

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	27/01/2016
Unique reference number	SC063895
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Post Vacant
Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Inspection date	27/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged Outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.	
Young people continue to receive a very good standard of care from a committed staff team who work hard to improve their lives. They make good progress in a range of areas given their starting points. Feedback from social workers and other professionals confirms that young people receive a very good standard of care. A social worker made the following comment, 'This is home for him'. Young people confirm that they are very happy and settled. One young person told the inspector that this was 'home'. The home continues to be well managed. Young people and staff were informed in October 2015 that the registered manager would be leaving to set up a new home with the company. They have been supported through this period and there is no evidence of any direct impact on the provision of care. The registered manager left at the beginning of January 2016 and a new manager has been appointed and due to start at the beginning of February 2016. The new manager is transferring from one of the company's other children's home and already knows the young people; she has extensive experience of managing children's homes. The registered manager has continued to forge strong relationships with partner agencies and multi-agency working is embedded in day-to-day practice. This has helped young people to continue to make progress. Care plans (known as individual placement plans), risk assessments, and associated records are generally of a good standard. However, some care plans do not always give clear and specific details about how to meet needs. Records are not always signed and dated by the author. There is no evidence that these shortfalls have affected the delivery of care because staff know young people very well. Nevertheless, there is the potential for these shortfalls to hinder staff's ability, particularly new staff, to deliver appropriate care. Some young people continue to make really good educational progress. Their attendance is very good and staff provide both practical and emotional support. Additionally, staff work very closely with schools, colleges and training	

organisations to ensure that they get the support they need. A young person has settled very well in their new school, which they started in September 2015, and his head teacher confirms this. She made the following comments, 'the Educational Psychologist who has worked with him for years commented that she has never seen him happier or more settled in school. This is absolutely because of the strong relationship between the home and school and the hard work the staff are investing in the young person.'

However, some young people who had been progressing well in their education have recently stopped attending their education provisions despite the best efforts of staff. This lack of engagement can be partly attributed to uncertainty about the young people's future, and decisions made about their futures by the placing authority.

Young people's behaviour improves over time. This makes them, as well as others, safer. Staff are skilled at managing challenging behaviours and work closely with a range of professionals to enable young people to change their behaviours. This means implementing clear and consistent boundaries and routines so that young people know what is expected. For those young people where restraint has been necessary, the number of incidents of restraint have reduced. A head teacher made the following comments about how staff support a young person with their behaviour: 'I regularly attend meetings with staff and can see how they care about the young person. This is shown in the strong, positive relationships he has developed with the staff and other children within the home. They understand what drives the young person's behaviour and are very positive with him, even when he has been challenging.'

Young people's unsafe behaviours, including going missing and engaging in substance misuse, reduce. Young people rarely go missing as they enjoy living at the home and, where appropriate, are able to have free time. Each young person has a range of detailed risk assessments for behavioural needs and for activities. However, the recording of incidents of self-harm has not always been robust. Failure to record incidents robustly and a lack of management oversight has the potential to affect the quality of care and welfare of young people.

Staff support young people to pursue their hobbies and interests. Some young people continue to enjoy going ice-skating regularly which has enabled them to develop friendships outside the home. This has also increased their confidence and social interaction skills. Young people are given a lot of opportunities to try different activities which they would not have been able to access before. These broaden their horizons and help to build their confidence. For example, young people go bowling, to the cinema and during the summer holidays they went on holiday to Wales. One young person received a guitar at Christmas as they had expressed a wish to learn to play; they are now enjoying guitar lessons at school. Another young person received a drum kit and a guitar at Christmas, is taking lessons and is looking into enrolling on a music course at college.

The home is generally decorated to a good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms. However, some shortfalls were noticed. The wallpaper in some areas of the main bathroom was ripped and the towel rail was going rusty. The shower cubicle in the shower room was in a poor state of repair. These shortfalls detract from the otherwise homely and comfortable environment.

Information about this children's home

This privately operated home offers accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/06/2015	Full	Outstanding
19/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
03/12/2014	Full	Adequate
20/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

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):

- Ensure that children's case records are kept up-to-date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. This also includes ensuring that children's care plans give clear and specific details on how to meet identified needs. (The Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations including the Quality Standards April 2015, page 62 paragraph 14.3.)
- Ensure that all staff consistently follow the home's policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home's care. This is with specific reference to ensuring that the recording of incidents of self-harm is robust and aids the monitoring of children's safety. (The Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations including the Quality Standards April 2015, page 54 paragraph 10.20.)
- Ensure that the children's home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children and that it is a homely and domestic environment. This is with specific reference to ensuring improvements are made to the bathroom and shower room. (The Guide to the Children's Home's Regulations including the Quality Standards April 2015, page 15 paragraph 3.9.)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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