

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC044231
Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Progress Care and Education Limited
Registered person address	Progress Care (Holdings) Ltd, Pear Tree Street Bamber Bridge PRESTON PR5 6EZ
Responsible individual	Margaret Calvert
Registered manager	Paul Lonergan
Date of last inspection	12/07/2013

Inspection date	12/05/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
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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Young people are happy, settled, safe and secure at this home and are making good progress in all aspects of their development. They benefit from highly individualised and consistent care which meets their unique and particularly complex needs. The staff adopt a highly flexible and needs led approach.

Parents, social workers and independent reviewing officers are consistently very satisfied with the good quality of care provided.

The strong management team are very clear about the strengths of their service provision and areas requiring continued improvement. Suitable development plans are in place to address the latter in a timely manner.

There is one breach of regulation arising from this inspection which is to maintain an admission and discharge register to include the details of the placing authority of each child placed. This does not impact negatively on the welfare or safety of the young people.

Two recommendations are also made. These are to: improve restraint records and in particular detail the de-escalation techniques used and demonstrate that all staff are fully supported in managing the extreme challenging behaviours young people

present; and ensure that the company's whistleblowing procedures provides sufficient protection to the person making the allegation.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home offers care and accommodation for up to four young people, of both genders, who have severe learning disabilities compounded by significant challenging behaviours, autism and complex medical conditions.

It is part of a wider private organisation that offers transition from this home to adult residential provision registered with the Care Quality Commission. It also runs an independent 52 week school which is co-educational and caters for pupils and students from the age of 7 to 19 years.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/07/2013	Full	adequate
04/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
07/11/2012	Full	adequate
22/02/2012	Interim	good progress

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
29 (2001)	ensure a record in the form of a register includes details of the placing authority in respect of each child accommodated. (Regulation 29, Schedule 4(1)(e))	31/05/2014

Recommendations

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

- improve restraint documentation and in particular: fully detail the de-escalate techniques used; and, demonstrate that staff are supported to manage their responses and feelings arising from working with children displaying challenging behaviours or have difficult emotional issues (NMS 3.10 and 3.13))
- review and revise the home's whistleblowing procedures to ensure they provide effective protection for the person making the allegation. (NMS 20)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

All the young people living at this home benefit from the security of long term, stable placements where their physical, medical and emotional needs are well met. One young person, in a relatively short period of time since admission, has transformed from being poorly, tired and distant to happy, smiley, alert and tactile.

All the young people really enjoy regular contact with their families. This helps to sustain important attachments and maintains a strong sense of identity and belonging. One young person's face lights up when his parents visit him demonstrating the importance of this relationship.

A particularly positive impact for young people living in this home is increased community access and the opportunity to take part in regular charitable events. Living at this home has significantly widened all their horizons. Despite histories of isolation and struggles with any transitions, they are now all experiencing and enjoying a wide range of challenging, stimulating and often brand new experiences. This increases their social interactions and improves their self-esteem and confidence. Recent examples include: train and boat rides; safari parks; zoos and, nature reserves. One young person communicated, 'I like foot massages, painting, water play, seeing my mum and dad and swimming, but I don't like busy places.' Another young person loves going out and socialising at a local coffee shop every night.

School attendance is excellent and young people are making good progress. This is within a context of very limited education in previous placements.

None of the young people living at this home smoke, drink alcohol, take illicit drugs or commit offences.

Improved lifestyles have had a very positive impact on their good health and well-being. Seizures, self-injurious behaviours and medication have all dramatically reduced in this placement. All the young people are now taking some responsibility for their continued good health. Examples include improved self-care skills, healthy meal choices and regular physical exercise. Swimming and trampolining are particularly popular activities.

Young people's confidence and self-esteem is demonstrably improving. Consequently, some are now taking a keen interest in fashionable clothes, hair styles and manicured nails.

All the young people have individual targets to continually develop their independence skills. Current examples include, choosing appropriate clothing from a choice of two and locking and opening their own bedroom door. Targets already successfully achieved include making snacks, personal care and laundry tasks. Young people particularly enjoy growing fruit and vegetables. This is from a starting point of total

dependency.

