

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	20/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC063683
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Manchester City Council
Registered person address	Manchester City Council, PO Box 532, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA

Responsible individual	Amanda Amesbury
Registered manager	Michael Booth
Inspector	Denise Jolly

Inspection date	20/01/2016
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

SC063683

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people recognise that staff care about them, and do everything they can to help them to stay safe. As a result, they experience improvement in their emotional wellbeing as well as their protection.
- Young people are provided with excellent support to address their emerging health needs.
- All young people have education or training placements and are persistently supported by staff to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Staff understand risk extremely well and are helping young people to explore and improve their understanding of the impact of making unsafe choices. As a result, there is a reduction in young people being missing or being criminalised, and fewer violent incidents in the home.
- A wide range of professionals say that staff have an in-depth understanding of the needs of young people. They promote, develop and sustain multi-professional planning and review to help their lives improve.
- Managers are committed to driving forward improvements but recognise there is still much to be achieved. This includes stabilising senior management structures; refining monitoring and quality assurance tools; and improving the matching of young people to the home to better support their needs.
- The Statement of Purpose is under review, and does not set out how the linguistic needs of unaccompanied asylum seekers will be met with regard to day to day living and independent advocacy.

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
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must, particularly in regard of those for whom English is a foreign language — (2)(b) ensure that each child – (ii) has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, and (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support; (d) ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about— (i) the children's guide; (ii) how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with; and (iii) what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision.	14/03/2016
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must— (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; (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;	14/03/2016
16. Statement of purpose 1) The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the	14/03/2016

matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular parts 1 and 5 of the Schedule with regard to unaccompanied asylum seekers.	
44. Independent person: visits and reports (4) The independent person must produce a report about their visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether— (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.	31/03/2016

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

- The registered person must monitor the use of procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.28,)
- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 56, paragraph 11.4)
- The registered person must ensure that recruitment, including by internal transfer, of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.1)
- The registered person should ensure that any actions to address improvements in the delivery of care provided in the home are clearly set out, so as to measure their ongoing effectiveness and the timeframes by which they are expected to be achieved. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65 paragraph 15.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This a local authority home that provides care and accommodation for six children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
19/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
28/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
23/05/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people live in a home where staff build positive and trusting relationships with them, and with the important adults in their lives. Staff work consistently and energetically to overcome barriers to trusted and secure relationships. Young people value the efforts of staff, saying, 'They help me when I need it, they are good to talk to, I trust (named staff)'. Staff demonstrate high levels of confidence and competence within their practice and remain positive and constructive, when young people experience difficulties in responding to their efforts. This has enabled a young person to stabilise their relationships with other professionals, and engage in key assessment of their needs. Ultimately, the findings from those assessments will improve the quality of care planning for their future progress. Most young people enjoy local contact with their family and friends. When appropriate, staff support and steer safe and positive contact that helps young people retain a sense of belonging and identity. Some transition plans have concluded with their return home or to independent living with family nearby. Staff promote positive messages about education, co-operative living, and responsibility. Progress reflects the starting points and history of young people and they take small steps towards making improvements in their lives. When they are overcome by the impact of past trauma and experiences, or important relationships become unstable, they rely on staff to help them to manage their feelings safely. This can mean that some young people do not make positive choices when they are outside of the home. When they encounter difficulty and slip back, staff remain steadfast, to encourage them to try again. They use a non-judgemental but challenging approach, to inform them about the risks, and reinforce the importance of their wellbeing. This approach ensures young people remain in a stable placement. An independent review officer said, 'I am impressed with the home. They stay with young people through their ups and downs.' Young people are aware of the health support services that are available to them. All are registered with community health professionals. When young people arrive with identified needs, such as dental work, they experience continuity of care because they continue to visit the professionals who already know them. This ensures that treatment is progressed despite their change of placement. Staff foster excellent relationships with the nurse for looked after children. She praised staff as 'absolutely brilliant', because young people trust them to help them	

through their health difficulties, and make informed choices.

Mostly, young people say they 'get along' in the home. A minority of young people who are not suitably placed have had an impact on the settled atmosphere in the home. Staff have worked hard to listen to the complaints and concerns young people raise, and tackle any issues of poor relationship or bullying quickly and effectively. Lively discussion is also had about the food provided, and staff offer solutions such as young people shopping and preparing their own food as an alternative.

