

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040642
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Surrey County Council
Registered person address	Surrey County Council, Children's & Safeguarding Service Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road ADDLESTONE Surrey KT15 2EP
Responsible individual	Louise Warren
Registered manager	Navjyot Kaur Dhanoa
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	20/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Young people receive outstanding quality of care and protection at this service. The support they receive impacts on the exceptional outcomes they achieve, taking their starting points into account. Areas such as education attendance and achievement, taking responsibility for their sexual health, transition to independence are all examples of areas current young people have made excellent progress in.

The home provides highly personalised, well planned care taking full account of the individual needs of each young person. Staff have high aspirations for young people through the delivery of consistent practices, developing trusting relationships which results in the young people having high aspirations for themselves. Young people are central to every aspect of the home. They are able to express their views and opinions about their day to day and future lives. They also have input into the running of the home in areas such as staff recruitment, choice and preparation of food, décor and all aspects of their own care.

Young people have extremely complimentary views of the home, the staff team and the care they receive. They enjoy the company of staff and show respect for them. Young people receive high levels of support, guidance and education relating to keeping themselves safe in the community. Young people are extremely positive about their experience of living at the home with quotes such as 'thank you Libertas for supporting me' and 'its safe here and you are very well supported.' The high standard of care is also supported by a comment made by a social worker; 'I have

been impressed in the way staff support young people in their care, they show real dedication and an unwillingness to give up on them.'

Strong working relationships are made with education establishments and specialist services such as drug, alcohol and sexual exploitation prevention teams that result in highly individualised care planning and delivery.

The leadership and management of the home are outstanding and highly effective.

The Registered Manager has excellent skills in advocating for young people and challenging professionals to get the best outcomes for them. Staff have expertise in many areas especially drug misuse and sexual exploitation. The commitment to protecting the young people and providing support for them to successfully live independently is exceptional. The management team and staff know the services strengths and weaknesses and are focused on continued improvement.

One identified area for improvement as a result of this inspection is having a written protocol in place for the use of door alarms for, if and when, they are next used.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a local authority. It provides accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/12/2013	Full	good
25/02/2013	Interim	good progress
05/10/2012	Full	outstanding

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):

- for children's homes that are not secure children's homes, where specific measures, including electronic devices, are used to monitor children, there is a written policy that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures. This relates to future use of bedroom doors alarms, and if used ensure a written protocol is in place. (NMS 10.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make excellent progress at this service. They form appropriate attachments with the staff team which enables them to trust staff and be guided by adults during difficult times. Young people acknowledge the impact these strong relationships have on the progress they have made. For the vast majority of young people progress is exceptional, considering their past experiences and starting points on arrival. Young people are proud of their achievements and comment that 'staff are brilliant and are proud of what I have achieved, as I am.'

The staff team work very closely with all young people to help them understand their background and cultural differences. Close communication with, and attendance at, local charities and groups enable young people to gain confidence in the wider community as well as gaining specialist support in areas such as sexual exploitation and cultural identity. As a result they achieve emotional resilience and a positive self-view. A social worker commented that 'staff help to promote young people's culture needs including their hairdressing, diet and religious needs.'

Young people make exceptional progress in education and achieve highly in formal education exams, taking their starting points into account. The staff support young people in having high aspirations for their future. An example being that the home will seek additional teaching to ensure they achieve results they need for future further education placements. Staff support, and young people's commitment and focus has enabled them to achieve in line with their peers and access education they require to achieve their future ambitions. Social workers comment that the home is excellent at enabling young people to attend and achieve successfully in education, supporting their attendance and communicating regularly with updates of achievements.

Many young people successfully work part time in addition to their education. This makes them feel part of the local community and gain life skills needed for adult life. Young people also enjoy other aspects of the local community such as attending clubs and accessing religious groups. Young people also enjoy holidays in Europe with the staff. Staff are excellent in aiding young people in maintaining family contacts, where these are appropriate. Restrictions of contact are clearly explained to young people and fully understood.

Young people are supported and guided to lead healthy lifestyles with examples of progress made in relation to high risk behaviours such as drug misuse and sexual exploitation. They benefit from a team of staff who are experienced in dealing with and managing many high risk behaviours. This results in young people trusting staff as they have confidence in their knowledge and expertise.

