

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC056259
Inspector	Stella Henderson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pebbles Care Limited
Registered person address	Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane Kirkstall Leeds West Yorkshire LS5 3BT
Responsible individual	Luiz Miguel Guilherme
Registered manager	Judith Goforth
Date of last inspection	04/11/2013

Inspection date	05/06/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Stability in placement and effective quality care contributes to young people making improved and in some cases good individual progress at the home. The majority of young people make secure attachments to staff, and they say they feel safe at the home.

Some elements of young people's individual needs are well met. This is evident in the equilibrium of some young people's emotional health and well being. For others this has meant a downward trend in incidents of self-harming. The majority of young people have a positive view about the care they receive and they say they get on well with the majority of staff.

Good practice has therefore achieved some positive progress for young people. However it has not yet had enough impact to secure consistently good outcomes for all young people across all of their outcome areas.

A number of shortfalls exist in relation to promoting education and good health, the quality of recording and keeping abreast of legislative changes. These shortcomings do not have a significant impact on the welfare or safety of young people in the home. However they do impact on young people being able to achieve optimum outcomes.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is provided by a private company and cares for up to six children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most children and young people are cared for in the main house but one child is also cared for in a detached bungalow situated in the rear garden.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/11/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/05/2013	Full	adequate
15/11/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
09/05/2012	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
4 (2001)	compile in relation to the children's home a written statement (in these Regulations referred to as 'the statement of purpose' which consist of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4)(1)	04/07/2014
33 (2001)	inspect the premises of the children's home and such of the children's home's records as the independent person requires (save for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent to the inspection of those records by the independent person) (Regulation 33)(8)(b)	04/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children's physical and emotional and social development needs are promoted. This is with specific reference to improving young people's nutrition (NMS 6.1)
- ensure that staff have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress (NMS 8.7)
- improve the registered provider's written report of a visit carried out under Regulation 33. This is with specific reference to ensuring accuracy of the visit findings (NMS 21.8)
- review the written policy that clarifies the purpose, format and content of information to be kept on the child's files and improve the system to monitor quality and adequacy of record keeping. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people are supported to feel positive about themselves and so achieve emotional good health. Over time this provides young people with a secure basis from which to make progress. This has helped one young person to move from a single unit, to group living and to plan ahead for a move to foster care. Self-injurious behaviour for another young person is reducing.

The majority of young people make sound educational progress. The majority attend school regularly and fully engage in their education. However the home is not always clear about the attainment targets set for young people. This inhibits their ability to achieve their full educational potential.

While placing authorities agree appropriate educational resources, the home provides some basic learning activities. Young people participate in these to varying degrees. This helps young people to remain engaged in some form of education but means they can achieve only satisfactory progress.

Routine appointments with dentists, doctors and opticians help young people to maintain basic good health. Keeping up to date with immunisations gives young people protection against major diseases. This promotes their health in the immediate and longer term.

Young people are involved in a variety of activities which help them to keep fit and healthy and help them to participate in the wider community. This includes dancing, canoeing and ice-skating. Young people's good health status is undermined however as they are not always offered a balanced diet. Recording the quality of nutritional intake is inconsistent. This makes monitoring difficult to achieve.

Arrangements for contact with family take into account past history and any safeguarding concerns. Some young people have friendships in the community. Friends are welcome to visit the home and these invitations are reciprocated.

Independence in decision making and practical skills is encouraged even among younger children. They are helped to develop the skills they will need in later life, such as cooking meals and taking care of the house. Young people have bank accounts and learn about the value of money by building up useful savings for the future.

Quality of care **good**

Young people present as well-mannered, friendly and happy to talk about their experiences at the home. The majority appreciate the support that staff provide for them. Young people said that they like their key workers and do different activities with them.

Young people understand the routines and boundaries in the home and think the rules are fair. The majority of young people respond to positive incentives and rewards at the home which supports positive behaviour. Staff listen to what young people have to say about how certain aspects of their behaviour is managed. Staff act on these preferences which provides young people with reassurance and gives them an element of control over their lives.

