

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC040926
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 Hanlon
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	20/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC040926

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Young people are exceptionally well cared for by committed staff that are intent on meeting their needs and keeping them safe.
- Young people's safety is extremely well managed resulting in a decrease in behaviours that place them at risk of harm. Young people are well educated about managing the risks that are pertinent to them.
- Highly effective care planning and partnership working ensures that young people continue to make improvements in all areas of their lives.
- Excellent partnership working with specialist health services, including Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS), consistently improves young people's emotional health, behaviour and resilience.
- Young people benefit from a stable, qualified and experienced staff team. This enables them to develop trusting and respectful relationships.
- The Registered manager and staff prioritise young people's wishes and feelings. Their committed approach to young people's participation ensures that young people are meaningfully involved in decision making
- The exceptional commitment shown by the registered manager and staff team ensures that young people feel highly valued. One young person said 'this is the only place I have not been kicked out of. The staff really care and ask me what I think. It's the first time I have felt safe'.
- The Registered manager and staff are ambitious and have high aspirations for the young people accessing the service and show tenacity in helping them achieve her goals.

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 the registered person actively seeks independent scrutiny of the home and makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. In particular, if the information provided is inaccurate this will need to be challenged and amended. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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. A local authority runs the home.

Recent inspection history

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

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
The short breaks and outreach service is making a positive difference in young people's lives. Staff provide highly personalised and very well planned care that takes into account the individual needs and wishes of each young person, and the views of their families. One young person said 'Before I arrived I heard lots of horror stories, I was dreading the door being opened. But I walked in to find smiling and happy staff and other young people who wanted to talk to me, I felt so relieved'. Social workers and other professionals involved in the lives of young people, say staff use their knowledge and expertise to help young people overcome their difficulties and achieve their individual potential. One young person said, 'This is the only place I have not been kicked out of. I know the staff care about me and are keen to ask me what I think, It's the first time I have felt safe'. One parent said, 'without the support of the staff helping me to deal with my sons behaviours we would not have survived as a family. The difference has been massive; I really cannot sing their praises enough'. Consultation with young people is exceptional in all aspects of their care. A multi-agency meeting is held prior to young people accessing the service. The young person, family members, care staff and any other professionals involved in the young person's lives are invited. This ensures that the young person benefits from a collective approach to their development and wellbeing. The meeting identifies the support needed and sets realistic timescales for outcomes. All plans are regularly reviewed to ensure the planned intervention is effective. One parent said 'I was involved from the very beginning and understood what I needed to do as a parent, but also what everyone else had to do, It really helped.' Staff consistently deliver exceptionally personalised care and intervention programmes that encourage young people to make progress in all areas of their development. This includes both individual and group work sessions using workbooks on topics such as child sexual exploitation, internet safety and bullying. Furthermore, staff complete one to one sessions with young people to encourage	

them to maintain a healthy life style and consider factors that may affect this, such as drug or alcohol abuse. In these circumstances, staff access a range of professional agencies that work with young people to gather further information and guidance. This helps in the delivery and support with these issues so that young people are able to make informed choices about their personal development.

Young people benefit from detailed internal placement plans and behaviour plans that clearly identify their individual needs. Plans are fluid and stipulate integrated strategies to access additional support when necessary. Staff regularly review and amend internal placement plans, and communicate the progress young people make to the placing authority and their families. Furthermore, young people devise 'child friendly' placement plans with staff to encourage them to recognise the significant and positive progress they are making. Young people are encouraged to negotiate proposed changes and amendments to internal plans and this means they take responsibility for their actions and personal development. As a result, young people's views, wishes and opinions are involved in decisions about their future.

Young people enjoy exceptionally strong relationships with staff. The home provides a well-ordered, calm and relaxed atmosphere in which young people succeed. One parent said, 'the home is a happy place to be, my son loves going and talks fondly about the staff.' Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the individual needs of young people and are able to recognise any changes in their moods, providing support as needed. As a result, young people are the central focus of the home and staff are able to adapt their practice to ensure consistent support. Young people say that staff have helped them recognise and achieve their potential and address risk taking behaviours, such as drug and alcohol mis-use. This has enabled to make informed choices.

Young people maintain their educational placements while attending the short breaks service. Consistent liaison between the educational providers, parents and the home ensure that up-to-date information is shared and responded too. When difficulties have arisen staff have offered additional support and reinforced to young people the importance of education. For example, one young person was experiencing difficulties at school; this was having a direct impact on his dad as he was being sent home on a daily basis. His keyworker arranged a meeting with school and a clear plan was devised with incentives and short-term goals. This enabled the young person to reflect on the impact his behaviour was having on both his education and his family. This proved effective as the young person has

since settled in school and is being supported to reach his full potential.

Young people demonstrate confidence and assertion in expressing their views and regularly participate in young people's meetings. These take place over a period of days to ensure all young people accessing the service have the same opportunities to contribute to the discussion. Recent topics included reviewing the children's guide and any changes young people felt are needed as well as choosing the colour schemes for the bedrooms. As a result, young people can influence and are central to the on-going development of the service.