The young people have significantly improved their tolerance levels and are learning to be patient, which are important social skills.

Quality of care

good

Young people benefit from highly individualised care. Staff are provided with very clear and precise written routines for each young person which are then discussed at every handover. This ensures consistency of care, which is particularly vital for the young people accommodated. The staff also have an excellent understanding of each young person. This means they immediately notice any changes in their moods, gestures, sounds, facial expressions and behaviours and can, therefore, ascertain and respond appropriately to their needs. Moreover, the staff are constantly developing young people's individual communication aids. This enables all the young people to express their views, wishes and feelings which are then positively responded to. This reinforces the fact that their opinions matter and are genuinely valued. This in turn, reduces frustrations and challenging behaviours and increases self-esteem and confidence.

Young people are also sensitively helped to understand when their wishes will not be adhered to. For example, the staff have recently made a concerted effort to ensure that all the snacks available in the home are healthy options, as the young people left unsupervised would eat to excess.

Young people exercise genuine choice in the meals they prefer to eat and the activities they take part in. Individual interests and talents are actively encouraged and supported which increases confidence and competences. All activities are carefully planned and thoroughly risk assessed to ensure they are safe and provide positive experiences. The use of social stories, timelines and photographs are highly effective in preparing young people for transitions and reducing anxieties and incidents. A member of staff said, 'The new deputies have put in weekly planners for each young person so the house is never too busy and they can all enjoy some space to do things they enjoy. It works really well.'

The staff accompany the young people to school to actively support their education and ensure consistency of care. The young people really like, and the care staff are particularly impressed with the dedication of a new teacher who has designed highly flexible timetables to meet individual needs. In the home, care staff reinforce the specific topics they are studying at school in ways each young person particularly enjoys. This enables them all to reach their full potentials. For one young person this means lots of colouring, gluing, sticking and cutting.

Parents are strong advocates for their children and are fully involved in care

planning. They confirm their views are listened to, respected and positively acted upon. Consequently they are highly satisfied with the quality of care provided. Comments include: 'The staff are enthusiastic and supportive and have made a big difference to our lives'; 'We chose this service because we were impressed with the expertise of the staff'; and 'This is a great home with great staff.'

Other key strengths identified by parents and professionals include: child centred and positive staff with an expertise in autism; excellent communication and information sharing with parents and placing authorities; and consistency of care. An independent reviewing officer confirmed, 'This service is extremely good at providing detailed reports, photographs and DVD's demonstrating young people's progress for statutory reviews.' A social worker said, 'I am impressed with the knowledge and consistency of the staff. They get to know each child as an individual and are very good with transitions. They keep me well informed. I am given intricate details of progress and achievements.'

Good health and well-being is actively promoted at this home. Staff benefit from the expertise of the company's nurse who has established excellent relationships with other health professionals. They also use a specialist dentist to reduce young people's anxieties. Staff have a proven ability to successfully advocate on behalf of young people to ensure correct diagnoses are made and therefore the most effective treatment and support is provided. This has, for example, resulted in a dramatic reduction in seizures which was traumatic for a young person. Consequently, the young person is now demonstrably happier and very settled.

Another key strength is the timely provision of a wide range of appropriate specialist services staff access for young people, to meet their unique and highly complex physical, medical and emotional needs. There are also robust procedures in place to ensure the safe administration of first aid and medication.

A continual programme of redecoration ensures that the home always provides a good standard of accommodation. Highly personalised bedrooms and staff adherence to strict evening routines ensures the young people settle quickly and benefit from a good night's sleep. The garden is also well equipped with furniture and toys to meet a good range of interests and abilities.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people benefit from long term stable placements. Consequently they are happy and settled at this home and there are no incidents of young people going missing. They are safe and secure and enjoy sound, trusting relationships with the staff. There is no bullying. Rather, young people are noticeably enjoying spending more time with their peers and are taking a positive interest in each other.

