

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	04/10/2016
Unique reference number	SC062248
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Quality Protects Children Ltd
Registered provider address	Hill House, Archway Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9XB

Responsible individual	Anthony Nolan
Registered manager	Joanne Byron
Inspectors	Michelle Edge Chris Scully

Inspection date	04/10/2016
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

SC062248

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Young people are safe and kept safe by good care practices from trained and experienced staff.
- Young people's self-esteem and confidence grow as a result of being cared for by a nurturing, supportive staff team.
- The registered manager and staff understand the value of young people attending education, college or training.
- Promotion of health services for young people is encouraged, including securing access to healthcare, emotional support and behavioural support.
- Detailed and bespoke care planning helps young people to prepare for independent living.
- A range of professionals involved in young people's lives confirmed that staff understand the risks that young people face and work cooperatively to minimise them.
- Young people who live far from home receive support and encouragement to develop and sustain important links with their culture and family.
- Managers and staff demonstrate interest in and enthusiasm for their care role. They place young people at the centre of all developments in the home. As a result, young people identify well with the home and those who care for them.
- Shortfalls identified from this inspection include:
 - independent visitor reports (regulation 44) not being provided to HMCI in a timely way
 - supervision of all staff is not held on a regular basis as recorded in the home's own statement of purpose
 - on occasions the rotas do not clearly demonstrate who is on shift and the hours they have worked.

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
33: Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development and receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)(b))	25/11/2016
37: Other records The registered person must maintain the records in schedule 4 and ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37 (2)(a)(b)) In particular, a copy of the staff roster of persons working at the home, and a record of the actual hours worked.	25/11/2016
44: Independent person: visits and reports The independent person must provide a copy of the independent report to HMCI. (Regulation 44 (7)(a))	25/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- All children's case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of the entry ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards,' page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run children's home for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/07/2015	Full	Good
09/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people make good progress while living at the home. They benefit from consistent care, which enables them to reflect on their past and to develop positive coping and social skills. This has led to a significant reduction for some young people in episodes of going missing from care. One young person said, 'Since I have been here, I have stopped running off and the staff have helped me.' There are good, supportive relationships between young people and staff. The staff and managers demonstrate both perseverance and determination to work through challenging times with young people. They listen to young people and provide encouragement and guidance. One young person said, 'Staff do listen and talk to us about making the right choices.' Staff are optimistic and talk freely about the qualities and strengths of the young people who they care for. A social worker stated, '(Name of young person) has made lots of progress and is now ready to move on to her new home, staff have helped by preparing and supporting her. Communication is good and I receive updates about her progress and development.' Young people are confident that staff listen to them, and discuss their complaints and concerns, as well as their future plans. Although young people have not used the formal complaints process, they were clear that they would talk to the manager or staff, if they 'were not happy' and feel confident that staff would help them. Young people also have access to advocates and their social workers, which means that they have other adults other than staff at the home to turn to if they are worried or concerned. Young people's meetings take place regularly. Within these meetings, young people are encouraged by the staff to voice their opinions and views about the care that they receive and their home environment. For example, young people had requested new mirrors for the bathroom and furniture for their bedroom. Staff had discussed this with the manager and worked with young people to purchase these. All young people are clear about the reasons they are in the home and the goals that they are working towards in their futures. One young person said, 'I like it here and the staff want me to do well.' This confidence in the staff's caring and nurturing approach supports young people's self-esteem and improves their emotional well-being. Young people attend school or other educational provision. They are learning and making progress. Staff encourage young people who refuse to attend and there are clear plans in the home, which ensures that staff are consistent in their approach in	

encouraging young people to return to their education placements. The home has also been proactive in its approach around challenging local authorities when young people have been given limited access to education. This direct challenge has provided opportunities for the manager to work closely with educational professionals, to ensure that clear plans are devised, giving young people the same opportunities as their peer group to learn and develop. This ensures that all young people are making progress in their education.

Staff work hard to ensure that young people are fit and healthy. They provide advice and guidance on healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, including the promotion of physical activities, such as trips to the local gym. Young people are up to date with their routine health assessments, and staff support young people who are hesitant to attend their health appointments with incentives and appropriate guidance. The staff's determination to secure appointments and to explain the importance of leading healthy lifestyles is showing young people that they care for them, and want to promote their good health.

Young people have appropriate, carefully assessed and supported contact with their families, friends and other people who are important to them. For young people who live a long distance from their families, staff continue to support and encourage regular and meaningful contact, in accordance with their local authority care plans. When issues about contact arise, including young people requesting additional time at home or being allowed to travel independently, staff liaise with the local authority and look at any changes that could improve the quality of contact arrangements. These changes might include longer timescales and, when appropriate, overnight stays. This has improved and sustained young people's relationships with their families and others who are important to them.

Feedback from both social workers and family members confirmed that communication from the home is good and that they all receive regular updates from staff. This ensures that those involved are fully informed and updated and are working together to ensure that young people's needs are met.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people said that they feel safe and secure in the home. Managers and staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and consistently review safe working practices, to help them to meet individual young people's needs. They are alert to potential risks, and encourage young people to let them know if they have any worries or concerns. Staff help young people to explore why social exchanges	

go wrong, and sensitively encourage young people to examine their own behaviour as well as that of others. Because key workers achieve a safe environment for this difficult work to take place, young people respond positively to their efforts to make progress at a pace that suits them. A strength of the home is the consistent messages provided by staff. This is possible because staff have developed an open culture where all staff contribute their thoughts about each plan of care for young people, and agreement is reached by child-centred and reflective practice.

Detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans provide staff with clear guidance and strategies on keeping young people safe. However, some risk assessments had been updated, but were not always signed and dated to indicate who the author of the changes was and when the changes were made. This did not have a direct impact on young people's safety, as staff demonstrate in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of individual's risks, and their interventions are consistent and effective. This was clearly a recording matter and, when brought to the attention of the manager, was immediately rectified.

Since the last inspection, there have been incidents of young people who have been missing from care, although this has greatly reduced in frequency. When incidents of going missing happen, staff and the manager act appropriately and in a timely manner, notifying the police and local authority so that appropriate action is taken. In addition, staff take appropriate action to follow the procedures and processes in place, to secure the young people's safe return home. When young people return they are greeted warmly. Staff provide an opportunity for the young people to meet with an independent person to discuss the events and determine the reasons for their absence. Any serious concerns are appropriately escalated to multi-disciplinary strategy meetings. This ensures that all safeguarding professionals are working together to assess and to minimise risk.

Clear boundaries are in place to manage challenging and risky behaviour. Staff work well together as a team, and this consistent approach helps young people to understand the rules and why these are in place. Young people report that any consequences they receive are fair, and positive behaviour is promoted through incentive schemes, which reward good behaviour. As a result, young people are beginning to learn what is expected of them, and understand how their behaviour has an impact on themselves and others. Occasionally, physical intervention is necessary to prevent significant damage to property or assaults on staff. All incidents are well managed, and records are completed afterwards. Furthermore, the manager continues to review all records, to identify any trends or patterns. The information gained is also used as a learning opportunity, to continually review and improve practices within the home.

Staff are alert to the potential for bullying, and the occasions when young people may say hurtful things to one another. Adequate staffing ratios means that any such incidents are known to staff who intervene quickly. Key work sessions take place regularly and focus on addressing any concerns. Young people are supported

to maintain positive and respectful relationships with each other.

Staff members understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of keeping young people safe. They receive regular training in various aspects of safeguarding practice, including child sexual exploitation, e-safety and missing from home. Staff understand what to do if they are concerned that a young person is at risk or being harmed in any way. The service has a full range of regularly reviewed and updated safeguarding policies and procedures in place, in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. These guide and enhance staff practice, which, in turn, helps to keep young people safe.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
Young people benefit from a suitably qualified and committed registered manager. She has considerable experience and a number of relevant qualifications, including the level 5 diploma in leadership and management. All staff spoken with during the inspection reported high levels of satisfaction at the management support that they receive. The home's statement of purpose is up to date and provides a defined level of information that confirms the services on offer and how they work in practice. The managers and staff have a clear understanding of the document. It was evident within team meeting minutes that discussions had taken place with staff about the ethos of the home, and about how they meet and support the individual needs of young people. This ensures that all team members use a consistent approach. On occasions, staff duty rosters fail to reflect accurately the actual staff on duty, including when agency staff are used, and the actual hours worked. This prevents a clear audit trail of who is working within the setting, when and where. The lack of transparency of who is on duty potentially places young people at risk and compromises the continuity of care. Staff feel that as a team they are mutually supportive and have the ability to reflect and learn from incidents. They use team meetings to review practice issues and to evaluate the progress and experiences of young people. However, some staff have not been provided with regular opportunities to reflect on their own individual practice, performance and development. Supervision has not always taken place regularly and new starters have not received adequate support and development. Effective supervision is of vital importance to improving the quality of care provided to young people.	

There is a detailed training matrix in place, which includes mandatory training in safeguarding, first aid, medication and managing behaviours. All staff are required to attend all training programmes, and the managers evaluate staff members' knowledge bases through supervision and team meetings. Staff have completed, or are in the process of completing, the level 3 diploma for residential care. This ensures that all staff have the skills and knowledge to work effectively with young people.

Good monitoring systems ensure that the registered manager and staff team have a detailed awareness of the home's performance, including any areas of improvement, patterns or trends. Regular feedback from staff, young people and professionals informs the development and team plan, in order to improve practice. Managers consistently monitor the plans of young people, updating them in response to behaviours, to ensure that they reflect the care provided and show the progress and development of young people.

The service has well-established networks and relationships with a range of agencies and professionals who are involved in meeting the needs of young people. Staff work closely with teachers, social workers and health professionals as well as maintaining links with agencies with lead child protection responsibilities. Feedback from all involved was very positive and they all commented on the good communication systems in place.

The home's notification system is robust. Leaders and managers fully cooperate with external professionals, such as the local designated officer, the police and health professionals. The manager also ensures that Ofsted is kept informed of serious incidents in relation to the safety and well-being of young people. This enables the regulator to carry out its safeguarding responsibilities effectively, to ensure that young people are protected from harm. However, copies of independent monitoring reports (regulation 44) have not always been provided to Ofsted in a timely manner. This has hindered external scrutiny of the home.

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 children looked after 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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