A young person with limited understanding of English language lives in the home. A translator has been present for planning meetings, and staff arranged for similar support to explore and resolve potential bullying. He spends a good deal of time alone in his room, when he is not at school. He has not been provided with a children's guide in a language he understands, nor has he been advised of advocacy services that may be available to him. This limits his capacity to have his needs and wishes understood on a daily basis, raise concerns, or to exercise freedom of expression.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Professionals say that staff provide safe and nurturing care, and promote transparency in their relationships. The home provides good information about incidents and difficulties experienced by young people, so that external professionals can assess the quality of safe practice in the home. This instils confidence in the ability of staff to keep children and young people protected from harm. Managers employ staff by using safer recruitment processes that help prevent unsuitable adults from working in the home. However, occasionally staff transfer from other homes within the authority. Insufficient information is recorded about their strengths and developmental needs, to fully assess their impact on the safety of young people. Effective buddying and practice support, effectively limits the impact of this shortfall. Staff regularly revisit child protection training, and are confident to explore each other's interaction with and attitudes towards children and young people in the home. The safety and welfare of young people is a priority. Staff efficiently share intelligence and explore identified risks such as the appearance of mobile phones or specific incidents when young people have been missing, to create a clear and coordinated response that enhances young people's safety. The benefit of this	

inclusive approach is evident in the reduction in identified risk to some young people, such as fewer incidents of being missing, and significantly reduced physical management. Keyworkers regularly update comprehensive risk management plans, to ensure young people's emerging needs are identified, and staff know what to do to minimise the risks. On a small number of occasions, staff do not follow written timescales for reporting young people missing. This leaves them more vulnerable to harm when they are out late, and sends mixed messages about the importance of keeping to their agreed plans.

Independent visitors are identified, to speak to young people upon their return from being missing. The arrangement is in its early days, and the organisation is making arrangements to visit the home to get to know young people, so that they may feel more inclined to speak to them about any issues related to the home.

Staff use a recognised behaviour support approach to help young people to develop strategies to manage their own feelings and behaviour. Strong role modelling underpins a clear message that young people should take responsibility for their choices and behaviour. Staff provide lots of opportunities for young people to talk through their feelings and to find helpful ways to manage their anger or upset.

Staff use approved and skilled techniques to physically support or restrain young people to prevent serious harm. Recording of such incidents is clear, to enable staff to reflect upon and improve their practice. Staff engage young people in debriefs, to explore other ways of keeping everybody safe. This approach has successfully reduced restraint in the home, and has enabled a young person to remain in placement despite originally demonstrating dangerous and volatile behaviour. Other young people have found it stressful to witness such episodes, and resent the loss of staff time and attention they might otherwise have. Typically, staff offer honest and positive opportunities for them to offload their feelings and regain activity time with them, to restore a sense of balance and wellbeing.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The suitably qualified and very experienced Registered Manager leads a stable, qualified and committed staff team, to provide confident and nurturing care to young people. They share a common vision to improve young people's lives and prospects. Their energy and drive is favourably recognised by many professionals. In recent months, senior managers have changed, and are continuing to progress towards a stable team. In addition, a temporary project manager has conducted a	

review of the authority's residential services, and created an action plan for improvement in children's residential care. While, the Registered Manager has yet to see the plan, he has participated in a number of improvements arising from the review. He was positive about being able to participate in authority-wide planning to identify and meet the needs of young people within residential care, as this has created significant improvements in placement matching, and therefore stability for young people. Currently, one young person lives in the home who is not suitably placed. He is benefiting from the placement because staff have skilfully engaged him in crucial assessments of his development and need. Another young person is placed in the home, without a clear plan in place to support his cultural and linguistic needs. This is because the home's Statement of Purpose does not set out guidance for how this will be achieved. The efforts of staff to help him to communicate are admirable, but not sufficiently effective to ensure he is enabled to fulfil his potential.

In addition, the new pan-authority process enables the manager to monitor and chase the actions of other professionals, who may be creating delay in achieving planning targets. For example, a school teacher was delighted to say that an educational assessment for one young person was fast-tracked as a direct result of the input from the home's manager. This is enabling an appropriate school place to be identified.

The manager is trialling a new quality assurance tool, to pull together sufficient data and analysis that will help him to evaluate the key strengths and developmental needs of the home. At present this tool, and monitoring tools already in place, do not fully identify how the views of young people impact upon the development of the home. Similarly, the report that is written by independent visitors does not provide clear judgements about how well young people are protected or cared for.

While the manager identifies actions to improve the home, they are not set out to demonstrate timescales for and steps towards achievement. This means, for example, that staff training is not measured for effectiveness and improvement in carrying out the aims of the home, and some staff appraisals do not result in clear targets to support them to improve the quality of care and support they provide.

Feedback from all stakeholders is extremely complimentary about the impact the home has on the lives of young people. They recognise that despite very challenging circumstances that bring them into the home, all young people make good progress from their starting points. In particular, they benefit from the development of safe and sound relationships that underpin their recovery from setbacks.

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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