

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	01/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC063219
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Children Assisted in a Real Environment Ltd
Registered person address	144 Old Oak Road, LONDON, W3 7HF

Responsible individual	Linda Blakely
Registered manager	Natasha Robinson
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	01/06/2015
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	Requires improvement

SC063219

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- One of the key strengths of this home is how staff form and build excellent relationships with young people. They hold high expectations of young people and promote an encouraging environment.
- An excellent core group of staff, who are well qualified and experienced, provide positive role models. This promotes effective individual work with young people. There is evidence of improvement and positive change in their lives. Positive behaviour is promoted and healthy attitudes are developed.
- Young people say they feel safe, listened-to and well respected. The home environment and atmosphere feels relaxed.
- There are good networks with professionals involved in young people's day-to-day care, all of whom give positive feedback on how the home and staff help and support young people.
- Communication is improving with wider professionals to develop better liaison with safeguarding partners, such as the local authority designated officer, the local child protection team, the police and the local safeguarding children board. Progress to develop strong links, which help to identify local issues and share information, will allow better protection for young people.
- Not all young people have looked after care plans from their placing authorities on their files. The Registered Manager and staff continue to challenge this position. The staff team are clear about overall plans for young people.
- Staff are not yet in receipt of regular and reflective supervision to support their work, neither are they having their performance appraised to ensure practice issues and development is progressed.
- The Registered Manager has not yet updated some policies to reflect the new regulations, for example the children's handbook and the statement of purpose. No young people are at risk as a result.

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
12. The protection of children standard. In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular reference to the updating of the safeguarding policy and location assessment, the Registered Manager must ensure: 12.(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – (c) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded; (e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly.	31/12/2015
13. The leadership and management standard. In order to meet the leadership and management standard with specific reference to seeking feedback from young people, the Registered Manager must: 13.–(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to – (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on– (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received;	31/12/2015
Employment of staff. (Regulation 33.–(4)(b)(c)) 33.–(4) The registered person must ensure that all employees–	31/12/2015

(b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(b)(c))	
Statement of Purpose. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)) 16.(3) The registered person must – (a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; (Regulation 16 (3)(a))	31/12/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure the requirements of the protection of children standard, the registered person has specific responsibilities under regulation 34 to prepare and implement policies setting out: the policy on protection of children from abuse and neglect should include arrangements in relation to e-safety and to counter risks of self-harm and suicide. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 44, paragraph 9.19)
- To ensure continued improvement under regulation 5, children's homes need to connect with and be part of the wider support system for each child in their care. No children's home will be able to meet, on its own, all of the child's needs. It is crucial that the home works in close partnership with all those who play a role in protecting and caring for the child, but particularly the child's local authority and statutory social worker. The registered person and the staff of the home cannot force a relevant person to engage or work productively with them and the regulation does not require this. The registered person should evidence what they have done to achieve engagement, including any actions taken to escalate concerns. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 11, paragraph 2.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home was registered in 2005 to provide residential care and support for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and who present with challenging behaviour. The home is owned and operated by a private organisation that has another registered home in the area. One Registered Manager is in charge of both homes.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23/06/2014	Full	Adequate
27/02/2014	Interim	Satisfactory progress
07/10/2013	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
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. One of the main strengths of this home is the emphasis on positive relationships between staff and young people. This extends to the relationships between the young people also and was emphasised well when one young person said, 'I love it here, the staff look out for you and the boys get along, you feel like it's your own home, it feels like a place you can relax.' All the young people say they feel safe and relaxed living in the home and when going out into the surrounding community. They know how to complain if they are not satisfied. They are able to invite friends and family to visit and feel comfortable doing so. One young person confirms they do not feel embarrassed about living in a children's home; they often bring friends to visit and feel relaxed about this. All young people are automatically given gym and library membership. They have access to a computer for homework and Wi-Fi. Staff switch the Wi-Fi off at 10.30pm, which all the young people understand. Young people agreed after discussions about why this was necessary and accepted this. One young person says, 'before it was switched off, I played games all night and didn't get up for school.' There is an emphasis on praise in this home and encouragement to have a say in organised and essential activities. A positive reward system gives young people the option to earn additional money for chores and good behaviour. Young people attend monthly meetings where they discuss and plan activities. Regular outings are organised; for example, during half term, staff and young people visited Southend-On-Sea and last summer they went camping at Clacton. At monthly meetings with staff, young people also plan a choice of menus and they are encouraged to help with cooking. One young person has cooked recently for the whole house, planning and preparing the meal with support from staff. Young people's diversity and identity needs met in this home. The staff group reflect the young people's diverse mix of backgrounds. Consideration to dietary and religious needs ensures young people feel valued and respected. Two of the young people have required interpreters to support them in the past; both young people have progressed so well with learning English that this support is not required. Staff have sought community networks locally to support young people	

with their cultural, language and religious needs. All of the above support has helped young people to communicate, learn, integrate and feel settled.

All the young people living here are on role at a school, college or a pupil referral unit and all attend regularly. There are high expectations for progressing in education, regardless of starting points and young people respond well to this expectation and are motivated. Positive behaviour is rewarded and celebrated.

There is a range of successes for the young people here, including gaining language skills, attending work experience, applying for an apprenticeships and working part-time.

