

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24 May 2016
Unique reference number	SC063219
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Children Assisted in a Real Environment Ltd
Registered provider address	144 Old Oak Road, London W3 7HF

Responsible individual	Linda Blakely
Registered manager	Natasha Robinson
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	24 May 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC063219

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The environment feels like a family home. The staff are friendly and welcoming, and the atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable.
- The staff are experienced and work well together as a team. Many of the staff have worked at the home for over ten years. This has created great stability.
- There is a stable group of young people. Some have been in placement for two to three years. Young people generally move on to semi-independent living when they are 18.
- Staff are ambitious for young people and have realistic expectations for them. For example, they provide considerable support for young people to engage in education and community activities.
- Respect and trust underpin the relationships that staff build with young people. Young people say they feel loved and accepted at this home.
- Young people make excellent progress from their starting points. The ethos within the home is that young people will enjoy and achieve to the best of their capacity.
- Young people in the home get on well together and choose to go out together. Older residents act as mentors and role models to newer young people.
- All staff are qualified to national vocation qualification level 3 or equivalent. Although the range of training is good, they do not receive specific training in the prevention of radicalisation and gang association.
- The safeguarding policy includes a majority of key issues including the risk of suicide and self-harm. However, it does not cover the risk of radicalisation or becoming involved in gang activity.
- Most staff have an annual appraisal of their practice, but some appraisals remain to be completed.

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

Recommendations

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

- All staff must have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and the children in the home's care. As part of the performance management process, poor performance should be addressed by a timely plan to bring about improvement ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5).
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the homes workforce plan.

This in relation to staff knowledge and training on prevention of radicalisation and gang association ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12).

- The registered person should ensure that the home's policies and procedures around the protection of children reflect any requirements of other relevant legislation.

This in relation to young people's vulnerability for radicalisation or gang association ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44, paragraph 9.22).

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 emphasis is on providing a family environment and a warm, professional and caring approach. 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
10 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
1 June 2015	Full	Good
18 February 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
23 June 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
A strength of this home is the staff team's attitude towards the young people. They provide good care and have appropriately high expectations for them. One social worker says, 'There is love there, helping them and expecting things of young people.' As a result young people make good progress which is often significant given their starting points. Young people make good progress from their starting points. For example, two young people in the home are involved in community volunteering. Another young person has recently passed his driving test. For others, small but significant progress includes eating with others at the dining table. Young people share positive relationships with staff and with each other. Most of the young people have been at the home for up to two to three years, and have built excellent relationships based on trust and respect. Older and more established residents are role models for newer young people. Such as setting the expectations of attending and engaging in education as a normal part of daily living. Care planning is very specific to each young person. The staff know young people well. This helps young people receive the support they need to make progress in their lives. In particular in their involvement with educational and community activities. Staff make sure that young people get to important appointments. Each young person has a personalised timetable that indicates what their schedule is for the forthcoming week. A youth offending worker says, 'Everything is very clear and pointed out to him, appointments and so on.' This approach enables young people to benefit from clear routines and expectations that encourages their participation in purposeful daily events. Staff promote young people's individual identities, needs and backgrounds. Young people who are seeking asylum gain good support to learn English as a second language. Staff also assist them in their applications to seek leave to remain in the UK. Young people have support to attend their personal place of worship within the community. For example, to visit the mosque or Catholic church. Young people are able to maintain contact with their families and those important to them. Staff support direct family visits in the community and ensure young people keep in touch with family members who live abroad. Young people have good access primary health services to ensure that they stay	

healthy. Staff arrange registration with local health providers quickly. They encourage young people to attend routine health appointments such as regular eye tests, and dental and statutory medical check-ups. Health care plans are accurate and ensure that staff are aware of how to meet specific medical needs. Strong networking with partner agencies means young people who may need further support their emotional and mental health have this provided. Young people also engage in regular key-work sessions which address many day-to-day issues such as self-esteem, negative behaviours and consequences. This provides young people with a suitable outlet to talk about their issues with adults they know and trust.

Young people make extremely good progress in their learning. All young people within the home are on roll for school or college, and are engaged in education. One young person has 100% attendance at college. Feedback from tutor's there describe him as a diligent student. Another young person has 98% attendance. Staff act quickly to pursue programmes of education including home tuition and pupil referral units. When young people need additional support to engage in education, appropriate rewards help to encourage attendance and a positive attitude.

