

Children's home inspection – Full

Inspection date	08/11/2016
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	Anne Tully
Registered manager	Byron Smith
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC035154

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- A passionate and driven management team leads this service. The team seeks continuous improvement to the support it offers young people and their families.
- The service that young people and their families receive is exceptional and, as a result, young people's lives are improved for the better. Breakdown in family relationships and the possibility of young people entering the care system are significantly reduced.
- Young people, their families and professionals identify their experience of this service as being qualitatively different to other services and key to the many positive changes they experience.
- Through the approach taken by the staff, young people learn empathy, develop emotional insight and become emotionally resilient. As a result, they become significantly safer.
- The staff and managers adopt a 'can-do' approach to the service they offer, being available to young people and families at the times when need is the greatest.
- Staff are well trained and skilled in the work they do with young people and their families. As a result, young people and families develop trust and confidence in the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This 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 under short-break arrangements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/05/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/02/2016	Full	Good
07/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
12/05/2015	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Families and professionals view the support offered by the staff and managers as being key to preventing family breakdown, instrumental in repairing relationships and altering significantly the outcomes for young people. One family member said: 'The change in "X" since engaging with [keyworker] and the team is huge. I don't think my family would have come through this without the home on board.' A social worker commented: 'It has exceeded my expectations. Looking back, I was really considering we would need to take proceedings to protect her, but we have never reached that point due to the support the service has given. They have listened to her, respected her and are on her level.' Young people experience an exceptional service that supports and encourages their emotional growth. They develop relationships with staff that are based on trust and mutual respect, and consider these relationships to be reliable. Young people feel listened to and grow in their understanding of how to communicate their feelings to others in acceptable ways. One young person commented: 'I can talk to any of them about anything – they understand. They get us to think about restoratives and ask you how you feel and how others feel, to look at different ways of doing things. You get to understand, and it's not a screaming and shouting match.' The research-based model that the service has adopted assumes a 'non-blaming' strengths-based approach. It is fully inclusive of family members, taking a systemic approach to problem-solving. Carers feel listened to and they too benefit from the approach taken by staff. One family member commented: 'All of us were involved. We would discuss it and we were all included. We all decided. They have certainly taught me things. I cannot speak too highly of them. It has been an excellent service.' Over time, young people and their families positively change their patterns of communication and, as a result, their relationships significantly improve. Staff work in a multi-agency manner which ensures that young people's needs are holistically met. Although education remains the responsibility of families, the staff take a proactive role in liaising with schools. Managers act as exceptionally strong advocates for young people when unmet needs are identified. For example, they have been instrumental in ensuring that educational healthcare plans are completed and fully support young people's transitions to new schools. Staff and managers seek to share their approach with other agencies in order to achieve consistency for young people. This results in young people successfully returning to school or college and receiving appropriate support while there. Young people enjoy a variety of focused activities and individual time with staff	

when they stay at the home. Their views are important to the staff, and their well-being and progress is central to the running of the home.

Young people view the 'rules' within the home as reasonable. One young person said: 'I wouldn't call them rules. It's just what they expect. Just that you work with your keyworker and talk and join in the activities – they want to include you. It's like home here – we all sit around the table and eat together. They are there for you. I've cried a lot on [the keyworker's] shoulder quite a few times.'

Young people develop reflective abilities and skills that help them to negotiate and navigate relationships across many settings. This progress has a positive impact upon all aspects of their lives. One young person summing up her experience of the service said: 'My life is just better.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people become significantly safer through the services that are offered by the staff. There have been no missing-from-home incidents since the last inspection. Drug and alcohol use either significantly reduces or ceases altogether, and young people's vulnerability to sexual exploitation diminishes. The reduction of risk to young people's safety and welfare is achieved and sustained through the highly effective and trusting relationships that staff develop with young people. In addition, young people become safer when living at the family home. Staff support families to manage and resolve concerns or conflict with positive outcomes. Carers and parents identify this continuous support, at the time of greatest need, as central to their sustained efforts to keep their children safe. One carer commented: 'I could just ring them at any time, even late at night, and they would be there on tap, giving advice.' A drug and alcohol professional commented: 'I have to say it has been invaluable as a launching pad to get them to the right place. The changes for "X" have been massive. I'm honestly really impressed. You don't see many changes like that.' Risks to young people's welfare are understood well by the staff, and they successfully address the underlying factors that may influence young people's behaviours. Young people commented: 'The home referred me to drug and alcohol services and I have moved schools. It's good. They arrange contact with my mum and supervise it so it doesn't go downhill. I like coming here,' and: 'I am focusing	

on the here and now and, if I do that, things will be better in the future.'

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The manager was registered to manage the home in August 2016. He is suitably qualified and has many years' experience and an excellent track record in the provision of residential services to children and young people. The manager is highly motivated and passionate about providing the best possible services and support to young people and their families. He is committed to continuously improving staff skills and, in turn, the outcomes for young people. He sets high expectations that are clearly communicated to staff. One staff member said of the manager: 'When he speaks he just empowers you.' The manager offers flexibility in the services offered to young people and their families. He continuously seeks to innovate and introduce creative ways of working and ensures that staff continue to develop their skills and knowledge base. This is supported through regular supervision, reflective practice, newly introduced staff objectives and leading by example. Any shortfalls in practice are quickly and appropriately addressed. This ensures that young people continue to receive high levels of individual tailored support. The management team has excellent levels of knowledge about the young people who use its services. This helps to identify areas for improvement in the home. This has resulted in developments such as individualised exit surveys that help to provide greater insight into the experiences of young people and families; staff shadowing community services to understand the support they provide; and securing an additional staff vehicle to provide increased flexibility for outreach home support. Managers are tenacious in their challenge of other agencies or services when shortfalls are identified. This ensures that young people are given every opportunity to reach their potential.	

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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