There is evidence of excellent networking between staff and professionals involved in the young people's care to ensure that care planning is progressed and communication is effective. One social worker reports that the relationships developed with staff are excellent, that the young person concerned speaks very highly of staff and his case was seen as a model of good practice with the local authority councillors. Another professional from the virtual school stated, 'Communication is really superb, they contact me on all issues, it's really refreshing, and it would be nice if all our young people were there.'

Independent living skills are encouraged and supported by staff. Young people gain basic skills by planning and cooking meals, tidying their own rooms, helping with washing-up and doing their own laundry, all with support to manage such tasks. This encourages a positive sense of self-worth.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	GOOD
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good. Various key documents designed to promote safeguarding are either not in place or require updating, for example the location assessment to identify risks within the local community and/or possible resources to support young people. The safeguarding policy needs updating to cover all possible risk areas. However, no young people are at risk and the key areas are covered. Day-to-day communication with professionals is excellent; however, pro-active networking on key areas such as young people missing from care, e-safety and understanding risks in the local community is weaker. The Registered Manager is	

aware of this and is working hard to strengthen these links to keep young people as safe as possible.

The condition and decoration of the home is improved and given the limitations of the property size and layout, it is difficult to make many further improvements. The home have purchased a new kitchen door, which awaits fitting as the current one is hanging-off its hinges. The upstairs bathroom is in need of some decoration as the skirting boards are dusty and the paint chipped in some areas. Otherwise, the home and garden is adequately furnished and maintained and gives a relaxed and comfortable feel.

Young people say they feel safe at their home. The manager and staff are aware they can do more to protect them when out in the community. Risks such as sexual exploitation, gang association and radicalisation are areas where young people are likely to be vulnerable. Staff have not created an understanding between other safeguarding partners so that there can be strong and pro-active responses when needed, helping to reduce the risk of harm and keeping young people as safe as possible.

Young people feel they have good, positive relationships with staff. They know who their key-workers are and enjoy trusting relationships with them. There are good pro-active key-work sessions, linked to young people's risk assessments. This supports work to minimise identified risks for young people and help them to think about other strategies to contain and manage their behaviour.

Case files contain clear and accurate information. Appropriate referrals to child and adolescent mental health services and psychology services are in progress. When responses are not forthcoming, there is evidence that staff challenge this to ensure young people receive the help they need. Despite this, some care plans are not present on young people's files. The manager and staff continue to chase local authorities for this information. Without the placing authority plan, day-to-day plans are difficult to make and review. Young people deserve to have their care plans explained to them so they can understand their circumstances, provide feedback and challenge these if they do not agree.

Positive family relationships have been encouraged and supported by staff. It is impressive how pro-active staff had been on behalf of young people and this has supported young people to understand their identity and keep in touch with important people. One independent reviewing officer reported, 'They have promoted safe family contact, he is positively engaged and diverted from an undesirable lifestyle.'

There have not been any significant episodes of young people going missing. The policy is clear and shows that records are up to date. Staff are doing what is required in their quest to keep young people safe. The allocated social worker had been to visit when one young person returned to the home but there was no offer

of a return interview by an independent person. The manager and staff are working to increase their professional network to set-up these processes to safeguard young people further.

There is a clear behaviour management policy and plan in place, which supports positive behaviour. The current mix of young people has responded well to the system of behaviour management used. Restraint is rarely used in this home, with no recorded incidents since the last inspection. Sanctions and incentive management schemes are recorded well. The manager needs to update the behaviour management policy, which still refers to the old regulations. This will further help staff and young people to understand expectations and encourage positive behaviours.

The manager and staff have not done enough to protect young people from risks the internet may pose, for example bullying, grooming, abuse or radicalisation. There is no policy relating to this or guidance for staff.

Robust staff recruitment processes are in place. This protects young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home.

Adequate precautions to prevent the risk of fires. Safety equipment is in place and there is evidence of regular and compliant checks and fire drills.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. There are some areas of weakness within the leadership and management of this service. The Registered Manager manages another home. There is a rota to show when she is available in the home but this is a recent addition, despite being a recommendation at the last inspection, and it remains unclear how much time she spends in this home. There is a deputy manager in post, which is a suitable arrangement for when she is not present. Staff say the Registered Manager is available on the telephone if they need urgent advice. The manager is not consistently monitoring what is going on in the home and this is not helping it to improve. There is still no risk assessment of the location of the home, despite this being required at the two previous inspections. The independent monitoring of the home has improved. The independent person's	

most recent report gives a better analysis of how the home needs to improve and what areas need to focus on for improvement. Despite this improvement, the manager has not clearly addressed the issues raised and progress continues to be slow.

The manager's own monitoring of progress in the home is weak, for example, the manager has recommended in her monitoring report for January that staff appraisals require updating but these remain incomplete.

The statement of purpose is out of date; it references the other home that the provider runs and does not reflect the new quality standards and regulations. This document does not provide stakeholders with the right information about the service.

The Registered Manager struggles with the priorities of two services. The deputy manager is currently supervising all the staff members at this home and this is too much responsibility without the support of the manager.

There is an impressive and experienced core group of staff working at the home. They do not receive effective and regular supervision to assist them in their roles. Supervision agreements are not evident on most staff files and notes of sessions do not address key areas of reflection or progression, but tend to be a record of basic discussions held. Staff do not receive support, development and an opportunity to address practice issues through the appraisal process, as only one member of staff has received an appraisal since 2014.

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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