

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	16/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC040926
Type of inspection	Interim
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 Hanlon
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	16/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. This short breaks and outreach service continues to provide outstanding care and support to young people and their families, who are on the 'edge of care.' Staff's diligent support and commitment is keeping families together. Young people and their families continue to be extremely well-prepared for their stay in the home. Planned introductory visits are organised where young people have the opportunity to meet staff and other young people. This helps them to settle when they eventually come to stay and offers reassurance to parents, who are also fully involved in the process. One young person said 'I was really surprised when I came to visit; the staff were helpful and kind.' Staff work tirelessly at getting to know young people and their specific needs and interests. Through warm nurturing care, they have continued to build positive and trusting relationships, with both young people and their families. This is reflected in young people's and parents feedback, 'staff are friendly and you can confide in them', 'I had a good night's sleep and I felt safe.' 'without their (staff) help things would have got a lot worse, I will know say no to (name of young person) and mean it.' All plans and risk assessments are personalised and inclusive and staff carefully assess and record the progress young people have made against their plans. Parents, young people and social workers all contribute equally to the home's comprehensive placement plan, which clearly details young people's wishes and feelings. Staff are extremely child centred and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of all young people's needs and family circumstances. A key strength is staff's proactive approach to partnership working. Social workers reported, 'I just wanted to say how helpful the staff have been with one of my young people.' 'Communication is excellent with the staff and managers; they really do want young people and their families to succeed'.	

When young people experience barriers to success, staff's natural 'can-do' attitude, and excellent analysis of the difficulty, helps them to overcome those barriers. For example, when families have difficulty relating to professionals, or do not accept the support available to them, the home will offer a different opportunity for them to work within their child's plans. This approach works because the managers have a clear understanding of the scope of their responsibility to support the local authority's plan for the young person. They will also challenge local authorities, if there are any delays or drift in planning, which is having an adverse impact on the young person or their families. This promotes working together to improve outcomes for young people.

The home has forged strong links with community services that provide a variety of opportunities and support to young people and their families. For example, they have linked young people into local youth groups where they are able to experience new activities, such as sports, drama classes and music lessons. This is supporting young people to make new friends, as well as developing their skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Parents also benefit from staff's dedicated support and guidance. Staff's outreach support is enabling parents to understand their child's needs and behaviour and respond to them in ways that are more appropriate. The short breaks away from home is giving parents and young people time to reflect and look at what needs to change. As a result, parents are learning to manage behaviours more appropriately and young people are enabled to live at home safely.

Young people's voice is a priority in this home and staff are skilled at ensuring meaningful engagement. Effective systems are in place to ensure young people's views are represented and they receive both verbal and written feedback from the managers, about any specific requests or ideas they may make. For example, there is a suggestion box in the living room area, where young people can write down any new ideas or thoughts. There is also a 'communication and action book', which clearly demonstrates requests by young people with action and responses from the managers. Young people had requested new games and new beds. These had been agreed and actioned.

Young people are safe and feel safe when visiting the home. Staff are knowledgeable and experienced and follow clear safeguarding protocols should a young person go missing or self-harm during their stay. Detailed records are compiled which demonstrate the effective action taken. Staff continue to benefit from a comprehensive training programme. They receive refresher training in key areas such as safeguarding and working with self-harm and exploitation.

Consequently, young people benefit from receiving care from a skilled and trained staff team.

The staff team continues to be led by a dynamic, committed and strong Registered Manager who demonstrates enthusiasm for the continued development and improvement of the service. Staff respond enthusiastically to her expectation that they will deliver outstanding care to complex and vulnerable young people and their families. Staff feel extremely well supported and this is reflected in staff's comments, 'the team is lovely, we love the work that we do and it's great to see what a difference we can make', 'the managers are always helpful and supportive and really do care about everyone'. 'We all get on well together and understand the importance of team work'. The staff team demonstrate a positive and aspirational vision of improving the service for the benefit of young people and were recently recognised for their commitment, hard work and positive outcomes by being entered and shortlisted into the local authorities 'team of the year award.'

Information about this children's home

This home provides short-term respite care for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A local authority runs the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
23/02/2015	Interim	declined in effectiveness
12/12/2014	Full	Good
06/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress

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):

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What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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