

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	26/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC061795
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Southern Adolescent Care Services Ltd
Registered person address	Room 8, Worth Corner, Turners Hill Road, Pound Hill, CRAWLEY, West Sussex, RH10 7SL

Responsible individual	Sharon Jenner
Registered manager	Sarah Chaston
Inspector	Kevin Whatley

Inspection date	26/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC061795

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people say they feel safe. They speak positively of staff and live in a home where their individual needs guide the care they receive.
- Young people benefit from personalised and comprehensive care planning programmes. These balance their individual targets against the wider overall aims and objectives of the placement; encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions.
- Partnership working between care staff, health specialists and education professionals is robust. This inclusive approach means that young people make good progress in all aspects of their development.
- Young people receive good quality education. Most of them achieve well and make good or above expected progress in their learning. The approach to vocational and employment training enables young people to gain valuable experience.
- Staff regularly consult with young people regarding the care they receive, their day-to-day experience of the home and the development of the service.
- A stable team of experienced staff understand the specific and often complex needs of young people. They display commitment and knowledge and talk enthusiastically about helping young people to make progress.
- The leadership team promote appropriately high expectations of practice and lead by example. The Registered Manager is passionate about consolidating individualised practice and aspires to improve the home further.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
8: The education standard In order meet the education standard the registered person must ensure that staff— 2 (x) help young people to attend education, training or employment in accordance with the expectations in the young person's relevant plans; In particular seek ways to increase the levels of attendance and engagement for older young people.	10/03/2016
10: The health and well-being standard In order to meet the health and well-being standard the registered person must ensure that staff- 2 (ii) understand the young person's health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the young person's health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the young person's age and understanding; In particular help young people to receive the health care that they require	10/03/2016
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must— 1 (b) promote the welfare of young people; In particular ensure that bathrooms and their flooring are improved or replaced	10/03/2016
40: Notification of a serious event 4 the registered person must notify Ofsted and each relevant person without delay if- (e) there is any other incident relating to a young person which the registered person considers serious	10/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs; In particular that staff receive training in the use of ligature cutters (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.11)
- If young people complain or give a view on how the staffing structure could be improved to provide the best care for them, appropriate action should be taken. This is with specific reference to the employment of male staff (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The setting is one of three homes operated by the same private organisation. This home accommodates six young people on a planned or emergency basis. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties of either gender.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/07/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
29/01/2015	CH - Full	Good
05/08/2014	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
27/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people receive a good standard of care that is well planned and delivered. Their day-to-day experience is positive with staff creating a welcoming and nurturing environment. The home provides a structure that supports young people to learn and develop. This enhances their feelings of safety and security. Young people share positive relationships with staff. One young person said, 'The staff are good because I think they understand what it's like for us.' Staff support young people to celebrate their differences and diversity. They promote tolerance and understanding through personalised one-to-one sessions, effective discussion and partnership working with other agencies. This ensures that young people receive tailored care that promotes their development. Young people say they feel listened to and heard. They participate in house meetings and are able to express their opinions easily. Aside from house meetings they also complete monthly monitoring of care forms. This enables them to contribute to menu and holiday planning. Care planning reflects young people's individual needs. This includes highlighting their physical, medical and emotional needs and incorporating their own views on how they should be looked after. Plans are compiled in conjunction with the organisation's therapeutic director and the placing authority's aims and objectives. These detailed plans provide a comprehensive guide of how young people are to be cared for that staff follow in practice. Young people have their medical and emotional health care needs met well. However a few young people refuse to have their needs addressed. Robust plans highlight the specific areas of need and how these will be met. Notably around how best to meet emotional well-being. Where young people have an identified issue joint planning ensures they receive the specialist support they require. For instance in networking with community adolescent mental health services to provide a cohesive approach. The role of the key-worker is central to the way that care is provided, for example in taking a lead in ensuring all routine appointments are completed. They act as advocates for young people and drive the progress that young people make in relation to their health. A majority of young people attend their routine or required health care appointments. Despite staff efforts some older young people are less engaged in the process and have refused to go to doctor's surgeries or other health care clinics.	

Young people are provided with focused support and guidance to help them prepare for adulthood and leaving care. Older young people work through the homes independence programme which offers them opportunities to improve their self-care skills. This includes living to a budget equivalent to their age if they were not in employment once they leave. Young people say this has been most helpful in giving them a realistic idea of what life will be like for them once they move on. The home also offers a period of outreach for those young people who leave and live locally. This provides young people with the chance to call on the strength of the relationships they share with staff for support as they move toward independent living. As a result young people are more likely to make successful transitions.

Because staff have a good understanding of the young people, they are able to respond to changes in their attitude and behaviours. They use their positive relationships to identify strategies that promotes personal development. For example in helping young people appreciate their vulnerability when away from adult supervision. Other professionals praise this approach. A social worker said, 'the home have really helped (name of young person) to take more responsibility...this has very much improved her confidence'.

Young people receive good support to engage in their learning, although not all of them attend regularly. The organisation has an education co-ordinator who oversees the education and training needs of young people. This allows for close liaison with schools and colleges to seek the best package. This has assisted young people who had poor attendance records to now engage well in their schooling. The organisation also employ teachers who offer a bespoke support package as a 'stepping stone' to getting young people back into education. They visit the home and work alongside young people to help improve their confidence around key subjects such as Maths and English. In general young people engage well, however some older young people have refused to attend their college placements or in-house support provision. They say, 'staff try hard to get us to go...but I am choosing not to'.

Young people benefit from living in a home that promotes the importance of community involvement. Regular activities take place with staff encouraging young people to attend the gym and go swimming. They are also supported to join local youth clubs and currently attend these several times a week. Young people feel able to bring friends to the home which helps create a homely feel. The home went on group holidays last year which young people and staff clearly enjoyed.