A real strength of the home is the guidance they provide for young people to successfully move into semi or independent living. The home is clear that preparing for adulthood does not just begin at 16, and the many skills needed to live independently are learnt and practiced from the time they arrive at the home. The 'How Ya Gonna Live' booklet provides young people with a wide range of skills for

independent living, which they enthusiastically engage in, with excellent outcomes. Young people have a high amount of input into their pathway plans and staff provide them with numerous opportunities to make the right choices, a skill needed for independent living. Young people benefit from an on-site independent flat where they get the opportunity to experience independent living whilst still getting the full support of staff. Young people who have moved on have continued to successfully engage in education and employment. Those young people who are not at the moving on stage also demonstrate the ability to do household chores and cook meals with clear expectations from staff.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff who are consistently focused on their welfare. Young people enjoy the company of staff and express their confidence in their ability to care for them with comments such as, 'I don't know if staff can do any better, they do a brilliant job, I know other young people who live in care homes and my home is much much better than theirs.'

Young people are consulted about all aspects of their care and the running of the home. The highly embedded and organised systems in place allow for this to take place. Young people confirm they are given choices and guided to make the correct life choices. Young people are clear that staff practice is consistent and they showed respect for staff during this inspection. Young people can voice their views and opinions through regular young people meetings, key worker meetings and individual or group work. Young people say they know how to make a complaint and who they are able to complain to. They add they do not feel the need to raise any concerns about the home as they are happy here and staff are 'fantastic.' Advocates and interpreters are actively sought and also provide additional avenues for young people to voice their views and opinions. They are also encouraged to be positively involved in their care programme, pathway plans and reviews. Records are of an extremely high standard and robustly monitored by the Registered Manager. Identified areas of further support are acted on quickly and sought out. Success is celebrated.

Young people are highly supported and guided to make healthy life style choices. They are supported to have regular dental and optical appointments, in addition to attending identified specialist consultations with a range of medical professionals. All young people receive their statutory yearly health checks. Where possible, young people self-administer their own medication and are encouraged to take responsibility for organising health appointments. The home has very close links with the child and adolescent mental health team and have a named link worker they can access, which enables both staff and young people direct access to this specialist provision. The home successfully works with young people on their sexual health. Young people access local sexual health clinics with the support of a delegated member of staff who has received appropriate training. This member of staff regularly talks to young people, individually or in a group, about sexual health matters. This member of staff also takes responsibility for 'healthy living' and she has regular conversations with young people about achieving and maintaining a healthy life style. This can be seen

in the menu that now has more salads, fruit and vegetables. The development of the home's vegetable garden has resulted in more vegetables and fruit being used in the daily cooking.

The Registered Manager attends the local Corporate Parenting Operational Group which has enabled her to build up contacts and relationships. These range from the designated looked after children's nurse for the area to the youth support services. This has resulted in the looked after children's nurse attending residents meetings to build up relationships with both young people and staff and to improved engagement with young people.

Staff are highly proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievements of young people, engaging with their schools and promoting their attendance.

Education and employment for the young people is a clear priority at this service.

Since the last inspection the service has developed improved relationship with a local college where by they have weekly contact to ensure they are able to fully support young people in their education. This has resulted in a reduction in issues arising with the young people in college and more collaboration and understanding from the college. This has also resulted in outstanding attendance levels. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people. Young people are proud of their progress and acknowledge the support staff have provided in their achievements. Young people enjoy many activities the area has to offer. They are supported by staff, if necessary, and encouraged to attend independently as and when they feel confident to do so in line with their life skills programme. Young people enjoy holidays abroad as well as quiet times at the house.

Care plans contain detailed information on individual differences in young people and guidance how these can be met. Staff provide young people with support in meeting their religious and cultural beliefs, including seeking support from families and other professionals where necessary. Staff are skilled at using all opportunities to increase awareness of different cultures and in negating discrimination of all forms. Young people are polite and respectful to staff and visitors.

The home is appropriately located, designed and very well maintained. It provides a high standard of furniture and furnishings that young people have been able to assist in choosing. The home is bright and homely.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Measures to ensure the safety of the young people are outstanding. Young people have a strong sense of safety and trust the staff team. They are confident that staff do their best for them. When asked what's good about the home, young people say 'everyone is nice, they have rules of what you can and cannot do so they cannot put you in trouble or at risk' and 'it's safe and you get supported.'

