

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064182
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Lodge Group Care UK Limited
Registered person address	87 High Street HEATHFIELD East Sussex TN21 8JA
Responsible individual	Jeffrey Alexander Darnell
Registered manager	Alina Daniela Opris
Date of last inspection	04/03/2014

Inspection date	06/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good home because: young people make progress and their needs are well met; there is a strong team of staff who reflect on young people's changing behaviour and are resourceful in adapting their practice to manage this; relationships between staff and young people are positive, friendly and caring; there is effective partnership-working with parents and professionals so that all involved in young people's lives are working in their best interests; and there is strong management presence and oversight which ensures that arrangements for young people's health and safety are strong.

There are some weaker areas but these do not affect young people welfare. The staff recruitment process is reasonable but telephone checks to follow-up written references are not always made and referees are not asked specifically to comment on the person's suitability to work with children. In one case, an applicant's physical and mental suitability is not ascertained. Some aspects of the premises have been improved since the last inspection. The home has a development plan which identifies those areas of the premises next to be improved. However, a few areas of the home and garden are not of a sufficiently high standard and require more expedient attention.

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
04/03/2014	Interim	good progress
23/10/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
12/07/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
26 (2001)	evidence that people employed to work in the home are physically and mentally fit for the work they are to perform (Regulation 26 (3) (c))	30/11/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept reasonably decorated and maintained, with specific reference to improving part of the garden area, some flooring, some decoration, some lighting and one bathroom in line with guidance regarding autism-friendly environments. (Regulation 31 (2) (e))	30/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- make sure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written evidence (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that references include, where possible, a statement from each referee as to their opinion of the person's suitability to work with children. (NMS 16.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people benefit from living in a stable placement where staff do not give up on them. Their needs may change, in some cases with behaviour becoming very challenging, however, they can rely on the staff to work with everyone else involved in their lives to explore the reasons for this and find ways to support them. As a result, young people, who find change difficult due to their disabilities, do not experience the distress of placement breakdown.

Educational outcomes improve. Some young people, who are excluded from school, experience continuity as their education is provided in the home. Older young people benefit from learning on life skills programmes; they gain confidence in managing some general household chores, such as cleaning or clearing the table, as well as taking increasing responsibility for some aspects of their personal care.

Young people, who live in the home long term, enjoy spending time with their families when they visit. They return to family homes for visits where possible, so that essential links are maintained with those they are close to. Young people celebrate special occasions with their families in the home, such as birthdays or religious festivals. Those young people visiting only for a short break, are helped to understand when they will be returning home to their families. This helps them feel secure in their routines.

Some young people make good progress in their social behaviour. For example, some will better tolerate others around them and some will now approach and communicate with new staff. Some reduce their repetitive behaviours, for example, pacing, so they may be involved in other things. Others reduce aggressive behaviour. Some young people's behaviour changes and as one behaviour improves, another more challenging behaviour may emerge, often as a result of changes in their medication. A parent says their child's behaviour has 'much improved' and 'calmed down'.

Communication skills generally improve and young people will express what they want or do not want in very individual ways. For example, young people regularly make choices about the food and activities provided in the home, using photos, PECS, gestures or signs. Young people are reassured by keeping to their established routines when staying in the home but are generally more willing to try new things.

Independence skills improve greatly. Young people generally perform household tasks, such as taking dirty clothes to the laundry or their used plate to the sink. Some young people, who no longer attend education, benefit by following life skills programmes.

Young people's general health improves. Some have lost weight as a result of changes to their lifestyle such as eating healthily and taking more exercise. Some have considerably reduced incidents of self-harm. They help in the home's garden where they enjoy growing, harvesting and eating fruits and vegetables. Personal hygiene improves, for example, in establishing toileting habits. Their appearance improves and they look well cared for; for example, staff make sure the young men are shaved and have smart haircuts.

Those young people moving on to adult homes experience excellent transition arrangements which helps reduce anxiety and distress about change. Those transferring to the company's adult provision benefit from moving on with the staff they are used to. They are carefully prepared for the change, for example, with visits and 'social stories' about the new home.

Quality of care

good

Young people's wellbeing is at the centre of this home. They receive good quality care from staff who are really interested in helping them to make progress and enjoy their stay. A health professional says, 'Staff interact with them (young people) a lot. Needs are well met here.' A staff member feels a strength of the home is the 'staff team, relationships which are strong and based on knowledge of young people needs'. There is effective partnership working with parents and external agencies to ensure young people receive the support they need.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a diverse staff team who reflect their family backgrounds and bring understanding of different cultural matters. Most of the staff have worked in the home for some time, so young people experience consistency in those looking after them.

