

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037657
Inspector	Marina Tully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Education Offices Huyton Hey Road LIVERPOOL L36 5YH
Responsible individual	Paul Boyce
Registered manager	Mark Ford
Date of last inspection	10/02/2014

Inspection date	08/10/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has not been any enforcement action taken since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people receive excellent quality of care. They benefit from individualised care planning that supports their diverse and complex needs. The home promotes a culture of mutual respect and acceptance. Young people feel valued and respected; they are involved in the making important decisions which affect their lives.

Young people enjoy living in a supportive environment which provides consistency, stability and routine that enables them to make positive progress. They are successfully supported to develop a positive self-identity and have a good understanding of their family circumstances and backgrounds. Young people benefit from maintaining positive contact with their family and friends this helps sustain their own identity.

Staff have detailed knowledge and understanding of young people's needs and care plans. Attachments with young people are fostered through nurturing and supportive care. Dedicated staff make persistent efforts to ensure young people have access to a range of services to promote better outcomes in all aspects of their lives.

Young people say they feel safe and any concerns that they raise are taken seriously and appropriately addressed. Partner agencies and placing authorities are extremely

complimentary about the service and quality collaborative working is central to safeguarding practice.

The registered manager demonstrates effective leadership skills and is committed to continual development of the service. Staff feel supported by the manager and each other and work exceptionally well as a team.

The areas for improvement from this inspection are to build on existing good practice and quality of care. This is in relation to: training for staff on e-safety; all staffs first aid training being kept up-to-date; developing and sustaining quality service monitoring.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
13/06/2013	Full	good
07/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
14/06/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting specifically in relation to first aid and E-safety training (NMS 18.1)
- ensure there are effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home, and children in the home are regularly involved in contributing to monitoring the operation of the home (NMS 21.1)
- ensure the children's guide is reviewed at least annually. (NMS 13.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress from the start of their placements. They are supported to develop a greater understanding of who they are and the background leading to them being in care. They maintain contact with family and friends which help them to develop a positive self-view and greater resilience to deal with difficult emotions and past trauma.

Young people understand the importance of maintaining good physical and emotional health. They show a positive interest and take responsibility for promoting their health needs. Young people are good at identifying when their health may be at risk and take appropriate action such as talking to staff and attending health appointments. Young people attend all routine checks as well as services specific to their individual needs, such as counselling and sexual health. Risk taking behaviour such as smoking, substance misuse is extremely rare, young people feel able to talk to staff about such issues and are therefore given support and guidance to ensure they can make informed choices.

The majority of young people have good school attendance. Some young people's attendance has improved since moving into the home. When young people refuse to attend school, quick action is taken and alternative arrangements are put in place to ensure minimum impact on learning. For example, the home works closely with schools and workers from the education department to address challenges. They explore more appropriate ways of delivering education taking into account the specific needs of the individual young person.

Young people enjoy planning activities with the home such as trips to Blackpool. They each have a leisure pass to the local sports centre which can be easily accessed from the home. Some young people have interests in music and drama and have been encouraged and supported to join community groups. This helps build their confidence and self-esteem as well as giving them opportunities to try new experiences and learn new skills.

Young people mainly enjoy socialising with their friends and are enabled to have regular contact with longstanding friends. This supports young people to develop and sustain positive relationships with people and enhances their ability to sustain strong attachments with people important to them.

Young people benefit from excellent support to help them move onto other placements. Comprehensive introduction plans are in place which involve staff, parents and young people's friends visiting the new placement prior to the move. This demonstrates effective preparation for significant changes in young people's lives; which increases the chances of the young people moving on and settling into their

new placements.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people are cared for by a committed, highly experienced and dedicated team; their safety and welfare is at the centre of staff practice. Staff work hard at developing and sustaining positive relationships with young people. They have excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's needs, vulnerabilities and triggers and therefore respond to need and risks effectively. Staff show unconditional positive regard to young people and respond consistently with empathy and understanding. This helps young people to foster positive attachments and trusting relationships with their caregivers. This is reflected in young people's comments 'staff look after me well, I'd give them outstanding'.

Staff support young people to make positive contributions to their care and placement plans. For example, young people devise their own written health plans, in addition to their statutory care plan. Consequently, young people know and understand their needs and are actively influencing the care and support afforded to them. This in turn increases their willingness to engage with the plan and are more likely to benefit from the services and support offered.

Young people feel listened to and know how to make a complaint. Although complaints are rare, young people know complaints and allegations are taken seriously and robustly addressed. Young people benefit from advocacy services routinely visiting the home. Furthermore, independent visitors are commissioned when necessary to ensure young people have access to impartial guidance and support. Young people's wishes and feelings are sought in a variety of ways, such as key worker sessions and regular house meetings. Staff support young people to understand the reasons why their wishes cannot always be acted upon. These measures ensure that young people feel that their views are valued and important and thus encourages their participation.