Staff encourage positive behaviour and are trained in managing actual and potential aggression. They are trained in physical interventions but they do not occur due to the capable and efficient abilities of staff in managing challenging behaviours. Young people receive consequences of their behaviour in ways which will apply when they live independently. For example, replacement of damaged items or police

interventions for more serious behaviours. Records kept of all incidents are comprehensive and show how a resolution was achieved with the young person. Incidents of young people going missing are extremely rare. The service has developed excellent working relationships with the local police missing person's unit and have a named officer they can communicate with. This police officer visits the home so young people know who they are and if there were any problems they could contact them with confidence. This relationship is very effective in as much as incidents are rare. There is a protocol in place should a young person go missing which clearly specifies time scales and responsibilities for both the residential staff and the police. This protocol takes into account the risk of young people being exploited. If a young person were to go missing the home instigates an intervention meeting involving all professionals working with the young person including the police, where reviewed strategies can be put in place.

The Registered Manager has high expectations of her staff team in relation to providing consistent and safe practices that provide a safe environment for young people. Staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding matters and are very confident in activating the local procedures as well as their own procedures. The Registered Manager takes the lead for child protection at the home and is suitably trained. She is efficient and skilled with all aspects of child protection and safeguarding procedures. The homes procedures work in accordance with local authority procedures. The Registered Manager has highly organised records showing concerns, referrals and follow up action taken. This allows for excellent auditing, reflection and monitoring. Young people benefit from staff receiving enhanced sexual exploitation training and an excellent awareness of sexual exploitation. Staff are successful in working with external agencies specialising in young people who have been trafficked and exploited. The Registered Manager will challenge agencies if she feels more action should be taken.

Young people are protected by the homes robust recruitment procedures which involves the required checks being carried prior to new staff commencing work at the home. All visitors are checked and suitably supervised whilst in the home.

The home is physically safe and regular checks ensure any health or safety issues are quickly identified and addressed. Young people know what to do in the event of a fire as a result of participating in very regular fire evacuation drills. The garden is well maintained and provides a safe environment for the young people. The bedrooms have door alarms fitted that are not currently used. There needs to be a written protocol in place should they be used in the future.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager has been working at this service for over 20 years, progressing to acting manager and then to Registered Manager in July 2014. She has qualifications relevant to caring for young people. She is a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessor and has completed a course in family therapy systemic practice. She is currently completing a management qualification, although this current lack of management qualification has not had any impact on her already

exceptional management qualities. She is a highly efficient, effective and organised manager who has the respect of her staff, young people in her care and professionals she comes into contact with. She consistently communicates high expectations to staff who show enthusiasm to improving the life chances of every young person in their care.

The home provides a clear Statement of Purpose outlining its aims and objectives. This enables correct placements to be made and offers young people, parents and professionals information of the home's function, purpose and ethos. Young people receive a guide explaining what they can expect at the home and what is expected of them. It contains contact details for external agencies and advocacy services young people may wish to access. Contact details can also be seen around the home. Monitoring and auditing of the home and its practices is excellent. The Registered Manager has embedded continually developing systems in place where she is able address any issue if it arises. She knows the services numerous strengths and very few weaknesses. She is always looking at to improve the provision and seeks feedback from staff, young people and other professionals to aid her in this. External monitoring is very good with monthly visits incorporating feedback from young people. Internal monitoring contains an impressive analysis over each three month period.

Young people are cared for by a stable and confident staff team. The team offers a good gender, age and ethnicity mix. Staff receive regular, good quality supervision which incorporates auditing of individual key working files. This enables all files to be regularly checked to ensure they continue to be of a very high standard. Staff rotas are compiled taking into consideration the strengths of the staff as well as the needs of the young people. The Registered Manager and two senior practitioners cover the on call system which is also recorded on the rota. All bar three staff have completed the NVQ level 3 qualifications for working with children and young people. Those three who do not are currently completing the diploma level. Staff also benefit from having a monthly consultation with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) service where they have been working on, for example developing 'team trust and honesty.' This enables the staff to give each other constructive feedback even though it may be critical. There is a clear, facilitated space for this on every shift.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities. Records are highly organised and maintained. They are securely and safely stored and contribute to a strong understanding of the young person's life.

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.