This staff team have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of each young

person's unique and highly complex needs. High staffing ratios, clear and consistent routines and daily support from experienced behaviour support workers has proved highly effective in reducing some extremely challenging behaviours. Consequently, the use of restraints has significantly reduced. Comments from parents include, 'He is a totally different lad now. He has calmed down so much in this placement and his behaviours have improved when he comes home too' and 'He is smiling and belly laughing again. We have not seen him do that for a long time and it's nice that he feels that comfortable in this home.' A social worker said, 'This young person is now exercising choice in the way he wants to be cared for to reduce his anxieties.'

The experienced staff team have a proven ability to enable young people to take appropriate risks to promote their continued independence. A significant recent development is that the front door is now unlocked during the day which gives young people more freedom and independence.

Staff persevere with young people despite some extreme challenging behaviours and they daily review, and if required amend their practice to ensure continued progress. A minority of staff are struggling with the particular strategies in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of one young person recently admitted. The interventions used are in full agreement with parents and the placing authority and are proving to be very effective. Consequently, self-harm has significantly reduced and serious injuries sustained prior to this placement are healing.

However, restraint documentation does not always sufficiently detail the support provided to staff to manage their feelings and responses following an incident and the de-escalation techniques used to try to avoid the need to restrain.

All the required health and safety certificates are in place and internal fire checks undertaken at the required frequencies to evidence a safe and well maintained building. Personalised fire evacuation plans are in place for each young person and regular fire drills are undertaken at different times of the day and night. This helps to ensure that all the young people and staff know exactly what to do in the case of a real fire.

Robust recruitment and selection processes ensure a safe and competent workforce.

Leadership and management

good

This service is financially sound. The home is well resourced to meet the unique and highly complex needs of all the young people accommodated. The management team has significantly strengthened with the appointment of two deputies who clearly demonstrate a good capacity to improve. They lead by example which instils confidence and enthusiasm in the staff team. They said, 'We have worked hard to make sure we are accessible and have time for the staff.' Staff confirm, 'I can discuss any concerns with my manager' and 'The management team are very

approachable and willing to listen and to discuss any new ideas.'

Consequently, staff are noticeably very happy in their respective roles and morale, commitment and motivation is high. They are demonstrably passionate about improving young people's life chances and are genuinely proud of young people's progress and achievements. One said, 'I love working here. It's a supportive team, nice environment and great children.' 'I love it here. It's a home, not institutional or clinical, so it is inviting for the parents who can come and have a brew.'

Staff confirm regular and good quality individual supervision sessions which support and challenge their performance to enable them to constantly improve. They also have timely appraisals where strengths and areas for continued personal development are thoroughly explored. Moreover, they confirm timely refresher courses to ensure they have the required knowledge and skills to care safely and appropriately for each child. Comments from staff include, 'I am able to request and receive any additional training that I feel I may need', 'All the courses are good. The epilepsy training was added specifically to help us meet a young person's needs and it was really helpful', 'Everything I suggest to stimulate and develop the young people is agreed to by the managers, for example horse riding lessons, a holiday and home visits' and, 'It's brilliant working here. They balance the staffing really well and I have learned such a lot.'

Monitoring arrangements have been strengthened. Consequently, any shortfalls identified are efficiently addressed. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last interim inspection on 27 March 2014.

The few complaints received are efficiently and satisfactorily resolved and lessons are learned to improve future practice and to avoid a reoccurrence. For example, a minority of staff do not feel empowered to raise concerns within the organisation. In response, the director is currently reviewing the company's whistleblowing procedures to ensure they are effective.

An up to date and accurate Statement of Purpose is in place in line with the new regulations. All the young people have their own copy of a personalised and meaningful children's guide, so they fully understand the services available to them.

However, the required admission and discharge details are currently recorded electronically on an unsecured site, so the details could be tampered with. They also do not include the details of each child's placing authority.

Young people's files are maintained to good standard. They provide an accurate and very positive account of their background, progress, achievements and future goals.

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.