

SC056259

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and managed by a private company. It offers care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Five children and young people live in the main house and one young person lives in a bungalow on the grounds of the home.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **Good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Outstanding**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 23 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- The young people who engage with the care in the home build excellent, trusting relationships with staff.
- The committed, nurturing and enthusiastic staff are good role models for the young people.
- The majority of the young people make good progress in engaging with education and transition to independence.
- The young people and professionals report how safe the young people feel, and are, in the home.
- Excellent management arrangements ensure that the young people's progress is known, and collaborative working with partner agencies provides consistent care.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The staff office and the rooms in the bungalow, in particular the bathroom, are in need of redecoration and refurbishment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/10/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. In particular, that the bathroom and the damp walls in the bungalow are renovated and that the office space in the main house is refurbished. (Regulation 6(2)(c)(i))	15/12/2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people enjoy living in a spacious, detached property on the sea front, in a small town and close to local amenities. They either live together as a group in the main house, or one young person lives alone in a detached bungalow in the grounds. The main house has a number of shared rooms for the young people to spend time in together, which promotes their sense of belonging and a homely atmosphere. However, damage caused by an outgoing resident to the staff office door and the decoration of the office have not been repaired in a timely manner. The bungalow is well equipped for one young person, but there are areas of damp on the walls that need addressing and the bathroom is shabby. The bathroom is in need of a complete refurbishment to raise it to the same standard as the bathrooms in the main house.

The majority of the young people make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress from their starting points in all areas of their lives. The quality of the young people's individualised care plans means that they fully understand what their plans are and how these are to be achieved. As a result, those young people who engage with the nurturing and enthusiastic staff team and respond to the care provided are happy and fulfilled, thus enabling them to thrive. A young person said, 'This is my home. I don't want to live anywhere else. I am able to have the happy life I want.'

Not all the young people have had the endings to their placements that the manager and staff would have wanted for them. With regard to one young person, the manager stated that, 'On reflection, it was not a positive admission.' However, this level of reflection and understanding of the home's strengths ensures that lessons are learned and that the home only accept placements for young people whose needs the staff can meet. This substantially enhances young people's opportunities for success. An independent reviewing officer reported, 'Staff have been highly supportive of the young person for whom I conducted the review and they most definitely contributed to the

really very pleasing progress made by this young person, who now has a bright future ahead.'

The young people who settle down and engage with the care in the home enjoy excellent, trusting relationships with staff. As a result, they are thriving and have ambitions for their future adult lives. The resultant growth in confidence and self-esteem empowers the young people to form lasting attachments with staff members and make friendships in their local community. A therapist said, '[Name] sees the home as his family and the staff are his attachment figures. He wants to stay there until he is an adult. I've experienced staff as being very nurturing and speak very warmly of him and they have a real commitment to him.'

Excellent collaborative working with partner agencies ensures that the young people are able to engage with the community and specialist agencies when they need to. Consequently, the young people are making good and, in some cases, excellent progress in education, including in mainstream provision. This enhances their future life and employment opportunities. A young person said, 'I'm really proud of how well I'm doing at school, because I want to be a nuclear physicist and work off-shore.'

The young people's physical and emotional health and well-being improve as they engage with their healthcare plans. For some young people, this may include receiving regular therapeutic input to address past trauma, or develop an understanding of their gender; for others, this may be completing programmes as part of a court order. The young people are fully supported to explore who they are and start to learn to like themselves. A social worker said, 'They support him with issues around his gender and they supported him to go to a group about his identity, and communication is good.'

The young people are very confident in expressing their wishes and feelings and feel heard and valued by staff. For example, residents' meetings are not held as the young people felt that they were too formal, and that this was their home and not an institution. A social worker said, 'I can see in terms of how he is doing that he's growing up.'

The complaints process is followed clearly. There are very few complaints from young people as they are able to address any concerns swiftly to their satisfaction. However, there have been a number of complaints from the community in relation to some of the young people's actions. It is evident that the manager and staff used reflective practice effectively to address each of the issues and work with the young people to amend their behaviours. As a result, the complainants were happy with the outcomes and the young people are in the process of developing an understanding of their responsibilities in their community.

