

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC036262
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Phillip Morris

Inspection date	09/11/2016
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

SC036262

Summary of findings

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

- Young people make good and consistent progress as a result of the nurturing and effective care they receive from a dedicated staff team.
- Young people trust the staff and confide in them. This enhances young people's self-esteem and confidence.
- Young people's rights and entitlements are valued. They are well supported by advocates. Young people are encouraged to voice their opinions and ideas.
- The physical and emotional health needs of young people are a priority.
- Young people report feeling safe at the home. Behaviour that risks their safety, such as self-harm, reduces because of consistently good practice by staff.
- The home has recently undergone extensive renovation. It now provides young people with a comfortable and safe environment.
- Staff receive regular professional supervision and oversight of their work. Their training equips them to provide good care to young people.
- Management arrangements are now stable. A permanent manager has been appointed and had an immediate positive impact. He is applying to Ofsted for registration. He has implemented an action plan to drive forward improvements at 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
5. Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff: (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans.	02/01/2017
11. The positive relationships standard (2) The standard requires the registered person to ensure: (a) that staff: (ix) understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children.	02/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full time attendance at school unless the child's relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- An effective introduction to a home will take into account the child's abilities and capacity to understand and retain information. Such an introduction may take place over a period of time and may be delivered in different formats according to the child's communication and cognitive abilities. The registered person should ensure staff establish the child's understanding of key information about living in

the home and the expectations of their care in order to establish whether there are gaps in the child's understanding. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57, paragraph 11.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home which provides care and accommodation for up to four children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home's statement of purpose indicates that the age range will be between 11 and 18 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement
06/08/2015	Full	Inadequate
14/01/2015	Full	Adequate
19/11/2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make consistent progress in all areas of their lives because they receive good quality care from a dedicated staff team. Supportive and caring relationships exist between the staff and young people. Staff know young people well and provide emotional warmth and encouragement. One young person stated that, 'Staff here go out of their way, they will come in and take us out when not due on shift, it is more than work to them.' Consequently, young people invest their trust in staff. This leads to improved self-esteem and confidence. Staff encourage young people to do well and recognise their skills and abilities. This develops young people's self-efficacy and promotes a 'can do' attitude, which leads to success. The achievements of young people are celebrated. Staff members praise and reward young people when they make progress. Young people's educational attainment is valued and promoted. They make good progress from their starting points. All young people have education plans in place. Some young people have made good progress towards achieving full-time education in mainstream schools. For example, one young person, who has a significantly disrupted educational history, is steadily progressing from nine hours per week towards a full time placement. Another young person is about to begin a full-time apprenticeship. Staff facilitate and promote young people's relationships with family members and those important to them in line with agreed contact plans. Staff members remain alert to the emotional impact on young people that family contact may have. They monitor young people closely and are on hand to offer support. However, the manager has not always ensured that effective communication takes place with social workers when young people have potentially damaging contact with family members. Young people's health needs are a priority. They have access to a range of healthcare professionals and undergo annual healthcare assessments. This ensures that their primary healthcare needs are met. When some young people have experimented with smoking and cannabis use, this has not developed into habitual use. Staff have quickly undertaken individual sessions with young people to emphasise the dangers of using tobacco and drugs. The emotional and mental health needs of young people are met effectively through the provision of a psychologist working directly with the service. The psychologist undertakes individual work with young people when required and also	

provides information and guidance to the staff team. Young people benefit from therapy provided by the local community child and adolescent mental health service.

The manager and staff ensure that young people's rights are respected. Young people can access advocacy services freely and an advocate visits the home regularly. The advocate commented that, 'The managers have responded very well to any issues young people have and try to resolve these quickly and effectively.' Additionally, young people know how to make complaints. The young person's guide is not yet a strong document because the design does not make it accessible to young people of different ages and levels of understanding.

The home has recently undergone extensive refurbishment. The young people were fully included in this process. The young people now enjoy comfortable rooms with games, activities and good equipment. One young person had artwork made in the form of a family tree with everyone's picture included. This has pride of place in the home and reflects the young people's appreciation of the care provided by the staff team.

Young people are well prepared for leaving care. The manager and staff work in collaboration with local authority leaving care services to ensure that coordinated support is provided to young people leaving care. Young people learn independence skills so that they can manage in the community. The manager and staff are committed to providing ongoing outreach and support services after young people leave the home.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people in the home present as settled, happy and content. They report that they feel safe living at the home and receive the help that they need to become increasingly safer. There has been a significant reduction in incidents of self-harm. One young person said, 'The staff have helped me through a lot. Before coming here I was self-harming a great deal and now I have stopped.' Since the last inspection, managers and staff have responded effectively to several safeguarding incidents. They have acted in accordance with agency policy and procedure. This transparent service strives to learn lessons that can help to promote continual improvements in safeguarding. Managers analyse all incidents to identify any information that may help them to prevent recurrence.	

Staff have undertaken training in safeguarding. Their application of this training is consistently good and they have a broad knowledge of the risks faced by young people. Detailed behaviour management plans support staff in managing incidents so that challenging behaviour is rare. The staff retain strong and consistent boundaries with clear expectations of young people's behaviour. This has led to a reduction in the use of sanctions or physical intervention. On occasions when physical intervention has been required, it has been proportionate. Staff and young people involved have received good de-briefing to understand what led to the incident and actions that might have prevented it.

Young people's safe care plans are not yet fully effective. These plans, crucial to the day-to-day safety of young people, do not fully take into account all known risk factors. For example, some plans do not accurately reflect how young people's emotions may be communicated through their behaviour. This hampers staff in caring for and supporting young people who are anxious or distressed.

New staff undergo robust vetting. These measures include enhanced criminal history checks. In addition, a full employment history is taken, employment references are obtained and verified, and identity checks are completed. This decreases the likelihood of young people being harmed by those caring for them.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
A new manager took charge of the home in April 2016. He is in the process of applying to Ofsted to become registered. The manager receives good support from an experienced deputy. Both have recently completed the diploma level 5 in leadership and management. They work together well and have a shared vision to take the service forward. They have made a great deal of progress in improving the service. Staff say that they feel motivated by their managers and are eager to make further progress. The manager quickly addressed the weaknesses of the service when taking up his post. An action plan was developed and implemented quickly to bring about sustained improvement in the service. Several shortfalls were identified at the last full inspection and statutory requirements were raised. These requirements are now met in full. The home has undergone complete refurbishment, which has greatly improved the day-to-day experience of young people. The new manager is driving forward improvements in all areas. Care planning is strengthened to ensure that young people have robust plans in place, and that these plans are understood and implemented by the staff team. Behaviour management processes are	

improved. The process for independent visits to the home has been strengthened so that the manager is better supported to make improvements.

Staff members receive regular professional supervision to support and guide them in working with young people. Supervision takes place monthly and is structured in a way that places the needs of young people first. Staff performance is appraised annually so that any gaps in knowledge or skills are identified and addressed. These processes have led to a cohesive and high performing staff team.

Arrangements for multi-agency working are good. The manager and staff work well with education and health professionals. Regular meetings take place that coordinate services and ensure that young people are provided with all necessary support so that they can make progress. The manager takes complaints seriously and responds to them quickly. When concerns are raised, the manager undertakes a thorough investigation. All complaints have been resolved to the satisfaction of those involved.

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 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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