

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	5 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC064182
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Lodge Group Care UK Limited
Registered provider address	87 High Street, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8JA

Responsible individual	Jeffrey Darnell
Registered manager	Alina Opris
Inspector	Barnaby Dowell

Inspection date	5 July 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

SC064182

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Outcomes in the home remain good. Young people benefit from well-planned and effective moves onto adult provision.
- Staff offer good levels of care and are aspirational on behalf of young people. One young person is presently learning to go to the toilet by himself with staff support.
- Young people make consistent progress from their own individual starting points and respond well to an effective behaviour reward scheme.
- Restraints are minimised by clear and effective behavioural management techniques. Staff know and understand young people and respond promptly to divert them from risky situations.
- Strong multi-agency work advocates strongly on behalf of young people. Staff regularly push for reviews of medication, if felt appropriate.
- Managers have acted upon the recommendations of previous inspections and implemented a successful service improvement plan.
- The home is in need of some up keep and renovation. The bedrooms require decoration and the garden wall presents a possible safety hazard.
- Despite remaining under one-to-one supervision, there are no internet safety controls in the home. This leaves young people vulnerable.
- The home admitted a young person without a plan for his education or a suitable impact risk assessment. This occurred without the input of the registered manager.

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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, with particular reference to the lack of a garden wall, the registered person must— (2)(c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— (i) meet the needs of each child.	30 August 2016

Recommendations

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

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments, they should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9).
- 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 ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4).
- Ensure access to the internet to support their learning. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.9).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides accommodation and care for up to six young people with learning disabilities. The service provides both long-term and short-break placements.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27 January 2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13 October 2015	Full	Good
19 December 2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
6 October 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 are happy in the home and make clear and consistent progress. They enjoy a wide variety of activities such as a recent trip to the seaside. These activities are risk assessed and planned to meet their individual needs. The home is full of happy and smiling images of young people enjoying the company of staff. Outcomes in the home remain positive. One young person is presently undergoing a managed move onto adult provision. The plan includes planned overnight stays and the provision of a book containing pictures of his new bedroom and his new key worker. This supports the process well and reduces his anxieties. Staff take visible satisfaction and pleasure in supporting young people. Young people enjoy individualised and well-planned packages of care. High staffing levels and consistent one-to-one supervision support focused, successful interventions. Each week targets are set in conjunction with the occupational therapist, who works in the home. For example, staff sing a song each morning as this is soothing for one young person. Other specialist input remains provided by close liaison with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and weekly visits from a speech therapist. Staff monitor progress daily in areas such as basic self-care and road awareness. They offer clear visual rewards such as receiving award stars or choosing a present from the lucky dip box. Young people respond well and develop skills for independence. The home prioritises educational achievement. Young people benefit from on-site education provision, which allows for the consistent implementation of behavioural targets. The home uses extra government funds for education to purchase specialist sensory toys to engage young people. Education providers complement the excellent communication and support from staff ensuring that young people achieve. The home offers a significant amount of indoor and outdoor space. This allows young people to separate themselves from the group when they begin to feel upset or need time away. Shifts are well planned and coordinated to include the safe administration of prescribed medication. Young people have a clear and visual plan, which offers security and consistency. Staff use their knowledge of young people to suggest activities of benefit, for example several young people benefit from swimming. These activities help to promote physical development and social skills. The home celebrates culture and difference. The staff team is diverse in terms of	

age, ethnicity and experience. They use this unique range of skills to arrange activities such as trips to local places of worship and restaurants. Young people really enjoy these activities.

The home works well with parents and supports contact needs appropriately. Staff communicate well and ensure that parents follow behavioural targets during contact. Parents act as an important source of comfort when young people enter hospital.

Multi-agency work is strong. Partner professionals report a good exchange of information and clear and concise monthly reports. One professional comments, 'The staff team is committed and dedicated with unique care skills.'