	Judgement grade
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people say they feel safe. Care practice is underpinned by effective policies and procedures, detailed risk assessments and staff responses. Staff practice prioritises the safe management of young people's individual risks and vulnerabilities. They receive training in safeguarding and fully understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Robust actions ensure that when safeguarding concerns arise they are addressed swiftly and in keeping with agreed child protection protocols. This includes reporting matters to external safeguarding professionals in a timely manner. None of these concerned staff practice or attitude. Staff use their relationships with young people to encourage them to reflect on their behaviours, take responsibility for their actions and consider the impact these have on others. This approach promotes young people's self-esteem and confidence and encourages them to use alternative strategies to manage their anxieties and frustrations. As a result young people generally make good progress in their development. An appropriate complaints procedure gives young people the opportunity to raise concerns easily. Clear details of the process is contained in the young person guide. Young people confirmed they know how to complain and who to contact should they wish to seek independent support or guidance. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. Detailed risk assessments outline young people's known risks and vulnerabilities from the point of admission. Staff continually monitor young people's behaviour and implement good systems to share important information with the whole staff team. This ensures that any emerging concerns are taken fully into consideration and enables staff to adapt their practice to counteract concerns and provide appropriate supervision and support. These processes are embedded in practice and have proven highly effective in supporting young people who are at risk; for example, those who self-harm. Staff engage young people through individual key-work sessions to explore their risk taking behaviour such as their risk of exploitation, substance misuse, e-safety and bullying. This helps young people to better understand the challenges and risks they face in their lives and helps them to make better choices about keeping themselves safe and out of trouble. As a result they have taken on board adults concerns, learned better decision making and have become safer. The home do not have a significant problem with young people going missing. Young people are provided with good support and guidance to appreciate the risks of them leaving the home without permission. This has helped them considerably reduce the times they leave in such circumstances. There are occasions when older	

young people return late to the home from periods of free time. When away from the home they generally keep in contact with staff. Although young people do not always comply with agreed time frames, they do not return under the influence of drugs or alcohol and have not been placing themselves at risk in the community.

Young people understand the rules and for the most part feel they are fair. The majority of young people speak positively about the homes' reward system and recognise the benefit of receiving incentives such as small amounts of extra money. For the most part young people behave well with inappropriate behaviour challenged in a firm but considered fashion. For instance in staff encouraging young people to treat each other and them with respect. As a result there is little or no bullying-type incidents and no young people raised concerns.

The use of restraint is appropriate and only used when required. Staff are trained in physical intervention with the value of purposeful relationships seen in the low number of restraints taking place. In recent weeks most interventions have been needed to stop young people hurting themselves.

Staff respond swiftly to situations where young people self-harm. This includes using ligature cutters to remove items that young people have tied around themselves. Although staff have applied such equipment appropriately they have not received formal training in their usage.

The searching of young people's rooms is proportionate. Young people say they are not subject to unnecessary searches. The use of searching is risk led and undertaken at a level which matches concerns. For instance when there are issues of implements used to self-harm.

Staff recruitment supports the safety of young people. Checks are completed prior to staff starting at the home are robust. This ensures only those adults deemed appropriate care for young people.

The health and safety of young people and staff alike is taken seriously. A range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine checks ensure the environment is safe. Fire safety is robustly implemented with a range of agreed protocols in place to facilitate the safe and secure evacuation of the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The management of the home is effective with a clear emphasis placed on meeting the individual needs of young people. The Registered Manager is suitably	

experienced and holds the required award in care and management. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is striving to consolidate good practice, learn from experience and improve the home further.

The one requirement made at the last inspection has been met. Staff have received training in radicalisation and speak positively about how this has raised their awareness and understanding. They are fully aware of treating such concerns in the same way as child protection and knew the protocols for doing so.

Feedback from stakeholders, such as social workers is positive. Comments included, 'the home have stuck by (name of young person) despite their difficult behaviours...staff provide firm boundaries which helps young people to settle...communication is very good'.

The home is monitored effectively. The Registered Manager's monitoring reports are detailed and take account of how well the home is functioning and the progress made by young people. This enables her to highlight patterns and trends in the behaviour of young people and the practice of adults who care for them. External independent monitoring takes place monthly. This provides a good overview of events including capturing the views of young people and stakeholders.

Staff receive clear guidance and encouragement to meet the needs of young people to a good standard. They receive appropriate training and regular supervision. Recent training has included the risks of radicalisation. Staff say they receive extremely good support which culminates in raising expectations of practice and improving consistency. As a result young people are cared for by adults who are motivated and passionate about supporting them to learn and progress in all areas of their lives.

Young people live in a home that is suitably maintained, although some areas are in need of upgrading. The fitting of new more domestic style doors has helped bring a more homely feeling to the environment. Young people continue to decorate their rooms to their tastes and personal choice with the home appearing welcoming. One bathroom is in need of refurbishment. Although functional the flooring has lifted and the overall appearance is somewhat tired.

Suitable care staff numbers ensure young people are looked after appropriately night and day. One young person noted that although they had no major issues with how they are looked after, they would prefer more male staff; the home has only one male member of staff. The human resources manager noted the difficulties in recruiting male staff and confirmed this is a key area of future recruitment. The aim being to provide a better gender balance across all the homes run by the organisation.

In a vast majority of situations Ofsted receive notifications regarding incidents that

the home consider serious. However on one occasion a matter involving the hospitalisation of a young person was not forwarded; all other parties had been informed. This shortfall did not place the young person at risk.

The staff team provide a good balance between imposing consistent boundaries, encouraging participation and delivering nurture and emotional warmth. Young people spoke most positively about staff, notably the support and guidance they receive. This they say has helped them make progress in their lives.

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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