Staff are keen to find a way to help young people's behaviour improve; they feel they are 'good at team working to find solutions'. Staff find their behaviour management training 'doesn't always prepare for every situation' when some aggressive behaviour appears suddenly and without an apparent trigger. However, the staff are inventive and proactive in managing young people's behaviour and the manager is reviewing staff training to ensure it is sufficient. Appropriate behaviour management strategies are used to help young people improve, for example, sanctions are not deemed appropriate, but rewards are used to reinforce acceptable behaviour.

Arrangements for dealing with complaints are strong. Complaints are welcomed. They are low in number. Investigations are thorough and carried out in a timely manner, ensuring any lessons are learned.

Medication arrangements are effective. Medication is carefully logged into the home and well recorded when administered to young people to try to prevent errors. It is stored appropriately to prevent young people having access to it. An 'open culture' is

encouraged so that staff know they should always report any errors quickly, although none have been reported. Staff are particularly good at observing any impact a change in medication may have on a young person's behaviour and reporting this to parents and medical professionals.

Young people take part in activities of their choosing. Some like going for drives in the home's minibus. Some have enjoyed travelling on a train. There are activities where young people are encouraged to exercise, for example, going for walks, to parks and swimming or bowling. Some go on trips further afield, for example, a boat trip in London. Young people have participated in events where their disability can be particularly supported in the community, for example, autism-friendly cinema nights.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people are kept safe when out in the community. Staff are aware that young people's disabilities make them extremely vulnerable and that they must be kept safe. Due to high levels of supervision and careful assessment of risk, no young people have gone missing from the home or from staff when out.

A teacher said they feel the young people are 'safe here' and that 'staff are good and capable of keeping young people safe'. At times, one young person's behaviour may impact on another and an incident may occur. A parent said they understand how this may happen due to the young people's autism although they would prefer not to see any further incidents.

The use of restraint since the last inspection is low and consists mostly of safe guiding or holding just to move young people to a quiet place where they may calm down, which is appropriate due to the young people needs. Such restraints are well recorded so their use may be monitored by management for any patterns or trends.

Care plans identify risks and these are regularly reviewed in light of young people's changing needs and behaviour. A social workers says that 'risk assessments are always at hand'. They find staff 'always address issues promptly and keep me informed'.

Child protection arrangements are effective. Staff closely monitor young people and mark any injuries or marks on body maps to ascertain how these have arisen. Staff receive refresher training in safeguarding and protecting young people. No referrals or allegations have been made since the last inspection.

The home's recruitment process is mostly thorough, with checks made with the Disclosure and Barring Service and references obtained. However, telephone checks are not made to confirm references and referees are not asked directly about a candidate's suitability to work with children. In one case, confirmation of physical and mental fitness for the work is not obtained. Due to these shortfalls and because the

recommendations about references were made at a previous inspection, the outcome for safeguarding is judged adequate.

Leadership and management

adequate

The service benefits from a Registered Manager who has been in post for a year and who has achieved the appropriate qualifications to a high standard. A teaching professional describes the manager as 'calm and reasonable'.

Staff feel well supported by management. Regular team meetings, supervision and appraisal helps staff in their work with young people. The staff are very reflective of their practice and look for ways to work most effectively with young people.

Frequent training enhances staff knowledge and skills. For example, their training includes safeguarding, autism, first aid and medication. The behaviour management training is regarded as mostly effective by staff but they find on occasion it is not entirely relevant to a few aspects of young people's very challenging behaviour. The Registered Manager is reviewing staff feedback on this aspect of their training. As the manager is reviewing behaviour management training, a recommendation is not made in this report. The majority of staff have achieved the minimum level 3 qualification while a few are working towards achieving this.

Monitoring is effective. Both the Registered Manager and an independent visitor regularly check what goes on the home to make sure the care is good and young people are safe. Their checks are thorough. All information about how the home is doing is quickly shared with Ofsted so the regulator is kept informed. Regular checks of the premises also ensure that health and safety is maintained, for example, with checks of electrical appliances and the gas installation.

Records are well kept. They provide staff with clear directions and assessment of risks to individual young people. Reports make clear what the young person's experience in the home has been and what the plans are for their future.

The home's Statement of Purpose is revised so that it reflects the amended regulations. It provides people with useful information about the service. The young people guide is suitably adapted in picture format.

The home is not maintained to a high standard in all places. There is a contrast between some parts of the home and those areas which have been redecorated/refurbished. For example, outside there is new decking where young people can sit and enjoy meals and this has greatly improved their experience of the garden. However, the lawn area where they enjoy using the trampoline is not so well maintained. Inside, one bathroom is now of a high standard but another bathroom is

in need of refurbishment. Staff feel strongly that the home should be maintained to a high standard throughout so that young people enjoy a fully appropriate environment. Visiting professionals find the building spacious and clean to a high standard but some areas require improved lighting, particularly the internal corridors, so that young people can negotiate this more easily.

One recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure the radiators in the lounges function as heating is provided by portable heaters in these rooms. The home has obtained quotes to rectify this situation by replacing the boiler and work is due to start soon.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.