

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	21/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC037910
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Tamara Pearcey
Inspector	Melissa McMillan

Inspection date	21/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The home has a comfortable, caring atmosphere and staff work tirelessly to develop relationships with young people in which they feel safe and able to trust staff. The majority of young people are new to the home and are beginning to get to know staff and the expectations of the service. One young person spoken with said that they feel safe and advised that 'staff genuinely care about you'. Managers and staff have excellent relationships with young people's placing social workers and the police. They work in partnership with other agencies and young people's parents to jointly assess risk and devise strategies to reduce young people's risk-taking behaviours. Due to the short amount of time young people have been at the home, staff's strategies to support young people to reduce their risk-taking behaviours are yet to become fully effective. Managers and staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of each young person, their risk factors and the actions they must take to protect them. The manager of the home uses her relationships with other professionals effectively to arrange regular strategy meetings about those young people who are at high-risk to review young people's progress and to ensure that all professionals take collective responsibility for ensuring young people's safety. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the signs that a young person may be being exploited. Managers and staff take action to escalate concerns to other agencies and implement strategies to manage the risk, by cooperating with the police and advocating for referrals to specialist services. This ensures that young people receive expert support to safeguard them. Young people do go missing from the home. Staff are acutely aware of the reasons why young people go missing and have devised strategies with the police to reduce incidents of missing. Young people are making progress in terms of returning to the home after a missing incident, which they have not done previously. However, due to young people's limited time living at the home, the staff's strategies have not yet been successful in significantly reducing the number of incidents. Staff follow young people's missing protocols and are proactive in trying to establish their whereabouts. When young people return, staff ensure that young people have return-home interviews to establish the reason why they went missing and to inform the staff's preventative strategies. The police missing person's coordinator	

said that he cannot fault the home's response to missing incidents.

Some young people have used alcohol and illicit substances. Staff work closely with other agencies, such as Barnardo's and Catch 22, to provide education and support to young people to help them to recognise the risks of using these substances and to reduce their use of them.

Risk assessments are of good quality and they advise staff of the risks and the actions they must take to reduce them. However, one risk assessment did not reflect the actions that staff are taking to reduce the risks related to online safety for one young person. This may result in new staff not having the full picture of known risks to a young person and the action that they must take to protect them.

One young person came to live at the home in an emergency while the manager was on sick leave. Prior to her leave, the manager had raised concerns regarding the referral and the impact that the needs of that young person might have on the others. Due to no other provision being available, senior leaders admitted the young person to the home. Although the statement of purpose allows for emergency admissions in these circumstances, it is not evidenced that senior leaders carried out a risk assessment to consider the risks posed by the new young person to those already living there. Nor did they plan for how these risks may be mitigated, as stated that they should do in the statement of purpose. On her return, the manager took action to ensure that staff are aware of how the new young person's known risks and behaviours can impact on others and outlined how these can be reduced. The manager continues to liaise effectively with the young person's social worker and police, to ensure that risks to other young people are minimalised and the placement remains appropriate.

Staff ensure that they provide as much information as possible to young people's new placements to aid a positive move. One young person has successfully moved into supported lodgings. Staff continue to give advice and support to this young person, providing consistency in a time of change.

The majority of young people are in full-time education. Two young people attend further education and are making good progress in their chosen field. Another young person has recently obtained a full-time place at a local school. This is as a result of the manager effectively advocating on behalf of young people and their education needs. She relentlessly challenges authorities when young people are not receiving their full entitlement and works with the necessary professionals to find an appropriate placement to suit the young person's needs. One young person does not currently receive his full entitlement of education. The manager is in the process of working with the virtual head of schools to obtain an appropriate placement.

Young people gain in confidence and develop the skills necessary for adult life. They learn to use public transport and to manage their finances, promoting their independence. One young person has obtained a part-time job in retail. Another was supported to gain an internship at a local council. These experiences enable young people to feel valued and promote their self-esteem.

Young people are able to maintain and improve family relationships safely and with confidence. This supports them to continue to have a sense of belonging within their families and to benefit from ongoing family support as they reach independence. Staff work closely with young people's parents to provide consistent boundaries and to promote positive changes.

Behaviour management focuses on restorative justice and on supporting young people to understand their emotions and the consequences of their actions. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours and to talk about their feelings, in order to find positive ways of expressing themselves. This approach has been successful. As a result, there has only been one incident of physical intervention since the previous inspection.

Records of sanctions do not include the young person's views and have not been evaluated for their effectiveness. This does not support the managers in improving practice.

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for no more than four young people who have complex behavioural and emotional needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
01/09/2015	Full	Good
27/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/11/2014	Full	Outstanding

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 recommendations:

- The registered persons must ensure that, when considering new placements, they fully consider the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of young people and evidence their judgement, supporting compatibility with existing residents. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered persons must ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each young person and the arrangements in place to protect them. This includes ensuring that all relevant information is contained in their risk assessments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The registered persons must ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 49, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person must ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles, as set out in 9.35, are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', April 2015, page 46, paragraph 9.36)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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