Young people say that they are listened to. They have a say on other aspects of their care and the running of the home, such as décor, menus, activities and holidays. They are involved, as is appropriate to their age and understanding, in their care planning and review processes.

Placement plans cover all aspects of young people's development and give a clear indication of the outcomes to be achieved. Young people benefit from effective collaborative links between staff and professionals from other agencies, such as psychological health services, looked after children nurses and education. This allows helpful guidance and support to be provided when young people are most in need.

Young people have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities such as ice-skating, canoeing, surfing and dancing. Some young people simply like to play out with their friends in the community. This helps them to develop friendships and learn how to have fun and keep occupied without having to spend money.

Young people live in a home which provides a comfortable, spacious and non-institutionalised environment. They are allowed to keep pets and have personalised their bedrooms. There is a commitment to maintaining the home at a good level of decoration and to undertaking repairs as quickly as possible. This helps young people to respect their environment and conveys to them that they are valued.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people say that they feel safe at the home. Whistleblowing procedures are effective and has resulted in a prompt response to a safeguarding allegation. Young people are protected by safe recruitment practices, which ensures that new staff are properly vetted before they start to work with young people.

Bullying is infrequent and staff respond well to incidents which may provoke this. The majority of young people respond positively to behaviour management strategies employed by staff.

Some young people have long histories of self-harming and missing from home. Self

harming behaviour is reducing. Staff respond quickly when young people go missing and act in accordance with the local authority care plan and local protocols to assist young people's safe return home.

Historic patterns of behaviour of young people who are new to the home are re-emerging however and they remain reluctant to accept the risks involved with this behaviour. As a result the number of missing from home incidents has fluctuated and recently increased despite the very close supervision of young people by staff. Strategies to reduce these incidents continues to be a daily work in progress, as the home tries to balance young people's right to some independence and freedom with the need to safeguard them.

Risk assessments are generally satisfactory. They are regularly reviewed and updated in response these and other hazards but updated risk assessments are not always signed by all members of staff. Although this does not impact on the care and safety of young people this reflects wider issues about the quality of record keeping.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home is managed by an experienced and qualified manager who has been in post for four years. She ensures that young people are looked after by staff who receive support through supervision, team meetings and relevant training. Staff turnover is relatively low which helps young people to experience stability over a long period of time. Staffing levels are sufficient to meet young people's needs and are increased when required.

A requirement to improve consultation has been addressed. A recommendation to ensure that all records kept by the home are regularly monitored for compliance is met. However the quality and consistency of recording is variable and sometimes lacks care and attention.

For example, not all staff have signed updated risk assessments and details about young people's nutrition is not always recorded, or recorded in different documents. A simple error in cross-referencing meant that a young person missed an appointment with the therapist.

The organisation's recording policy does not make it easy for staff to record incidents and exchange information. The detail of the events in young people's lives is in danger of being lost to excessive paperwork. For example, a missing from home incident has to be recorded in four different documents.

These shortfalls will not help young people make sense of the care they have received, should they choose to read their files.

The Registered Manager has not ensured procedures and documentation reflect recent changes to the Children's Home's Regulations. For example, the home's

statement of purpose has not been amended and the independent visitor has not sought permission from both young people and placing social workers to view children's records. The statement of purpose also gives inaccurate information about the age-range of children admitted to the home. This may give a misleading impression to parents and other stakeholders of the services offered.

The independent visitor's report is comprehensive but sometimes lacks clarity. For example, one report notes that, 'young people eat a good balanced diet' when this is not the case for all young people. The visitor had also recorded on one occasion that, 'children are working towards their attainment levels' when the home is not always aware of what these are. This means the provider does not get a completely accurate picture of the functioning of the home.

Young people live in a home which is well-resourced, suitably furnished and maintained. There are sufficient finances to enable young people's participation in a range of activities. All health and safety requirements are met which ensure young people live in a safe environment.

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.