Staff show a determined approach to promoting the health and wellbeing of young people in their care. They have established excellent links with health professionals such as counselling services and the children looked after health worker; both visit the home on a regular basis. Health professionals comment on staffs excellent work and proactive approach to seeking information on health issues: 'staff are constantly on the phone to me asking for information on services that would help young people.' As a result, young people's physical, psychological and emotional health is effectively promoted and safeguarded.

Staff are consistent and highly supportive of young people's educational

achievements. They are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support young people to progress with their education. Young people's school attendance and behaviour improves from the start of their placements. A deputy head teacher commented: 'her attendance has improved and so has her behaviour. She is now our best behaved pupil.'

Education plans are in place to address the individual needs of young people and alternative arrangements are made for young people unable to attend school. Young people have aspirations for their future employment and know what they need to do to realise their ambitions. This greatly improves their life chances when they move into adulthood.

Young people live in a comfortable, safe and suitably located home. The whole of the house is soon to be redecorated and young people and staff are looking forward to the work being completed over the next couple of months. Young people have chosen designs for their own rooms as well as contributing to the colour scheme of communal areas.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people said they feel safe and secure in the home. Their welfare is promoted and protected by a caring and knowledgeable team.

Young people benefit from comprehensive and regularly reviewed risk and behaviour management plans which clearly define actions to be taken. This ensures staff have updated knowledge and are therefore prepared with appropriate strategies to prevent risk and minimise harm.

The home is good at keeping young people safe. Risk taking behaviours such as self-harming reduce from the start of placement. This is largely down to young people being linked in with services to support their emotional well-being such as adolescent mental health and counselling services. They are therefore given sufficient opportunities to address their emotions in a more constructive way.

For some young people incidents of missing from care have reduced. When young people go missing, staff respond quickly and make good efforts to locate them to ensure their safe return. The home has forged good links with other professionals to address incidents of missing from care. For example, the police missing from care coordinator, young people social worker's and the manager of the home work collaboratively to address incidents of significant concern. This joint working has proved effective at tracking missing young people and obtaining intelligence on the places and people they visit. Consequently, professionals and staff are better equipped to respond when young people fail to return home.

All child protection matters including allegations against staff are appropriately investigated and managed. Young people are cared for by an experienced and robustly vetted staff team. Staff are suitably qualified and receive ongoing training to develop their knowledge and skills including safeguarding, self-harm, physical intervention training. There was a shortfall in relation to staff knowledge and expertise in relation to e-safety and promoting safer internet practice. As a result staff do not have complete knowledge and skills to fully protect and guide young people when accessing the internet.

Restraint is very rarely used. When it is it is as a last resort and only to prevent significant harm to young people, staff or others in the home. The need to use restraint is reducing. Positive behaviour management strategies are effectively teaching young people to regulate their emotions in a more constructive way. This is reflected in the home's restraint records as well as the views of young people 'I've never been restrained here but I needed to be restrained when I was younger'.

The service provides a safe and stable home environment and a competent team of staff who prioritise children's safety and well-being. Safety is further enhanced by regular health and safety checks and frequent fire drills and equipment testing.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has a Diploma in Social Work, an NVQ level 4 Leadership and Management qualification and over 23 years' experience in children's residential services; of which 13 years have been in management. He demonstrates a commitment to continued professional development for both himself and his team.

Young people benefit from living in a home run by an experienced and committed registered manager and a highly supported, stable team. The number of staff on duty is sufficient to meet the needs of young people. A regular pool of staff, employed by other departments within the organisation, cover staffs shifts when necessary. The deployment of staff promotes continuity of care and provides opportunities for young people to form and sustain positive relationships with a consistent team of staff.

Staff are enthusiastic about their development and willingly engage in ongoing training, team meetings, supervision and annual appraisal. Staff are good at identifying each other's strengths and utilising their different skills and approaches to achieve better outcomes for young people. Consequently, staff have ample opportunities to review young people's needs and progress, and to reflect on their individual and team practice to ensure young people are receiving the best possible care and protection.

The manager ensures staff are involved in the monitoring and development of the service. Their views are sought during monthly service monitoring visits, team meetings and individual supervision sessions. Consequently, the team feel valued,

respected and supported, which is reflected in the excellent quality of care provided.

Although quality assurance and service monitoring is carried out quarterly by the registered manager, there was a shortfall in the quality of the reports specifically in relation to evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the service; demonstrating how young people, parents and other stakeholders contribute to service development and identifying future actions. The manager intends to address this by reviewing the format for future monitoring reports.

An updated Statement of Purpose clearly defines the service aims and objectives. It reflects the change in conditions of service since the last inspection which increased the number of placements for young people to 3. A shortfall however, was the failure to update the young person guide to reflect this significant change.

A requirement and some good practice recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. The manager has demonstrated his ability and commitment to continued improvement and development. This is reflected in his development plan which identifies areas for improvement, including the full redecoration of the home.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.