

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC045408
Inspector	Paul Taylor
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Surrey County Council
Registered person address	Surrey County Council, Children's & Safeguarding Service Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road ADDLESTONE Surrey KT15 2EP
Responsible individual	Louise Warren
Registered manager	Colin Roy Christensen
Date of last inspection	29/07/2014

Inspection date	05/01/2015
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Previous inspection	sustained effectiveness
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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This home provides good levels of support to the young people who live there. Young people are often admitted to the home at short notice or in an emergency. The staff are adept at providing thorough and well thought out packages of care which enable the young people to make good progress and to benefit from their placements.

Young people feel safe living at the home and speak positively about how the staff care for them. This is endorsed by parents who say they feel that the home works closely with them. For example one parent said 'my child has come on so far since living there.'

Despite the fact that young people often come to live at the home at short notice and in a time of crisis, the staff team are skilled at establishing trust and setting clear boundaries with them. As a result relationships are warm, supportive and based on mutual respect. This encourages young people to develop new skills and strategies which improve their life chances.

This is a well-managed home with a conscientious Registered Manager and a committed team of staff who work effectively together in providing a very good standard of care. One young person said, 'I would give this home nine out of ten'.

One minor shortfall has been identified as a result of this inspection and relates to ensuring that members of staff receive monthly supervision in line with the organisation's supervision policy.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority managed children's home is registered for two young people of either gender. The home facilitates assessments while providing short to medium-term placements, including emergency and crisis placements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/07/2014	Interim	sustained effectiveness
24/03/2014	Interim	good progress
08/10/2013	Full	adequate
13/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. In particular, ensure that the frequency with which staff receive supervision complies with the home's supervision policy. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress as a result of the care and guidance they receive. They develop trust in the adults caring for them and this enables them to reflect upon their behaviour and their backgrounds. This in turn leads to them achieving success in areas in which they have historically struggled. For example, increased attendance at school and a reduction in incidents of going missing.

Young people benefit from having their health care needs met to a good standard. They are supported to attend key health appointments with health professionals which ensures that they receive the advice, information and support that they need to lead healthier lives.

Young people's school or college attendance improves as a result of living at this home. The culture and regime of the home emphasise the importance of and promotes regular attendance. As a result, young people's attendance is good particularly in relation to their starting points.

Young people enjoy taking part in a number of activities while they live at the home. These include joining clubs as well as participating in activities and outings which the members of staff arrange with them.

Young people are able to maintain contact with their families and are offered well planned and sensitive support if contact is challenging or stressful. They are also able to have friends visit them in the home and this ensures that established networks are maintained and they are not isolated.

Young people are offered good support to move on once there is a plan in place for this to happen. For example, members of staff will visit their new placements with them so that the young people feel ready to move on when the time comes.

Quality of care **good**

Relationships between young people and members of staff are warm, supportive and trusting. 'I really like them, they have helped me loads' said a young person. Staff display a thorough understanding of each young person's needs and how these should be addressed. This means that when issues arise, such as young people being distressed or upset, staff are able to respond in a thoughtful and calm manner which enables trust and respect to develop. A parent said 'My child has bonded with all of them'.

Young people's views are heard and respected standard. They have numerous opportunities, both formal and informal, to say what they think and feel about how they are being cared for. They have a voice in the running of the home and are involved in making choices on issues such as activities, menus and friends visiting. They are also involved in recruitment interviews for new members of staff. They understand the complaints process and know who to contact, both within the organisation which runs the home or independently of the organisation if they so wish. No complaints have been received since the last inspection.

Bespoke plans of care outline the needs of each young person and are reviewed regularly. Young people are aware of these plans and know what their particular targets are. This means that they have an investment in their plans and feel involved in their care.

Young people's health needs are known and responded to effectively. Members of staff arrange for health specialists to meet the young people and for specific advice and guidance to be made available to them. For example, appointments with sexual health staff or substance misuse staff are arranged if needed. Routine health appointments are also arranged for the young people so that their general health needs are met to a good standard. Arrangements for the administration of medication are robust and audited thoroughly. This ensures that young people receive the correct medication at the right time.

Members of staff advocate strongly for the young people and support them to a high standard in maintaining good attendance at school. This includes negotiating on behalf of the young people to increase the schooling hours available to them if they are on reduced timetables. As a result, young people make good progress at school and with their attendance, especially when bearing in mind their starting points.