Young people are encouraged to learn independence skills. For example, cooking for themselves, buying ingredients and preparing a meal for the other young people. Young people do their own laundry and keep their rooms tidy, with support where needed. One young person who moved out recently had a programme of outreach support put in place should they need it. Young people are welcomed back to visit and eat at the home on occasions. This helps to make young people feel valued and part of the home.

Personal choices are available for young people and they have added their individual touches to decorate their rooms. For example, one young person has his country's flag up and another told me that he went out to choose a bedside lamp for his room. This helps young people to feel involved in their home, and that they can have choices over how their rooms look.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say that they like living here and feel safe. One young person says, 'I wouldn't change anything, I get on with the staff okay and know how to complain.' Other comments from young people include: ■ I like it here and get on with the other young people. ■ I like the staff and I'm okay here. ■ I'm very happy here, things have been pretty much the same all the time.	

The risk young people pose to themselves and others is identified and planned for. Good quality assessments clearly identify areas of risk and provide staff with strategies to manage and reduce them. Staff are working to develop better ways to involve young people in contributing more routinely to their risk assessments. This is an area of ongoing development, following a recommendation from the independent visitor to the home.

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

Behaviour management is excellent. A rewards system linked to clear expectations of behaviour works particularly well with young people responding and engaging positively. The use of sanctions is appropriate and provides a good balance between acceptable behaviour and the expectations of staff. As a result the number of incidents remain low.

Young people live in a home where the need for staff to intervene physically is rare. No restraints have occurred since the last inspection. Staff use the strength of relationships to de-escalate difficult situations. This helps young people find appropriate ways to deal with their feelings.

The homes safeguarding policy guides staff in what is required of them to keep young people safe. This has recently been updated to include the risk of self-harm and suicide. This helps staff to understand how to reduce risks or to take action, if needed. However, the policy does not currently include the risk of young people becoming involved in radicalisation or gang association. This omission does not place young people at risk of harm.

Staff are aware of the risks when young people go missing. Protocols are clear and staff follow these. Staff talk to young people when they return to the home and ensure that they feel welcomed back. This helps them to understand why the young person went missing. A majority of missing incidents relate to young people returning home late. The home routinely requests that placing authorities fulfil their statutory duties to complete independent return home interviews. However, none have taken place. The registered manager challenges this on behalf of young people and shares good working relationships with safeguarding partners, such as the police.

The approach to health and safety ensures young people live in a safe environment. Adequate precautions prevent the risk of fire. Safety equipment is in place and there is evidence of regular and compliant checks and fire drills. A suitable location risk assessment identifies local risks well and identifies community resources. Issues associated with gangs or the risk of young people becoming radicalised are being incorporated as part of on-going safety planning.

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	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is competent and experienced. She is appropriately qualified, having recently completed her level 5 diploma. She holds management responsibility for two children's homes and makes appropriate arrangements for management in her absence. Her deputy manager is experienced and takes an effective leadership role in the home when she is not present. This means staff receive a consistent level of support and guidance. Managers have addressed a majority of the four recommendations set at the last inspection. This confirms that leaders and managers learn from experience and make improvements to the service. Staff say that they feel very well supported. Supervision recordings indicate regular meetings and relevant discussions about all aspects of staff care and practice. Appraisals are now present on most files. However, some are still not complete. Appraisals give leaders and managers an opportunity to reflect on practice, challenge weak areas and plan staff development. They also identify areas of weakness where staff training is required. Staff showed good knowledge and understanding of most safeguarding issues. However, they have not received training in the risks posed to young people of radicalisation or gang association. The staff team is extremely stable with many of them employed for some time. Just one staff member has left since the last full inspection, and a new member was recruited in her place. Such stability supports the development of meaningful relationships and provides a sense of permanence to young people. There is good external monitoring of the home. An independent visitor regularly visits and seeks feedback from young people, professionals and parents. Recommendations are acted upon, and this has helped leaders and managers to improve the service. The registered manager completes a review of the quality of care, which has helped to provide an overview of the service. This has informed the home's development plan, which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. The registered manager is developing systems to reduce paperwork to a minimum. The responsible individual is very much involved in the planning and organisation of the service. They have recently recruited a compliance manager to work across both homes to drive and implement improvements. There is good evidence that leaders and staff work proactively with others to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people. Feedback from professionals and parents was positive. One parent said, 'Staff have been very respectful. They always inform me and consult with me.'	

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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