education.

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):

- All children's case records (regulation 36) must be kept up to date (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3). In particular, that following a review, the home's placement plan is updated in a timely manner to reflect those changes.
- Staff should understand factors that affect children's motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 39, paragraph 8.13). In particular, that staff receive training with respect to attachment and developmental issues.
- Each child's talents and interests should be understood and nurtured, with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonable (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 31, paragraph 6.4).

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and is registered for 5 young people from the ages of 12 to 18 years, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/05/2015	Full	Inadequate
19/12/2014	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
04/09/2014	Full	Adequate
18/07/2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	requires improvement
Young people now have suitable education identified and clear multi-agency plans address their needs. Specialist reports are being fully utilised to plan current and future needs and there is a coordinated approach to the delivery of services. Young people now attend school consistently and those who are above compulsory school age have been successful in achieving college placements. Young people's aspirations, for example to become plumbers, are now supported through effective challenge and support. Young people are better supported to manage their emotions in acceptable ways. They receive consistent and reliable support to enable them to accept responsibility for their actions within a positive framework of reward. This change has lead young people to be more willing to engage with staff and take part in activities. For example, some young people previously declined all activities offered, preferring to spend long periods away from the home. They are now taking part in bowling, cinema and gym activities on a regular basis. Staff have improved their responses to young people and this has in turn improved overall relationships within the home. Young people are more willing to accept advice and support and manage situations they have found challenging. For example, one young person successfully joined a new schooling environment and another attended a college course interview and was offered a place. These recent changes by staff require sustaining and embedding within the culture of the home. Young people are supported to make a successful transition into young adulthood. Staff offer suitable advice and structure to enable them to develop cooking, budgeting and general life-skills. Young people that struggle with this transition are given incremental and achievable tasks that build their experience and confidence. Young people's contact with family is supported both emotionally and practically by the staff. Staff act as advocates for the young people in seeking to re-establish or increase contact arrangements. For example, one young person now has contact planned with younger siblings who he has not seen for over 12 months. Also, the manager has arranged additional support for a young person who is adversely affected by external decisions made regarding family. Young people are regularly consulted about their views and the care the staff provide. They have choice over room décor, food and a choice of activities. Young	

people stated however that they found the current activities repetitive and expressed a desire to have a greater variety offered to them such as quad biking.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement
Young people report feeling safe within the home and this view is shared by social workers and independent reviewing officers. One social worker commenting on the recent changes within the home said, 'Things seem a lot calmer'. The home has become a more welcoming environment due to a reduction in the frequency and level of damage caused by young people. Incidents that have the potential for police intervention are successfully diffused by the staff. Young people are supported to make positive alternative choices in expressing their emotions and avoid possible criminalisation. Young people benefit from clear and unambiguous expectations with regards to their behaviour and daily routines. Missing from home incidents are infrequent and any such incident or unauthorised absence is appropriately responded to by staff. Staff are active in liaising with other agencies, keeping in touch with young people and physically locating them. Absences are on the whole for short durations. Young people are often with family or siblings and there is close liaison with social workers regarding the assessment and safety of young people with regards to this 'unplanned' contact. Young people who smoke or use drugs are actively dissuaded by the staff and any incidents of this occurring within the home is robustly responded to. Although some young people chose not to make use of the specialist support services, they have made attempts to reduce their use of drugs.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The manager has been in post since April 2015 and is in the process of acquiring	

registration. He has held Registered Manager status for another local authority home since 2011. He is suitably qualified and experienced.

Since the previous inspection the manager has ensured that sufficient changes have been implemented in order to meet the requirements made. His proactive leadership is providing continuous improvement in the care offered to young people. Staff and other professionals report that there is a noticeable and positive difference in the overall running of the home and outcomes for young people. One independent reviewing officer commented, 'He wants to be on top of things, not just the things which are going well but keen to raise the bootstraps where they might not be doing so well'.

In addition to meeting the previously set requirements, the manager has streamlined the records for each young person. This is making it easier for staff easier to cross reference to other supporting documents. This ensures that information about the young person is located with ease and any changes made are implemented. New 'consequences and room searches' protocols have also been introduced and these reinforce positive behaviour management approaches. The clear guidance ensures consistency and transparency for both staff and young people.

The manager has completed a review of staff skills and knowledge base. This is informing provision of training and ensures that staff have the correct knowledge base to give individualised care.

Progress has been made in relation to the reviewing of the home's placement plans and the implementation of recommendations from assessments. Young people therefore receive the specialist services identified and their complex needs are met within a holistic and multi-agency approach. Although these reviews have resulted in clear action plans which have been implemented by the staff, the written documentation to reflect these changes have not been updated in a timely manner.

Staff are now clear with regards to their expectations of young people's behaviour and these expectations are positively reinforced. Young people have a greater sense of security through the team approach that is employed in maintaining boundaries. Staff understanding of attachment and child development is however limited and this restricts their insight into how young people's current behaviours reflect past experiences. Staff therefore would benefit from targeted training or support in this area.

Staff are supported through regular formal and informal supervision and this is further complimented by regular staff meetings. These meetings comprehensively

address each young person's needs and are clear with regards to the how the staff are to respond as a team.

Young people benefit from increased educational hours as a result of effective liaison with other agencies and services. When young people have been identified as not making appropriate progress there is effective challenge by the manager and staff.

Young people benefit from improvements within the home that create a more welcoming feel. For example damaged areas have been repaired, soft furnishings have been bought such as pictures and cushions, rooms have been repainted and a new front door has been fitted.

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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