

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC040631
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Terence Brooks
Inspectors	Jan Hunnam Ruth Coler

Inspection date	21/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC040631

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people experience stability and security within a nurturing environment. They settle and develop in all areas of their lives, making significant progress in managing their emotions and improving their behaviour.
- Meaningful and positive relationships are at the heart of practice within the home. Young people feel safe, knowing that staff listen and respond to their specific needs.
- Experienced, knowledgeable and skilled staff understand the emotional needs of young people and continuously look for ways to promote their safety, welfare and development.
- Highly experienced managers provide strong, effective leadership and support for staff, based on a clear understanding of young people's individual needs.
- Excellent proactive partnership work with other agencies enhances the support provided by staff and helps young people to be increasingly safe.
- Although safeguarding practice is mainly robust, improvements to some care plans and risk assessments are required to ensure that they provide clear guidance for staff to protect young people and identify current concerns.
- Other shortfalls include ensuring that individual young people are assessed in relation to the necessity of using surveillance devices, ensuring that staff recording is careful, objective and clear, and improving the quality of supervision.

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
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that staff: (2)(a)(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child.	11/11/2016
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if: the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children. (Regulation 24(1)(a))	11/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person must have systems in place so that staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/11/2015	Full	Good
20/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people living in the home are making significant progress from their starting points on admission. Some, who have experienced multiple foster placement breakdowns, are settled and benefiting from a nurturing and stable environment where they are cared for by skilful and sensitive staff. They are responding to individualised, consistent support and developing warm, trusting relationships with staff so that they feel safe and valued. Young people are learning to manage their emotions more appropriately, acquiring insight into their past experiences and increasing their ability to keep themselves safe. Staff are ambitious for young people to succeed in education, and successfully support them to achieve and fulfil their potential. For example, two young people have recently completed GCSE exams and have commenced apprenticeships. Such progress is commendable and illustrates the positive impact of staff support on young people's future life prospects. Staff work hard to support young people whose emotional difficulties impede their education. They closely liaise with education staff to ensure that approaches are consistent and that young people's individual needs are met. Staff recognise the importance of leisure activities in young people's development. Staff encourage young people to pursue their interests outside the home so that they have opportunities to develop social skills and widen their social experiences. Examples of such participation are playing for a local football club, bowling, climbing and diving clubs, and attending the local leisure centre. Close partnership working with external health professionals and careful monitoring of young people's physical and psychological health needs ensure that they receive health services according to their specific needs. Support from a specialist child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) worker from the children in care team is valuable to staff in helping them to understand young people's early life experiences and the impact that these have on their behaviour. Strategies to support young people's psychological health are successful, as their self-harm and violent behaviour decrease and their emotional well-being improves. Young people's views are important to staff. Young people are relaxed and comfortable, talking to staff about any concerns that they may have. Staff consult with them on decisions about the decoration and furnishing of the home, menus and activities. Young people's meetings, key-work sessions and the opportunity to speak to an advocate enable young people to put forward their views. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure, but these are infrequent. They	

know that staff will listen to their concerns and respond to their views and wishes.

Staff provide effective support for young people to acquire independence and daily living skills as they prepare for adult life. Staff work closely with young people to develop their practical skills and help them to establish budgeting and financial routines to assist them in managing their lives in the future.

Staff work positively and proactively with families to enable young people to maintain meaningful relationships.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff prioritise the safety and well-being of young people so that they experience a nurturing, secure and stable environment. Young people develop warm and trusting relationships with staff, and these relationships provide young people with a sense of protection, knowing that staff will respond to and meet their specific needs. Through this close and individualised care, young people's emotional well-being improves. For some, their level of insight into their past experiences develops and the degree of their risk-taking behaviour reduces, so that they become increasingly safe. The quality of care plans and risk assessments is variable. Some are comprehensive, with strong risk assessments. However, for one young person these were not robust in identifying developing unsafe behaviour and their particular needs in relation to an increased risk of harm. The risk assessments do not provide clear guidance for staff to protect the young person and, on one occasion, staff did not review it following a potentially serious incident. Staff understand young people's needs and provide appropriate boundaries and routines. The strong and effective relationships between young people and staff enable staff to focus on individualised behaviour management strategies using a restorative approach. With warmth and good humour, staff de-escalate difficult situations without the use of physical intervention. Staff are aware of the potential for young people to be sexually exploited and they adopt a vigorous safeguarding approach. Effective working with external agencies, such as the police and local safeguarding teams, and valuable information sharing ensure that measures are in place to protect young people. Staff sensitively support young people to recognise their vulnerabilities and raise their perception of exploitation. Young people with a history of being reported missing and at high risk of sexual exploitation are reducing such behaviour. Staff follow appropriate procedures when a young person is reported missing, including arranging an	

independent return home interview.

Health and safety systems protect young people. Parts of the communal areas are alarmed to alert staff when young people leave their rooms at night. However, these alarms are routinely used for all young people without assessing whether individuals require such monitoring to safeguard them and promote their welfare. Such monitoring devices, without regularly reviewed specific risk assessments, may unnecessarily restrict young people's privacy and ability to access all appropriate areas of the home.

Thorough recruitment processes minimise the possibility of unsuitable adults working at the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager provides strong, effective leadership and support for the stable staff team, based on a clear understanding of young people's individual needs. He is suitably qualified and experienced, having been in post since 1992. Many staff have also been working at the home for a considerable length of time. Managers and staff use this depth of experience and knowledge to provide high-quality care and support for young people with complex needs so that they improve their future life chances. Staff undertake comprehensive training relevant to their role. All staff, apart from one relief staff member and two new staff members, hold an appropriate level 3 qualification. The unqualified member of staff is due to complete the qualification within the required timescale. Staff report that managers are supportive and available to discuss young people's progress. A reflective culture is developing through de-briefings at the end of shifts, so that staff consider what has gone well and what they could do differently to promote young people's progress further. Staff receive individual supervision, but this is not always regular, in accordance with the home's policy, and does not consistently consider in depth young people's development. Managers clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Systems are in place for reviewing the quality of care and progress of young people. Managers are introducing a new system for monitoring outcomes which highlights areas where young people need more focused support. Some areas of monitoring are not thorough. Some records show inappropriate and unprofessional use of language, and the monitoring system has not identified the shortfall in the quality	

of risk assessments and care plans.

Excellent proactive partnership work with other agencies, such as CAMHS, education staff and specialist health professionals, enhances the support provided by staff. Particularly positive working with the local police is proving successful in safeguarding young people and implementing strategies to protect them. Social workers report positively on young people's placements at the home. One commented that the home: 'Is fantastic and the young person has excellent relationships with staff. Their key worker is brilliant. Staff are very proactive in meeting individual needs to the extent that the young person's emotional well-being has improved considerably.' Another reported: 'Staff are very good with the young person. Staff get it just right and it works really well. The young person is now showing huge insight in relation to their past experiences and reducing their risk-taking behaviour.'

The statement of purpose sets out the ethos, aims and objectives of the home, and the range of services that it provides for young people. Managers and staff are fulfilling the statement of purpose.

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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