

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	13/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC064182
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 Darnell
Registered Manager	Alina Opris (currently on maternity leave)
Inspector	Barnaby Dowell

Inspection date	13/10/2015
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:

- Young people access specialist services from the home such as occupational therapy; this helps them to make progress.
- Young people benefit from a stable, permanent staff team who are skilled and suitably qualified. They understand young people and have a warm and trusting relationship with them.
- Staffing levels are high; this helps to offer more activity choice and keeps young people safe.
- Young people access education in a safe and contained environment.
- Staff advocate strongly for young people on issues such as the inappropriate prescription of levels of medication.
- Restraints are minimised by clear and effective behavioural management techniques.
- Young people are able to maintain close contact with their families and move back to their families when appropriate.
- There are insufficient relationships with the local authority and local advocacy groups. The home needs improved lighting in the 'quiet room' as it is too bright for young people. Managers are presently addressing these issues.

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

Requirements	Due date
The registered person must maintain records ('case records') for each young person, which are up to date. (Regulation 36(1)(b))	30 October 2015

Recommendations	Due date
Ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are: designed and furnished to (i) meet the needs of each child; and (ii) enable each young person to participate in the daily life of the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 13, paragraph 6 (c)(i)(ii))	30 October 2015
Make sure that registered persons have a key role in seeking to develop the home's effective working relationships with each young person's placing authority and with any other establishments that work with young people in the local community. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 52, paragraph 10.3)	30 October 2015
Ensure that when restraint occurs, the young person must have the opportunity to express their feelings as soon as possible. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 49, paragraph 9.60)	30 October 2015

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
19/12/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/10/2014	Full	Good
04/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
23/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
This is a specialist home, which allows young people from the local area to remain in a caring environment while maintaining close contact with their relatives. Young people are safe in the home. The building contains suitable security features and all visitors receive appropriate challenge to verify who they are. Young people remain settled in the home and all make progress from their own respective starting points. There is a warm and homely atmosphere. Young people engage well with staff and feel a real sense of belonging. One social worker comments, 'The staff team are amazing, the care and dedication they show, even in the most difficult of circumstances, is second to none; they simply don't give up.' The home's decoration reflects the sensitive needs of the young people. Photos of recent activities line the walls. Bedrooms and bathroom areas are risk assessed and are free from hazards. Young people recently personalised the living area with a large painting. The home is equipped to meet the needs of young people. For example, a well-equipped sensory room allows young people to relax when they begin to feel unsettled. Staff make good use of the 'quiet room'. This is a small area with padded walls, which reduces the risk of self-harming. However, this room contains a single strip of lighting, which may unsettle or disorientate young people in distress. Staff use the home environment to engage young people. They participate in managing the herb garden. Cooking sessions use garden produce and incorporate simple counting exercises to develop their skills. Staff are developing their use of the PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) to communicate with young people and improve participation. This is a collection of pictures, which young people recognise and can attach to certain feelings or emotions, for example, a smiley face to indicate pleasure or happiness. Each staff member carries a PECS booklet, which is readily accessible to young people. The communal areas of the home contain PECS's boards, which offer clear pictorial guidance and prompts for young people. This allows young people to express their wishes and feelings to staff and begin to develop their independence.	

Young people receive education in safe and contained environment on the premises. For some, this is their first engagement in education. The layout and decoration of the education room, approved by an occupational therapist, helps to maintain engagement and good behaviour.

Specialist government funding for education has assisted with the provision of specialist materials and computers. For those young people who receive education offsite, feedback from schools has been extremely positive. One teacher states, 'Staff are always there when we need them, and they are very supportive and are clearly very close to the young people.'

Key work sessions occur regularly in the home. Staff set ambitious and realistic goals for young people through the PECS system. Staff pursue these goals with great sensitivity and perseverance. Young people are encouraged to enjoy new experiences and tasks such as handling small change in a local café or washing themselves with the support of staff. Swimming is a popular activity.