Young people have access to a range of enjoyable and enriching activities. They are encouraged to join clubs in the community so that they can develop their social networks in a way that increases their social skills and builds their confidence. Young people are also able to have friends to visit them at the home and this further ensures that the young people are not isolated from the wider community or key people in their lives.

The home is comfortable and well-furnished and young people have an influence on the décor of their rooms. Regular refurbishment means that the home is maintained to a good standard.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people say they feel safe living in the home. They report that there are no issues with regards to bullying.

Each young person has an individual protocol in place for the staff to follow if the young person goes missing or is absent without permission. These protocols make clear the level of risk that the young person may be exposed to if they are missing and identify what steps the staff need to take. The protocols are followed effectively and when young people return to the home they are given support to reflect on the risks and their own vulnerabilities. This approach ensures young people are provided with a clear message that their well-being is of paramount concern. As a result of this approach, incidents of young people going missing have reduced significantly.

Positive behaviour is rewarded and encouraged. Young people are able to earn extra outings and treats if they behave well or achieve agreed targets, such as not running away or improving their school attendance. Young people have bespoke behaviour support plans which include strategies for members of staff to use if the young person is anxious or unsettled. Members of staff are skilled at supporting the young people at times of challenge and this ensures that the use of sanctions or restraint is rare. Emphasis is placed on the development of caring and supportive relationships underpinned by tolerance and respect.

Members of staff receive training in safeguarding issues including child protection, e-safety and child sexual exploitation (CSE). They know how to recognise warning signs and who to inform if they have concerns about a young person's welfare which means they are able to safeguard and protect young people effectively. Records show that when there have been concerns the staff liaise promptly and effectively with the relevant agencies so that strategies and plans can be put in place to promote each young person's safety and well-being.

The organisation that runs the home has a robust and thorough recruitment process which ensures that all necessary background checks, including a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check, are carried out prior to a new member of staff starting work. This ensures that only adults with appropriate backgrounds and working histories are employed in the home.

The home has a robust and effective approach with regards to health and safety. All necessary safety checks are carried out and young people are involved in regular fire drills. In addition, the Registered Manager has completed a risk assessment of the surrounding area to ensure that the staff are aware of any specific hazards or risks in the community. Issues taken into consideration include, for example, the proximity of railway lines and areas where there has been anti-social behaviour in the community. This means that members of staff are aware of areas of increased risk or places to avoid taking the young people at certain times.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post for over two years and is suitably experienced and qualified. He provides strong leadership to the experienced staff team and is regarded as approachable and supportive by both young people and members of staff.

Monitoring of the home is of a good standard. The Registered Manager ensures that he is a visible presence in the home on a daily basis and completes statutory reports in accordance with the regulations. An independent visitor comes to the home every month and provides a thorough assessment of the quality of care delivered. As part of this process, the independent visitor meets with the young people in order to gain their views on how they feel they are being cared for. Any issues are dealt with swiftly and robustly by the manager. The Registered Manager routinely assesses the home's performance and the impact of care provided to the young people in order to ensure that their progress is maintained.

At the last inspection in July 2014 a recommendation was made that the minutes from team meetings should be made available promptly to all members of staff. This has been achieved; members of staff who were absent from the team meeting are now able to find out what was discussed quickly and easily.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the services provided, ensuring that parents and placing social workers understand the home's aims and objectives. Young people also have a guide which explains the purpose of the home, their rights, the home's rules and expectations, the home's routines and who to complain to. This ensures that all stakeholders have a clear idea of what the home sets out to achieve.

The home has sufficient staff to provide good levels of care and support to the young people. All members of staff receive training which ensures they have the knowledge and skills to care for the young people. However, not all members of staff receive supervision on a monthly basis as recommended in the organisation's supervision policy and as agreed in the staff supervision contracts. Although this minor shortfall has had no impact either on the quality of care or young people's well-being, it means that formal recorded supervision does not occur as often as agreed. Members of staff speak highly of the support given to them by senior members of staff and managers. 'We all work from the same page, this is such a welcoming team'.

Good quality recording provides a clear account of each young person's time in the home and records are stored securely. Parents and relevant agencies are notified promptly of any significant events. This ensures that practice in the home is transparent and that the home is accountable to all stakeholders. A parent said 'I really feel that we work as a team and that we're all on 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.