

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC040642
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Navjyot Dhanoa
Inspector	Jennie Christopher

Inspection date	27/07/2016
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

SC040642

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make some very good progress while living in the home. They are positive about their relationships with staff, who they feel have helped them to make changes in their lives. Observations of interactions showed young people approaching staff with questions, worries and concerns, as well as for a chat, and enjoying appropriate joking and banter.
- Young people are engaged in monthly reviews which formulate the coming month's plans. This enables them to see the progress that they have made, while considering what their next steps are.
- Young people are supported to form a positive self-view and understanding of who they are and their personal history. Staff take photographs and keep mementos during young people's time living in the home, so that they have a memory book when they move on.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of each young person's individual vulnerabilities and do all that they can to keep young people safe. Any concerns are reported to the appropriate partner agencies without delay, and meetings to discuss concerning behaviours are regularly convened.
- While living in the home, the vast majority of young people reduce the number of instances of risky behaviour such as being missing or self-injury. Where individuals are struggling to reduce risky coping strategies, staff engage specialist and other professionals to help to care for the young person.
- Staff say that they work consistently as a team and are well supported by their colleagues. They can go to each other for help and support, and feel that they can approach senior staff and managers, who will always give them the time that they need.
- Shortfalls identified as a result of this inspection are: ensuring that all staff have regular individual supervision; maintaining the independence flat, including making good the mould and damp in the bathroom and bedroom; reviewing the child protection and safeguarding policies; reviewing placement plans to include more on culture and identity; and ensuring that staff are consistent when sharing information with young people regarding risk assessments.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(b)(ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. This specifically relates to ensuring that in-house placement plans reflect young people's culture and identity; that staff use language in plans that is reflective of the home being the young person's home; and that all staff have a full understanding of rules and guidance, and how these are adapted for each young person's needs and circumstances.	21 September 2016
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure— (2)(d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health. This is in relation to the cleanliness, habitability and quality of furnishings in the independent living flat.	21 September 2016
The registered person must ensure that all staff receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	21 September 2016

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 recommendation(s):

- Ensure that policies in relation to child protection, e-safety, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, and countering the risks of self-harm and suicide are reviewed regularly and revised, where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.19)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Within the home, there is a provision for up to two young people to live in a flat with separate external access.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/09/2015	Full	Good
11/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20/08/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make some very good progress while living in the home. They are positive about their relationships with staff, who they feel have helped them to make changes in their lives. Young people feel able to raise any issues that they have about specific staff members to the managers at the home, and feel listened to and respected in these instances. The staff complement each other's styles and mostly work cohesively as a team to support young people. Observations of interactions showed young people approaching staff with questions, worries and concerns, as well as for a chat, and enjoying appropriate joking and banter. Young people have the opportunity to share their views about their care, both formally through young people's meetings and key-work sessions, and informally through general discussion. The meetings are also used by young people to raise any concerns that they have regarding their relationships with others within the group. Their ideas are discussed at staff meetings and then decisions are fed back to young people. When something cannot happen, staff take time to explain the reasons why. On occasion, staff do not all have the same level of detail regarding decisions made and the reasons behind this, which causes anxiety and confusion for young people. An example is what young people perceived to be a blanket rule that they should cover their scars from self-injury while on holiday, when in fact it is guidance based on individual needs. Young people are engaged in monthly reviews which formulate the coming month's plans. This enables them to see the progress that they have made, while considering what their next steps are. The plans provide much detail, but lack information regarding the young person's culture, interests and how they identify themselves. A great deal of information is available in various plans, such as health plans and behaviour plans, but it is difficult to ascertain quickly how the young person is to be supported. Young people are treated with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to respect others. Bullying and discrimination are actively challenged, and all are expected to respect each other's differences. Young people are supported to form a positive self-view and understanding of who they are and their personal history. Staff take photographs and keep mementos during young people's time living in the home so that they have a memory book when they move on. All young people are encouraged to engage in education. Those below the age of 18 are due to start college courses, including vocational courses and A levels, in	

September. When young people are out of education or struggling in classroom environments, staff liaise closely with the virtual school in order to arrange other, more suitable, provision. In addition, an education coordinator engages some young people in educational activities or life skills programmes within the home, for example learning how to use public transport. In addition to educational arrangements, young people have the opportunity to engage in a range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities, such as volunteering in charity shops and with the national citizens' service, working with theatre groups and going to the cinema. Due to the age of the group, young people also spend time in the community with friends and family.

Young people who are new to the home are welcomed by the staff and made to feel comfortable. They are able to visit the home prior to moving in and meet the others who live there. The registered manager is acutely aware of the mix of young people and is anxious to ensure that it is a balanced group. Pre-placement assessments ensure that, as far as practicable, young people will not negatively impact on each other's development and emotional well-being. When moving on, young people are supported as well as possible to transition to adulthood and independent living. A member of staff commented that they try to prepare young people '110%' for living alone, as they do not always have the family networks that others do when living independently for the first time. They have the opportunity to live independently in the on-site flat that has a separate entrance. This allows them the opportunity to practise living with minimal staff intervention in their daily tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, while giving them the experience of potentially being alone for periods of time. Young people who have moved on have found this a useful experience.