Most of the young people are active members of their local community. They attend mainstream schools, play in local football teams, and have friends with whom they spend positive, fun time. This enhances the young people's sense of belonging, empowering them to make strides in their maturity. A parent said, 'I think it has helped him definitely. I'm thankful for everything they've done for him, because they've turned him into a lovely young man and that makes me really proud.'

Four young people have left the home since the last inspection. One of these young

people had been resident for three years and made exceptional progress during that time. Comprehensive transition and independence plans were developed between the home, placing authority, family members and the youth offending service, ensuring that all followed clear, consistent steps. The young person successfully completed his education and gained a place on an apprenticeship scheme. The warm and caring staff team ensured that his move to an independent flat took place as positively as possible, ensuring that those first steps into adulthood were a good experience. A social worker said, 'I think all the staff who've worked with [Name] have been great with him and he formed positive relationships with all the key workers. They supported him to learn independent living skills. He's done really well there.'

The majority of the young people placed in the home are a considerable distance from their locality. The proactive manager and staff team do all that they can to maintain and, in some cases, rebuild family relationships. For some young people, this can be the tentative start of letter contact. However, this is really beneficial in empowering the young people to gain an understanding of their heritage and build cultural links that will enhance their future adult lives. An independent reviewing officer reported, 'The young person lived a significant distance from home and staff continually supported ongoing contact with family, and even went out of their way to adjust arrangements when a family member was unwell and hospitalised.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The energetic and enthusiastic staff are good role models for the young people in their care. They provide the young people with consistent and caring boundaries in which to explore their burgeoning independence and make positive decisions about their future life choices. A therapist said, 'He's really invested in the home. He's a real asset and example that residential care can work for kids. His attachments have been so strong for that staff team and staff have been so nurturing for him that he has made real progress. He is safe there and he would say if he didn't feel safe.'

Comprehensive risk assessments address all areas where the young people may be vulnerable. These ensure that clear steps are followed to protect the young people from risks in the community, as well as their own behaviours. The young people are safeguarded as a result. A young person said, 'The only thing that frustrates me about here is that the staff insist on knowing who my girlfriends are. They want to check that the girls are of the right age and not 50-year-old women.'

The young people are protected from involvement in child sexual exploitation and radicalisation as a result of the well-trained staff team's knowledge of each individual young person's vulnerabilities. An increase in the number of missing episodes since the last inspection involved two of the young people who are no longer resident in the home. Records evidence that extensive risk assessments and missing person procedures were effectively applied. Staff actively searched for the young people and did all that they could to return them to the safety of the home. The current group of young people do not go missing, but can be late home on occasion, as can many teenagers from their family home. The young people's views are always captured on their return, enabling staff to put measures in place to prevent recurrence. Some of the recorded comments

include 'I'm sorry' and 'I didn't realise the time and wanted to be with friends'.

The consistent use of excellent behaviour management plans empower the young people to learn the consequences of their actions. A social worker said, 'He can be intimidating towards staff, but they've put appropriate measures in place.' The young people work reflectively with the skilled staff team to negotiate their own sanctions, thus empowering them to take responsibility for their behaviour and understand the impact that their behaviours can have on others. The young people's recorded comments include 'awesome' and 'thank you, I was really happy after getting my positive xx.'

Such are the excellent relationships with the stable resident group that they have not needed any physical interventions. The 12 restraints performed since the last inspection all involved two young people who are no longer resident in the home. The majority were managed appropriately by staff, ensuring that the young people were kept safe throughout. However, on one occasion, a new member of staff did not follow correct protocol and acted in a way that could have placed the young person at harm. The experienced staff members on duty swiftly addressed this and rightly informed the manager. Appropriate actions were taken to ensure that all the staff members received up-to-date training to prevent a recurrence of this situation. This protects all the young people.

