

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040926
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	People Directorate: Children, Adults and Families, Town Hall Library Street WIGAN Lancashire WN1 1YN
Responsible individual	Jayne Ivory
Registered manager	Victoria Maria Hanlon
Date of last inspection	06/03/2014

Inspection date	12/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home has changed its purpose and function in the last 12 months and has moved towards being an edge of care service offering short breaks to young people. This is to help to maintain the family unit and to prevent young people from coming into the care system.

The home is well led and managed by a dedicated, qualified and experienced Registered Manager. Staff offer good care and support to all young people. Their commitment to improving outcomes is recognised by other professionals who work with the home and say that the staff often go above and beyond what is expected of them to support young people. The staff's commitment to improving young people's relationships with their family and helping them to manage difficult situations productively are key strengths of the setting.

Young people build positive relationships with staff that are based on consistency. This helps them to develop trust and affection for the adults who care for them. Young people feel safe in the home and have a strong sense of ownership. Staff promote positive relationships and use their knowledge and understanding of safe practice to intervene effectively when young people encounter unsafe situations.

Staff have a very good understanding of the young people they are working with.

This ensures young people are recognised as individuals with different needs, abilities, backgrounds, interests and views. Consequently, they receive highly personalised care. Staff value the rights of individuals to be different and promote respect and dignity.

Record keeping is generally sound although some records are not sufficiently detailed. The lack of coherent recording in some instances means that it is not always easy to monitor records and that they not do always provide a clear audit trail. This means records may not be helpful to young people when they access their records now or in the future. These are recording issues and do not detract from the care and support provided to each young person. Managers and staff are keen to address shortfalls and develop the service they provide.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides short term respite care for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is run by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/05/2013	Full	good
08/02/2013	Interim	good progress
31/05/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
21 (2001)	ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the recording and handling of any medicines: this specifically relates to how medication is received into the home and the recording of controlled medication (Regulation 21 (1))	09/01/2015
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use any measure of control or discipline within the children's home a record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. Specifically include the time the measure was implemented, the name of the actual person using the measure and the effectiveness of the measure. (Regulation 17B (3)(d)(e)(f)(h))	09/01/2015

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure young people's health is promoted in line with their placement plan, in particular each young people has a health care plan (NMS 6.5)
- enhance further the managers monitoring of the home to ensure all any concerns about specific incidents, patterns or trends are recorded and any action taken to address any issues raised by the monitoring in particular risk assessments including missing from care are sufficiently detailed and dates are accurately recorded. (NMS 21.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are making excellent progress in developing positive and realistic views of themselves and their emotional resilience. This is because of the highly individualised support, which helps them to grow in confidence. This means they are able to enjoy the benefits of staying for short periods in the home before returning to the family home. Young people say, 'the X is the place you come to, to get a rest from home, and 'it's a place you can stay when you don't want to be at home.'

Young people have strong, trusting relationships with staff, because staff value their opinions and treat them as individuals. Young people say that staff help them to deal with difficult situations, 'they (staff) comfort and support you.' Consequently, young people are more able to deal positively with the issues going on around them.

Young people generally enjoy good health and healthy lifestyles. They make more positive choices to accept guidance and support. For example, young people engage with a variety of health care professionals as required, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health teams (CAMHS), which helps them to overcome specific health issues.

Young people enjoy a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks during their stay. They are enthusiastic bakers and thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to try new recipes. Young people said this is something they feel unable to do when at home, but it really helps them to relax. Young people enjoy the opportunities to prepare and cook meals with staff. They confidently ask specific staff to cook what they perceive as their specialities' such as curries.

Young people remain in their school placements during their stay and their attendance during this time continues to be good. They engage in a wide range of activities that are tailored to their specific needs. For example, some young people relish the opportunities to spend time on their own and doing things that are just for them such as pampering nights.

A key strength of the provision is their work in supporting families and young people. As a result young people are able to maintain, re-engage with and build upon their relationships with their family. Young people stay for up to three nights a week at the home, which are not necessary consecutive. Young people say they can remain in contact with their family during their stay, but for some this is their 'me time'. They acknowledged that by spending time here they have built much more positive relationships with family members and are more able to express themselves to them in a more constructive manner. A young person said 'they (staff) helped me to improve my relationship with my family' as a result they are more confident to say how they feel.

Quality of care

good

Staff are fully committed to enabling young people to overcome the difficulties they may face to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Young people's individual well-being is central to practice and young people are seen in a positive, realistic light. Staff work in an understanding, compassionate way with young people. As a result, young people receive individualised support and reassurance which is effectively tailored to their individual needs. Parents and carers said the home has helped them to reconnect with their child and has provided both of them with lots of support. This has helped them to strengthen their relationship with their child. A social worker said the staff are 'successful in enabling young people to remain in the family home'.

Staff spend time individually with young people and enjoy working with them and doing things together. As a result young people benefit from the positive relationships with staff. Young people say 'staff try to get you to socialise with other people, they never judge you and they always help you to get rid of any worries you have and they treat you with respect'.

