

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	23/02/2016
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	Vacant
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Pauline Yates

Inspection date	23/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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

SC035154

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people receive good quality, targeted support that enables them to make progress across different areas of their lives. They are emotionally and practically supported to become increasingly safe and positively manage important relationships.
- Through consistent and reliable support, young people grow in emotional awareness and develop trusting relationships with staff. They begin to apply the advice that is given and make positive changes.
- Young people feel safe at the home and value the time spent with staff.
- Young people feel valued and their views and opinions influence the decisions that are made within the home. Their needs are identified and met through close collaboration with themselves, parents and other professionals.
- There is a strong and dynamic manager. He is fully committed to ensuring that the services provided are fully focused on the needs of young people and their families.
- Staff actively advocate for young people.
- Young people are given a warm and nurturing environment and building on their strengths and talents is a primary focus for the home.

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
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person- if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires 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 the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. (Regulation 44 (2)(a) (4)(a)(b))	30/04/2016

Recommendations

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

- 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. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 16 paragraph 3.14) In particular, that staff should be given access to specific training that supports and promotes the development of these skills.

Full report

Information about this children's home

Since the previous inspection, the service has undergone a change in focus from offering medium to long-term care to young people, to a preventative, outreach and short break service. This home is owned and run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 5 children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties under short break arrangements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
12/05/2015	Full	Inadequate
19/12/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/09/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people make good progress through visiting the home and the work that is achieved with their carers and families. This progress is individualised and includes making positive decisions regarding their leisure time, improved relationships with family members, improved educational attendance and being able to address for the first time issues of loss. Young people quickly learn to trust staff and build relationships that enable them to listen and use the advice that is given. They are given warm and positive regard that makes them feel valued and listened to. This good quality care has beneficial effects upon their emotional responses and levels of confidence. Young people's emotional resilience grows and their ability to negotiate relationships improves. Young people's views are actively sought and appropriately acted upon. They are central to the decisions that are made in the home and as a result, they feel their views are important. This listening process has brought about changes such as a good variety of activities being accessed, bedtimes being amended, additional chairs in the dining room, a dart board being put up and mirrors being fitted in the bedrooms. Since the previous inspection, the home has undergone substantial refurbishment and it provides a warm and welcoming environment. Staff provide safe and consistent boundaries that young people adhere to. Placements plans and outcomes that are developed are devised and reviewed with young people and their families. This central and inclusive approach is underpinned by a restorative and strengths-based model to resolve conflict and difficulties. As a result, young people do not feel stigmatised or blamed for the difficulties they experience. One young person commented, 'It has helped and I have respect for X (keyworker). She spends time helping me and my mum.' The service is valued by parents, young people and professionals. One carer commented, 'We are in a better place now.' A parent said 'The changes are really, really amazing. For me it has made a huge difference and she keeps going because she wants to and she wants to make a difference. Our relationship has improved.' A social worker commenting on the difference the service had made for one young person said, 'I have nothing but positives to say about the home. The support package has had a positive impact.' Young people are supported and encouraged to develop the skills they will require	

in adulthood. This includes food and meal preparation, shopping and positive use of leisure time. They are encouraged to value the role that education and training plays in their current and future lives. Although carers retain primary responsibility for education, the staff are extremely proactive in seeking young people's engagement and securing appropriate provisions.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people's vulnerabilities and risks are understood well by the staff. This understanding is underpinned by thorough risk assessments. Young people make good progress in relation to reducing risk-taking behaviours that undermine their physical and emotional well-being. Young people say they are safe and feel safe at the home. Expectations and boundaries are clear and this significantly contributes to their sense of safety. There are robust staff recruitment processes in place that ensure young people are not cared for by adults who may pose a risk to their safety. This is further strengthened through good management oversight of the work that staff do with young people and active listening of young people's views. Through the good quality care and services that are provided, some young people significantly reduce their risks associated with child sexual exploitation (CSE). One young person commented, 'I used to go missing quite a lot but I've only been missing once recently.' She saw the relationship with staff, especially her keyworker, as being significant in the change that has occurred. The young person commented further, 'They all speak to me like a friend instead of telling me what to do. Like if I tell them something, my keyworker tells me something about herself – they share. I get on with all the staff.' When young people do go missing from home, the response from staff is robust and prompt. Staff are active in keeping in contact with the young people, going looking for them and persuading them to return. Missing from home protocols are adhered to and appropriately updated. The staff and manager ensure that there is a multi-agency approach to addressing young people's safety and well-being. Young people make progress in talking about what is difficult in their lives and their experiences of loss. Through this process, young people begin to make links between these past experiences and their current risk-taking behaviours, such as drug use. This fundamental learning process lays the pre-requisite steps to addressing the behaviours that pose a risk to their emotional and physical health.	

The home have embedded a restorative approach to managing and changing, for the better, young people's behaviour. This approach teaches young people the value of dialogue, problem solving and positive resolution to conflict and disagreement. Through this approach, young people learn to understand how conflict arises and equips them with the skills needed to manage relationships. As a result, of adopting this approach, sanctions are not used within the home and physical restraint is rarely used or required.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The manager is in the process of applying for registration at the home. He is suitably qualified and has many years' experience in the provision of residential services to young people. He is both dynamic and ambitious for the service and is extremely thorough in his approach to improving the outcomes for young people. The manager leads by example and his presence is very much felt within the home. He is well respected by other professionals and staff. The visiting therapist to the home commented, 'X' (manager) provides very family orientated leadership. He manages and he leads. They (the staff) are starting to follow his lead. There has been a huge shift.' One member of staff commented, 'I'm being pushed in a positive way to keep learning and skilling up and this keeps me motivated. I feel really positive.' Throughout the process of change for the home, the manager has ensured that staff have been well supported. He is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has addressed these in a systematic and robust way. As a result, services to young people and their families are focused and meaningful. The manager uses his thorough understanding of the young people's needs to advise and inform the practice within the home. Staff take a collective approach to the needs of young people and work as a team. They receive good, reflective supervision and there is a culture of positive challenge that promotes continuous improvement in meeting the needs of young people. One member of staff commented, 'I value my supervisions, they are really important to me. It's my opportunity to be able to reflect on my practice and look at what has gone well and how I could do it differently.' The management team are proactive in their approach to securing a holistic	

service to young people. They work with a wide variety of professionals such as education, health, family group conferencing team and preventative services. This enthusiasm for collective working has led to the recent development of staff taking a 'lead professional' role in the family group conferencing process. The working together of these complimentary services ensures that young people are given the best opportunity to resolve any difficulties they face.

The manager provides effective challenge to other services and advocates on behalf of young people. For example, one young person who previously had an out of date special educational needs assessment now has an up to date plan that will inform his needs into adulthood. One social worker commented, 'The manager has been very proactive. The structure and expectations have been clear from the start.'

At the previous inspection, several recommendations were made and these have been met. Documents recording progress are updated in a timely manner and young people's interests nurtured and valued. Staff also have a clearer understanding of how issues of attachment and family dynamics effect young people's behaviour and responses. However, staff do not have automatic access to specific training on the theoretical approach that has been adopted by the local authority. This approach underpins its work with children and families. Given the recent change in focus for the home, training for staff in this area would enhance outcomes for young people.

The manager has good processes in place for reviewing the quality of care that is provided and has an on-going development plan for the home. This plan is regularly reviewed and added to in order to continually drive positive changes. In addition to these processes, the manager makes good use of the independent visitors report and the recommendations made within. The report however, does not meet the requirements as laid out in regulations.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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