

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC039897
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Melanie Hollman-Dryden
Inspector	Lisa Walsh

Inspection date	27/09/2016
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	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

SC039897

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff have a good knowledge of young people's risks and vulnerabilities, and use safeguarding systems and procedures well to keep young people safe.
- Staff encourage young people to develop their level of responsibility to prepare for the transition to adulthood.
- Staff encourage young people to sustain positive relationships with their friends and family, when appropriate.
- The registered manager ensures that young people's care is personalised, well planned and takes into account their individual needs.
- The registered manager ensures that matching of young people is carefully considered before decisions are made.
- The registered manager and staff ensure that young people's views and opinions are central to the running of the home and are carefully considered in all decision making.
- Healthcare is an integral part of everyday practice. Young people have easy access to health professionals who oversee their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.
- The registered manager ensures that staff members work collaboratively with social workers and police to safeguard young people, resulting in young people receiving good-quality and integrated care.
- The registered manager is extremely passionate and committed to providing high-quality care for young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is one of five local authority homes. It is registered for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and is situated in an urban area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
19/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/08/2014	Full	Good
18/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Staff have a very positive view of the young people and work hard to engage with them. Staff have a 'never give up' attitude and continue to create daily opportunities to engage young people to make meaningful progress, despite challenge and resistance from some young people. A social worker commented, 'Staff go above and beyond to meet the needs of the children. Their communication is excellent, as is the work they put in to ensure that the children placed with them are enabled to achieve good outcomes.' This approach to care supports young people to develop confidence, and to identify and build on achievements. Young people are supported to manage their own health needs, where appropriate. Nevertheless, staff still ensure that young people are registered with primary healthcare and specialist services. This means that young people can access services and receive treatment without undue delay. This, in turn, helps to enhance their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. For example, when young people have anxieties about attending appointments, they are sensitively supported to engage through preparation within key-work sessions. Staff work hard to engage young people and source appropriate educational placements upon admission. Young people benefit from individual education packages that reflect their learning needs and challenge any barriers that they face. When young people choose not to engage in education provision, staff work relentlessly in partnership with specialist education agencies to reduce disruption to young people's learning, where possible. An education worker told the inspector: 'Staff provide background information about the young person, relevant to overcoming the barriers preventing them from accessing education. Staff are supportive of young people engaging in education, and provide transport to interviews and use incentives and sanctions to gain cooperation from the young person. As trusted adults in the young person's lives, they actively seek the wishes and feelings of the young person towards the various education options, which supports the work I am trying to carry out.' Where appropriate to do so, young people are encouraged to develop their level of responsibility in preparation for the transition to adulthood. This is reflected in the key skills that young people have developed. For example, some young people are supported to plan, shop for and cook their own meals. Young people are also encouraged and supported to manage a budget for their money and to make plans for the future. This ensures that young people are able to improve their own resilience and life skills.	

Staff encourage young people to express their views through young people's meetings and informal conversations. Young people say that they understand how decisions are made and the degree to which they are able to influence them. This enhances their day-to-day experience of living in the home.

Staff hold regular key-worker sessions with young people. The quality of the key working is good. All sessions have a clear focus on a young person's specific needs, including, where required, sensitive discussions about healthy relationships and sexual health. This means that young people are supported to make safer choices and are protected from becoming involved in negative or exploitative relationships.

Staff pursue opportunities that enable young people to take part in their wider community. Young people's particular favourites include fishing and playing football. Staff encourage young people to engage in organised annual charity fundraising events to raise money for local community causes. These experiences allow young people to increase their self-esteem, confidence and sense of personal identity.

Where appropriate, staff promote relationships between the young people and their families. Staff spend time preparing young people for contact and complete debriefing discussions afterwards. Staff are also very in tune with family circumstances and use their knowledge to help to plan for potential difficulties for the young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff know how to keep the young people safe, and work well with other professionals, including the police and social workers, to manage risks. Staff are clear about keeping young people safe when they use the internet. These steps give an additional layer of protection for young people against online risks. Staff ensure that risk assessments clearly identify potential risks to young people in the community and highlight the strategies used to reduce these risks. These assessments are subject to ongoing monitoring and reviews by staff to reflect any changes in young people's needs and emerging risks. This demonstrates that the welfare and safety of young people continue to be priorities. Young people's complex needs mean that they can at times display extremely difficult and challenging behaviour. Staff have a good understanding of these behaviours and know what action to take to address them. This ensures that young people, including the most vulnerable, benefit from effective support and protection. The use of negative sanctions is low, because staff deploy a strength-based social learning approach to support young people to take responsibility for	

their behaviour. The emphasis is always on verbal de-escalation. Staff receive training in the appropriate use of physical restraint, but only ever use this as a last resort. There have been no incidents of physical restraint of the current young people since the last inspection.

Despite clear risk management plans, some young people continue to engage in risk-taking behaviours such as drug use, criminal activity and being missing from home. However, incidents of young people going missing from the home are well managed by staff. Young people's safety is promoted through detailed 'missing from home' plans. These specify the actions to be taken by staff and others to ensure that young people are returned to the home as quickly as possible. Staff understand the risks to young people of sexual exploitation. They know the signs and symptoms, and proactively monitor all young people. This integrated approach to protecting young people means that young people become increasingly safe.

Young people are clear that their concerns are taken seriously. They know how to make a complaint. Staff make sure that complaints made directly to them are thoroughly investigated and that young people receive a written response.

The registered manager ensures that location risk assessments include local statistical data regarding crime and community resources. This ensures that local areas of risk in the vicinity are known. This information assists staff in supporting young people to keep safe during free time in the community.

Staff undertake regular health and safety checks, routine servicing of equipment and robust risk assessments to ensure that the home is safe for young people. Staff are trained in fire safety procedures, and they ensure that young people take part in fire evacuation drills so that they understand how to leave the home safely in an emergency.

Young people are protected by the organisation's robust recruitment practices. Staff are vetted and assessed as suitable before any appointment is confirmed. These procedures promote the safety of the young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

The accommodation in which young people live is well maintained and decorated to a high standard. Young people have the opportunity to personalise their bedrooms, enhancing their sense of identity and belonging.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post since April 2003. She gained the Registered Managers Award in 2003. In addition, all member of staff are qualified	

to the level 3 diploma in childcare. There is a good balance of experience among the staff. They are a strong staff team who are child focused and committed to improving the home.

The registered manager understands young people's individual needs, and ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to meet them. Effective team meetings ensure good communication and consistency of practice across the staff group. All staff attend these meetings. There are mutually supportive and respectful relationships across the staff group. These demonstrate positive role models and consistency to the young people.

Staff talk positively about the support that they receive, especially in relation to the registered manager. Staff supervisions routinely take place. Supervision sessions are consistently recorded, as required in the company policy. This allows opportunity for managerial oversight and staff development.

An independent visitor undertakes monthly visits and produces reports. The registered manager finds these useful. These visits, together with other systems, enable the registered manager to monitor the quality of care. As a result, young people benefit from consistency of care that achieves better outcomes than previously.

The registered manager ensures that the statement of purpose clearly demonstrates the aims and objectives of the home. This makes it possible for parents or placing authorities to have a clear understanding of the services available. The registered manager ensures that young people are provided with an informative children's guide with information that is important for them to know and understand.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive regular training and have the skills and competencies necessary to meet the diverse needs of the young people. This will help to ensure that a suitably qualified staff team delivers high-quality care to young people.

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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