Young people have learned to communicate through various means. Staff make good use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to communicate with young people and improve participation. There is a good use of PECS throughout the home, giving clear guidance for young people on basic routines, such as brushing teeth. In addition, young people now indicate their wishes and feelings by using key words, bodily movements and images outside of the PECS system.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home has a strong safeguarding culture. Recently, the home investigated an allegation from a member of the public in conjunction with the local authority. The investigation concluded that there were no concerns. The designated officer from the local authority comments, 'The home worked in partnership and in a transparent manner.' Staff have successfully implemented the learning from this incident. A pre-prepared hospital bag is available in the home, therefore ensuring a managed transfer into hospital, if required. Staff understand behavioural prompts and triggers and manage behaviour well. They use great sensitivity and understand when young people are seeking staff attention or privacy. Staff offer hugs and cuddles safely and meet the sensory needs of young people. In addition, the home offers other sources of support such as weighted blankets dependent on need. Young people respond well. Young people work to reduce outbursts and restraint use is limited. Staff use effective behavioural management techniques to intervene effectively before young people struggle. Staff use spontaneous drives in the home's mini bus as an effective tool for diffusing and relaxing young people when they struggle. Following a restraint, managers consult well with young people and seek to ascertain any alternate strategies, which may have averted physical management. Staff prioritise the importance of healthy living. Young people enjoy good access to primary care services. The menu remains planned to limit snacking and staff	

ensure that salad and fruit is readily available.

Despite one-to-one supervision, there are presently no internet safety controls in the house to ensure that young people access the internet safely. This shortfall although posing some risk is minimised by the level of staff supervision.

Staff advocate strongly on behalf of young people. They use high levels of experience and strong relationships with young people to support this. For one young person, following a reduction in contact with his mother, staff noted an increase in bed-wetting. Staff advised the local authority and contact levels were adjusted, bed-wetting episodes subsequently reduced.

Key work recordings are in depth and analytical. They inform staff through and well-informed risk assessments and health plans. Staff noticed that one young person was not spending enough time outside and his behaviour was possibly linked to low levels of vitamin D. Extra vitamin supplements and more planned outdoor activities have helped to improve behaviours and maintain progress.

Managers ensure that the home is a safe environment, with all necessary risk assessments undertaken. Each young person has an individual fire escape plan to minimise any possible distress caused.

The home environment needs further attention. Despite the recent purchase of a sandpit and a trampoline, the back wall has fallen down and requires replacement. At present, there is no effective boundary between the home and the neighbour, presenting a risk to both parties. The bedrooms in the home are showing signs of damage and require redecoration.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home benefits from a strong and committed registered manager. She has over seven years of experience of residential care, is a qualified social worker and is qualified at level 5. She remains supported by a deputy manager qualified to level 5 and with over 10 years of relevant experience. The interim manager who covered her recent maternity leave continues to work with the home as an occupational therapist. This supported an effective handover of responsibility in January 2016 and the continued progress of the home. Staff and key partner professionals respect the management team. An effective service development plan is in place and managers have rigorously addressed the recommendations of previous inspections. For example, young people now have access to independent advocacy. An application to amend the conditions of registration to allow for five permanent placements with one additional placement is currently being considered by Ofsted. Regular visits and reports from the independent visitor have offered an important	

source of scrutiny and challenge for the management team. They respond well to recommendations and suggestions.

Care plans and risk assessments remain regularly reviewed with strong management oversight. Managers push professionals for prompt reviews of medication levels to support young people and maintain good behaviour.

Staff generally support admissions well. Recently, staff used an induction programme to spend one week in school learning specific behavioural management techniques and strategies. This ensured a successful transition into the home. The most recent admission was less successful and occurred while the registered manager was on leave. The home accepted the placement without a full assessment of need nor an educational provision. This resulted in drift and delay for the young person concerned.

The staff team is well bonded and morale is positive. Managers have recruited safely and the use of agency staff is limited. Supervision and appraisal are regular and valued by staff. One staff member comments, 'We are a good team. Things are better.'

Staff have responded well to the allocation of 'champion' roles. This allows room for specialisation and service improvements in crucial areas of service delivery such as sourcing activities. Staff respond well to a thorough programme of training, sourced from both the local authority and a private provider.

Recent training provided by the local autism ambassador gave staff a unique insight into the communication and sensory needs of young people. Managers have supported the induction of new permanent staff by implementing a successful mentoring system. This results in staff supporting each other in times of difficulty and ensuring consistency for young people.

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 that 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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