A comprehensive safeguarding plan details all necessary aspects of the young people's welfare. This complements the young people's individual safeguarding plans. As a result, the young people's welfare is promoted and they are protected from involvement in radicalisation and extremism. A young person said, 'I've felt safe here ever since I moved here and it's just got better, because now I can go out and about with my mates and I've learned how to be safe there as well.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The inspirational and enthusiastic registered manager is in the process of leaving the home for promotion to another role. Before leaving, she ensured that all relevant systems were in place so that there could be a seamless transfer to her successor. This demonstrates her ability and attention to detail. It is evident that the assistant manager has grown in confidence and the skills necessary to fulfil her role as a result of the support of the outgoing manager. While she was still with the home, the manager's expertise was recognised by a local university where she now guest lectures. Staff and the young people benefit from having had this excellent leadership. A staff member said, 'I can't say enough good things about [manager's name] because she's spot on and gets things done. She will always do what is right and she knows where everything is. She has the expertise and she will really follow it on.'

The one recommendation raised at the last inspection has been fully met. This not only demonstrates the home's capacity for development, but also ensures that the language used in the recording of the young people's movements in and out of the home is consistent of a family environment and not institutional.

The ambitious manager has high aspirations for all of the young people in her care. Her consistent guidance and leadership ensured that staff are excellent role models for the young people, and empowered those young people who engage with the care to achieve

significant outcomes. The tolerant, non-judgemental atmosphere promoted by the manager, with training for staff where necessary, empowers the young people to explore their identity. As a result, the young people develop an understanding of their gender and sexuality and are able to take pride in their cultural heritage. The manager said, 'When I met with [Name] University, they were so impressed with us as a children's home that they asked me to go and speak with them as a guest lecturer. I like to see very proactive key working, so the staff will do a lot of research as well.'

Comprehensive recruitment procedures are effectively applied, ensuring that staff members of the right calibre are appointed to care for the young people. Excellent supervision processes ensure that staff members' strengths and areas for development are reflected on regularly, enabling the staff team to take strides in its development. The company trainer has recently left, which could have an impact on staff receiving up-to-date training. However, the proactive manager has ensured that other training opportunities have been sourced, maintaining a high level of skill. A staff member said, 'My supervisions are very in-depth and thorough and give me a real chance to reflect on my practice to ultimately improve my performance with the young people. My supervisions outline my current training needs and address these by booking me on training or taking part in practical work with my supervisor. My manager has given and provided me with plenty of opportunities and supported me throughout to improve my performance.'

The manager has an excellent overview of the care provided in the home. Her monthly auditing processes inform both the development plan and the Regulation 45 report and identify areas of need to benefit the young people, for example arranging for the designated officer to attend the home to conduct a training session for staff. Excellent external monitoring reports effectively contribute towards the well-being and safety of the young people.

The home's statement of purpose states that: 'Our Mission at [home's name] is to offer young people in crisis a family environment where they can settle, relax and find stability in their lives. An environment where they will receive understanding, encouragement and support from adults who care, and are trained to work in a professional and non-judgemental manner. Our staff are committed to guiding the young people towards reaching their full potential and preparing them for the responsibilities of future citizenship.' The fact that the current resident group members are happy, safe and have made significant progress in improving their education and well-being demonstrates that this aim is being met.

Parents report positively about the regular contact that they receive from the home and the support that their children receive. This enables the young people to remain a part of their extended families, where agreed with social workers. A parent reported, 'I have complete trust about them keeping him safe. I think he is a lot safer than when he was being fostered.'

The outgoing manager established clear processes to identify the progress the young people make. This enabled her to address any deficiencies with placing authorities and partner agencies. The young people fully benefit from this proactive approach. Professionals from all disciplines are universal in their positive comments about the excellent communication and collaborative working between themselves and the home.

This provides young people with consistent messages and a knowledge that the staff team will work with others to ensure that they attain the best possible outcomes. An independent reviewing officer reported, 'The young person could very easily have gone down a very different path. As a result of the placement with this unit, and the support given by staff and other professionals working with him, this young person's outcomes have significantly improved.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC056259

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pebbles Care Limited

Registered provider address: Rouse House, 2 Wyther Lane, Kirkstall, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS5 3BT

Responsible individual: Amanda Quinn

Registered manager: Post Vacant

Inspector

Ann-Marie Born, social care inspector

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