Young people learn about a healthy lifestyle and what this means for them. This ranges from a balanced diet and making fresh meals to managing their emotional well-being. Staff fight for young people to have access to the services and professionals best able to meet their needs. They challenge delays in identifying health and well-being services, such as specialised support for self-injury and eating disorders. Young people attend routine medical appointments and assessments with the nurse for children looked after. Medication is stored safely within the home and, as part of their independence skills, young people administer their own medication if they are assessed as being able to do so.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they feel safe in the home and that there is usually at least one member of staff whom they could go to if they were worried or upset. In the rare instance they do not have someone in the home, they identified a family member whom they would be comfortable going to. Staff are confident in their	

roles and responsibilities for protecting young people. All have had training in various aspects of safeguarding, such as exploitation in all forms, trafficking and radicalisation. They are knowledgeable and able to transfer their training effectively into practice. The child protection policy requires a review, as it is outdated. However, this has had limited impact, as staff have an excellent understanding of each young person's individual vulnerabilities and do all that they can to keep young people safe. Any concerns are reported to the appropriate partner agencies without delay, and meetings to discuss concerning behaviours are regularly convened.

While living in the home, the vast majority of young people reduce the number of instances of behaviour that have placed them at risk, such as going missing or self-injury. When individuals are struggling to reduce their risky coping strategies, staff engage specialists and other professionals to help to care for the young person. Examples include working closely with eating disorder professionals, and police officers who specialise in missing people and those being exploited. On occasions when young people are missing, staff employ a coordinated approach to locating them, including searching for them even when they have little information on their whereabouts, contacting the young person and their friends or family by mobile phone and working alongside the police. On their return, young people benefit from time with staff to explore why they went missing and how they could reduce the risk in the future, as well as meeting with a worker from a national charity. Staff within the home have strong relationships with the local police and attend monthly meetings to identify the risks that young people may be at and those potentially posed by the local community. This has led to a reduction in alcohol consumption, for example, as police have responded to concerns of underage people being served in local shops.

Risk assessments consider young people's histories, as well as their current behaviour. They are reviewed at least monthly, with young people's input, and allow them to take age-appropriate risks in line with their skills, abilities and stage of independence. Plans are clear on how risks will be reduced, and often involve the input of other professionals working with the young person, such as social workers and emotional well-being professionals.

Positive behaviour is actively promoted within the home, with young people being expected to take responsibility for their actions through a restorative approach. Formal sanctions are rarely used, and the two recorded since the last inspection have been regarding agreed restrictions on free time due to the risk that the individuals have been at, at that time. Young people have a strong sense that it is their home and they respect it as such. Inappropriate behaviour is discussed as a group, including considering the impact that it is having on others. Restraint is rarely used, and only to protect young people from harming themselves or others.

Young people are protected from avoidable risks and hazards within the main house, which is well maintained and decorated. However, the independent flat has

a serious damp and mould problem in the bathroom and one bedroom, there is a hole in the sofa and a broken extractor fan remains in situ. The general cleanliness is also not in line with the remainder of the home. This has limited impact on the young person who lives in the flat, as they are in the last part of their transition and rarely stay there. The registered manager confirmed that no young person will live in the area until the other issues are rectified.

The home follows safer recruitment practice when appointing new staff, reducing the risk to young people from undesirable people working in the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post since 2013 and holds suitable qualifications for the role. She has a keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the home and practice, and seeks to improve the service provided. She utilises the information in reports by the independent visitor in line with Regulation 44 to evaluate and improve the home, and is redesigning the process for managers' monitoring to provide greater evaluation. The development plan is reflective of the service and is time limited. However, neither the independent visitor nor the manager have noted the issues within the independence flat in their reports. The home has been understaffed for some months. However, permanent senior and bank staff have covered gaps in the rota, and there has been no use of agency staff, reducing the impact on young people. New staff are due to start in September. Those in post benefit from varying training, and 13 of 16 staff hold an appropriate level 3 qualification. Those without the qualification are due to enrol on the training in September. Staff say that they work consistently as a team and are well supported by their colleagues. They can go to each other for help and support, and feel that they can approach senior staff and managers, who will always give them the time that they need. However, individual formal supervision, in particular for senior staff, is not regular at the moment. In instances when staff performance has been called into question, the registered manager has responded robustly, and offers support and records regular reviews of staff practice. The registered manager and senior staff within the home have good oversight of young people's plans. They monitor key workers' monthly placement plans, reviews and sessions with young people, and discuss any issues arising. There are close working relationships with a range of partner agencies to ensure that the best service is being provided for young people, with challenge if it is felt that the individual is not getting the help or support that they require. When there are	

concerns regarding a young person's progress or placement, multi-agency reviews are held to consider what extra can be done, or whether a placement more able to meet their needs is required. The registered manager is mindful of new referrals and how they will interact with the established group. She feels confident to say when she does not feel that a new placement would benefit from living at the home or would have a negative impact on the group.

Policies and procedures within the home are currently under review. The statement of purpose reflects the service provided, and staff have a good understanding of their roles in meeting the aims and objectives that are detailed in it. Records regarding young people are clear and provide an accurate depiction of their progress and any significant incidents. However, staff continue to use the term 'unit' when referring to the home, which is outdated and negative, as young people see it as their home.

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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