Managers and professionals regularly review behavioural goals. They suggest new and innovative strategies for supporting young people. In one example, the introduction of an egg timer has helped one young person understand the concept of time more clearly. Monthly reports show that young people make progress with their own individual care plans.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit from a committed permanent staff group and achieve sustained and positive change. This has allowed the formation of warm and trusting relationships between the young people and staff. One social worker comments, 'Staff attune to the needs of young people with ease and form close and trusting relationships.' The home is able to offer short break provision. All referrals are carefully scrutinised to maintain the the stability of the house and the welfare of those young people already resident. Young people receive individualised support in a supportive environment and reduce risk-taking behaviour. Risk assessments are clear and concise. Staffing levels are high and permit for one-to-one attention; this helps to keep young people safe and minimises incidents of self-harming behaviour. Behaviour is good. Staff have learnt to recognise key indicators of bad behaviour such as actions and facial expressions. Staff enforce behavioural limits consistently and warmly. Young people have grown accustomed to this. When in need of support, staff suggest that young people enter the 'quiet room'. This allows behavioural management to occur away from other young people and in a safe and contained environment. Staff work hard to offer young people an alternative to violent or inappropriate behaviour. Sensory toys and equipment assist to minimise incidents of this nature. Restraint is limited and used only as the last possible means of keeping young people safe. At present, post-restraint debriefs do not ascertain the wishes and feelings of young people so an opportunity to improve behavioural management is lost. Staff prioritise the health of young people. Young people are engaged in daily exercise routines such as the use of the home's trampoline. Firm and clear boundaries about food have allowed young people to maintain healthy weights and eat a balanced diet. Medication use is safe and secure. Staff are proactive in monitoring medication levels for young people and advocate on their behalf. They use their understanding and relationship with young people to challenge medical professionals when it is felt that prescription levels are inappropriate. Following an agreed change in medication, parents and professionals have noted improvements in behaviour. Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's care and enjoy an excellent exchange of information. One young person recently enjoyed a successful	

birthday party in the home. Young people enjoy safe regular overnight contact with their families. One parent comments, 'They are wonderful people who could not do enough for my son, they have been an absolute gift to my family.'

Young people successfully move on from the home. The home's statement of purpose allows young people to remain in the home post the age of eighteen. This allows for planned and managed moves irrespective of young people's age.

The homeowner has an adult provision within the local area, which offers ongoing care. Staff from the home are able to visit and offer ongoing support, offering an important element of consistency and support. This helps young people to continue to progress.

	Judgement grade
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The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The Registered Manager is presently on maternity leave and is due to return to the home on the 18 January 2016. The interim manager has been in post since the 29 July 2015. She is presently completing a level 5 qualification and has four years of relevant experience in the field. She is a qualified physiotherapist and occupational therapist. This has allowed her to give staff guidance on helping young people with their posture and developing fine motor skills. One deputy manager is presently in position to support the management team. Since arriving, the interim manager has achieved considerable progress in the home. One staff member states, 'She has been like a breath of fresh air; she has engaged everyone and got us all motivated; the changes have been great.' She is an approachable manager who chooses to lead by example. She has introduced new motivational strategies, including the introduction of 'staff member of the month'. Staff report that they feel more valued. Supervision has now become more regular and a programme of appraisals has commenced. There have been no complaints to the service since the last full inspection. The interim manager has a clear idea of the weakness and strengths of the service. There is a programme of improvements, which she plans to implement prior to the return of the Registered Manager. She has the full support of her managers and receives good support from the independent visitor. The home plans an extended handover period in January 2016, to allow the Registered Manager to fully understand and incorporate the changes. The interim manager has acted to limit television viewing in the home. Young people benefit from this action, as the focus is on staff to seek new means of engaging and supporting them. Staff are encouraged to use interactive play skills to develop relationships and help young people develop confidence. This has worked well and staff report that they are now more engaged in their work. Staff have been encouraged to improve their use of the PECS system. This will allow the young people to express their wishes and feelings more clearly. The interim manager has requested video evidence of these sessions; staff have responded well to this innovative tool for improvement. Case recordings are not up to date. The interim manager is working with staff to produce concise reports that avoid duplication. The rota allows specific time slots for case recording, allowing staff to spend more time to spend with the young people. The interim manager regularly audits case files and has a firm understanding of the needs of all of the young people in the home.	

The interim manager has ensured that the monthly reports sent to professionals are regular and of a high standard. These reports capture the progress that the young people have made and identify any areas for targeted interventions.

There is no use of agency staff in the home and no staff departures since the last full inspection. This has led to a good staff team dynamic and increased consistency for young people. All of the staff have obtained the necessary level 3 qualification resulting in a fully trained staff team.

One staff member is presently going through her probationary period and has been safely recruited with a full and a through introductory programme. All staff have up-to-date checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service. This ensures that staff are fully trained, vetted, and able to meet the needs of young people more effectively.

There is a culture of learning and development in the home. The interim manager has prioritised the purchase of books and materials specific to the study of autism. Team meeting allows staff to share their research on specific areas of practice development. This has encouraged staff to broaden their understanding of the young people's needs.

The interim manager has accessed training from the local authority. This has ensured that staff have been able to network with other professionals and improve their knowledge of areas of risk, such as child sexual exploitation.

Relationships with the local authority and partner agencies are not developed. This has restricted young people from accessing specialist support in the community.

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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