Young people confirmed they understand how to make a complaint and how to access an independent advocate. Complaints from young people or others are rare, but are taken seriously and investigated fully in appropriate time scales. The Registered Manager immediately addresses any concerns raised and provides young people with written and verbal feedback. This means that young people feel assured that their concerns are addressed and resolved.

The home is very well maintained to a very high standard. The warm and homely atmosphere creates a calm and relaxed environment where young people say they feel happy and safe. Young people proudly display their artwork around the home and photographs show the fun and happy memories young people have experienced. One young person said 'It's the first time I have ever baked before and I loved it', while another young man said, 'My keyworker taught me how to have a shave, without cutting myself.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Safeguarding young people is a priority and is central to practice. Young people are fully supported in keeping themselves safe. Sufficient levels of supervision both inside and outside the home recognise young people's vulnerabilities. Staff are proactive, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and act within clear procedures when required to safeguard young people. This means the safety and well-being of young people is of high importance.	

Managers and staff ensure extremely detailed risk assessments are in place to protect young people from harm and promote their well-being and safety. Staff sign regularly reviewed risk assessments to confirm their understanding. A new risk assessment system means that activity, environmental and behaviour specific risk assessments are merged prior to any event commencing. Staff are highly adept at working in partnership with the placing authority and other professionals to identify individual's vulnerabilities and effective strategies are in place to reduce anticipated risks. As a result, young people take proportionate risks to assist their transition towards adulthood.

Staff devise comprehensive behaviour management plans that incorporate short, medium and long-term goals. Plans deliver strategies that emphasise consistent interventions and de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint is rare and only ever used as a last resort. Associated records are appropriately completed and maintained. Young people benefit from continual verbal praise from managers and staff. This means that young people are encouraged to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and be responsible for their actions. Subsequently, the use of sanctions is minimal.

The home has protocols in place with local police regarding young people who go missing from the home. Staff receive regular training in child protection and safeguarding. Furthermore, the Registered Manager delivers regular missing from home workshops during staff meetings to ensure that staff knowledge and practice reflects updated legislation and guidance. Guest speakers, including the police, attend to team meetings to explain the links between young people who may go missing from care and child sexual exploitation (CSE). Staff spoken with during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of CSE and what action to take in the event of a concern.

The Registered Manager ensures that any allegations against staff are promptly reported in line with safeguarding protocols. Concerns are dealt with transparently and within acceptable time scales, providing support for both young people and staff. The home adheres to thorough organisational recruitment policies and procedures. This means only suitably selected staff that are appropriately vetted and monitored work with young people.

Staff maintain health and safety records to an exceptionally high standard. Robust and systematic systems are established to immediately highlight and action any shortfalls. Young people regularly participate in fire tests and drills and understand the fire procedures in place.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
A motivated, proficient and permanent manager effectively and efficiently runs the home. The Registered Manager has a strong commitment to improving outcomes and the quality of care for young people. Young people and the placing authority are clear about the support the home provides, and the home meets the aims and objectives detailed in the Statement of Purpose. A number of Professionals involved in young people's lives, including both health and education workers, positively confirm the exceptional progress young people make at the home. One social worker said, 'This home is marvellous and the manager and staff are superb. The support that young people and families receive is outstanding'. The Registered Manager has forged excellent multi-agency working with other professionals and the placing authority and this is a significant strength of the service. The home produces detailed progress reports prior to statutory reviews and external agencies say that communication with the home is factual and informative. Young people are very well supported to write down their views and to attend their review meetings. As a result, young people say they feel involved in decisions about their future. Staff have an extensive range of skills and are proficient at identifying the welfare and care requirements of young people. This means that young people work with staff that are able to recognise and meet their needs. Staff receive regular and effective supervision that compliments their role and considers their personal development. Mandatory training is regularly refreshed and the Registered Manager provides specialist and specific training workshops to reflect the individual needs of young people. An independent visitor undertakes monthly monitoring to improve the quality of care. However, the report compiled is not effective, as it does not provide an up to date account of safeguarding or welfare concerns. On occasions, these reports have provided contradictory information that impacts on the managers own monitoring of the home. The independent monitoring reports are currently being reviewed.	

The Registered Manager recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the service and regularly identifies approaches to improve services. The home is well resourced and structured to ensure stability and consistency for young people. Robust and effective systems are in place to monitor the quality of care and the progress and experiences for young people. Systems identify patterns and trends and this information is shared with staff during regular team meetings. All records are clear and securely stored. Detailed case file records are regularly appraised and this means that they contribute to an understanding of young people's backgrounds, experiences, progress and future plans.

Young people come to stay in a home where boundaries and expectations are clear and staff practice is consistent and reflective. As a result, the service has an immensely positive impact on young people and improves their life chances through personalised care and dedication. One parent said, 'I cannot thank the home enough for supporting me and my family. They will never understand the difference they have made'

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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