Young people's placement plans are in keeping with plans identified by the placing authority social workers. The plans provide a detailed picture of personal needs, the support required and the objectives young people and staff are working towards. Care planning and staff's day-to-day practice effectively recognises young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. Health care plans are not as detailed, the impact of this is minimized as the staff have very good understanding of each young person. Consequently, their health care plan needs are met well in practice.

Recently the systems for receiving some medication into the home have not been sufficiently robust. This has led to some medication not being received into the home in its original container. Staff are already in the process of rectifying this issue and are looking into the transportation of medication from a young person's and the setting as a matter of urgency. Some medication is also not being recorded in line with the Royal Pharmaceutical guidance. This is a recording issue and does not impact upon the care of young people.

Staff work tirelessly to ensure young people have access to the services they need, such as CAMHS. They liaise well with CAMHS teams and the families to ensure young people attend their appointments and feel confident to talk to health care professionals. For example, staff rearranged young people's stays so that they could take them to their appointments and meet family members there. Consequently, young people benefit from access to the right services and agencies to support their specific needs.

Professionals working with the home say staff always go above and beyond what is

expected of them and are fully supportive of the young people and their families. For example, providing additional stays during stressful periods. Professionals said staff work creatively with young people and are passionate about what they do.

Young people stay in a warm, homely environment. They have a choice of bedrooms, all of which are very well maintained. Young people have the opportunities to bring in items from home to personalise their room during their stay. This is echoed by professionals who say the home provides a welcoming and supportive environment for the young people, their families and for the people working with them.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people's welfare is of paramount importance. They are effectively supported to overcome any difficulties they may face so they have an opportunity to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Young people live in a safe environment where they are protected from harm and have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Young people say they feel safe living in the home. They say they can talk to staff and know they will help them to 'sort things out'.

Staff have a secure understanding of the home's safeguarding procedures. They give young people's safety the highest priority and are trained in relation to safeguarding. Consequently, staff are clear on the action to take should they have any concerns regarding a young person's safety or well-being.

Young people do not go missing, this is because they are 'buying into' the service and want to be here. There are clear procedures in place should this occur which are understood and are effectively implemented by staff should a young person fail to return on time. This means they are able to quickly locate a young person and find out why they are late. Staff work well with other professionals to ensure risk assessments are in place should this occur. These are generally well recorded but, some lack information based on a young person's past history as to where they may go and who to alert. This is a recording issue and does not impact upon the care and support provided.

Staff effectively implement clear, consistent boundaries for each young person.. These are fair and reasonable and are created in consultation with young people. Consequently, young people have a strong sense of ownership, know what is expected of them and are working in partnership with staff. Parents and social workers say that since coming to the setting young people are increasing in maturity and are much more able to manage, conflict and difficult situations.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected from any hazards by the implementation of the health and safety procedures, and risk reduction plans. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an

emergency.

Recruitment and selection processes are very thorough and ensure that young people are protected. The management team carefully ensures staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual young people. Visitors are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2009. The Registered Manager is suitably qualified to undertake her responsibilities; she has a level four qualification in management and a social work qualification. An appropriate action plan is in place that sets out how the home is to develop. Staff are extremely supportive of the Registered Manager and have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They say that she is always available to talk to and that her positive attitude means that any issues are quickly resolved.

Leadership and management are effective because they provide a well-run home that focuses on achieving good outcomes for young people. Social workers say staff are passionate about what they do and work in creative and collaborative ways to support young people and their families.

The home meets the Statement of Purpose's stated aims by providing care that safeguards and promotes the welfare of young people.

Records and documentation are generally well maintained and provide an insight into young people's time at the home. However, some records such as risk assessments are not always sufficiently detailed and/or have minor omissions. This impacts on how helpful these records are likely to be to young people now or when they look back on the time they spent living at the home.

External monitoring of the home is sound. The home is monitored, on a monthly basis, by an independent person on behalf of the organisation. However, internal monitoring reports undertaken by the Registered Manager lack evaluation and do not always identify shortfalls, patterns or trends.

Young people are cared for by a highly committed and dedicated team of staff who want the very best outcomes for all young people. Staff are proud of young people's achievements. They say we 'provide a safe and relaxed atmosphere, that offers the young people that reside here there opportunity to talk with professional people about their problems and issues, and to meet other young people with similar issues so that they can be with others that they can relate to. This is echoed by social workers who say staff are 'very child-centred, treat all young people equally and clearly committed to keeping families together.'

Staff benefit from regular supervision and staff meetings. Their training needs are regularly reviewed and there is a rolling programme of training, including refresher training on mandatory topics such as child protection and the management of behaviour. This ensures staff maintain up to date knowledge and can respond to key areas of learning linked to their new roles in supporting families. Staff report that team training sessions mean that everyone is 'singing from the same page'.

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.