

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/12/2015
Unique reference number	SC064663
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Mr Jim Buchanan & Mrs Ivy Thompson
Registered person address	Eastfield Group, 6d Ryeground House, 6b Ryeground Lane, Formby, Merseyside, L37 7EQ

Responsible individual	Ivy Thompson
Registered manager	Ivy Thompson
Inspector	Michelle Bacon

Inspection date	14/12/2015
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

SC064663

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Staff provide a good quality of care to vulnerable young people.
- Most young people make progress across all aspects of their social, emotional and educational development within a supportive environment.
- Staff ensure the daily routines of the home support young people's participation in education. They reinforce the expectation of regular attendance.
- Young people and key professionals say this is a good home. They credit the reduction in young people's risk taking behaviours including being missing from home for long periods to the care and support they receive.
- Young people benefit from a stable, qualified and experienced staff team who have a good understanding of their needs. However, there is no workforce plan in place to support the continuing professional development needs of staff.
- Effective partnership working promotes the welfare and safety of all young people.
- Staff provide young people with clear boundaries and routines in line with their placement plans which are updated regularly. However, there is a conflict of information in some risk assessments which has the potential to mislead or confuse staff.
- An occasional communication error between the Registered Manager and her deputy has meant that on a couple of occasions Ofsted have not been notified of concerns relating to the welfare and safety of young people in a timely way. That said, the registered manager ensures all other agencies are notified of any concerns.

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 staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are concerns for a child, their placement plan and risk assessments, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)
- ensure the registered person notifies Ofsted if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)). (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 63 paragraph 14.10)
- ensure the registered person has a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1(paragraph 19 and 20). The plan should be kept updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by the staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff- including the home's manager.(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.8)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
24/09/2014	CH - Full	Good
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
20/11/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
There have been a number of young people who have moved into and left the home since the last inspection. Some young people have moved to semi-independent living, while others have moved to placements which are more suitable for their needs. Most young people make good progress from their starting points, however slight. One young person who recently left wrote to the staff saying, 'thank you for everything you have done for me...I miss all of you loads and loads. Thank you for looking after me.' A parent also wrote, 'I would like to thank you for all your support you gave (Name) during his stay...I felt you gave him as much support and help as you could.' Overall, young people's emotional and physical health is good and they are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff ensure they have good healthcare advice on particular life choices, including smoking and cannabis use, and make sure that individual young people have access to specialised health professionals to improve their emotional well-being. In addition the staff actively encourage young people to keep fit by going for regular walks, Zumba, golf and swimming. Young people achieve mixed outcomes in relation to their education. Staff value the importance of education on their future life chances and make every effort to promote regular attendance, although at times this can be slow. They liaise effectively with education providers to challenge any barriers to young people's learning, and attend school events, such as parents' evening. One young person is undertaking a course at college because they want to improve their skills and knowledge. Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other. One young person said, 'I really like it here...I'd give it 9 out of ten.' A placing social worker said, '(Name) is very positive about the home...she knows the staff care about her and I have observed some positive friendships.' Another professional commented, 'this is the most settled she's been.' Staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs and are committed to making a positive difference to their lives.	

Staff encourage and support young people to take part in decisions about their futures and contribute to the running of the home. At weekly house meetings they are able to decide on menu choices and activities, as well as sharing their ideas on the décor. Regular key work sessions provide young people with the opportunity to talk about any issues that may be affecting them. Furthermore, some young people have been involved in the recruitment of new staff. Consequently, young people feel valued and respected.

Young people are offered and supported to take part in range of activities, such as boxing, dancing and army cadets. They also have opportunity to spend time with their friends and family. One professional commented, 'I have been quite impressed with them, they have supported the re-hab plan back home, and have been very accommodating around contact.'

Staff support young people to develop a range of practical skills, including shopping, cooking and travelling independently. This enables them to build confidence in their own abilities and prepare them for independent living. Prior to moving on from the home a young person sourced themselves a part time job at a local chip shop and another young person worked during the summer holidays to earn some extra money. This helps to develop their social skills and prepare them for the world of work.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people say they feel safe and that they can discuss any issues or concerns they may have with staff. Staff have undertaken direct work to help them understand about keeping themselves safe, and when they spend time away from the home the staff maintain regular contact by phone. This gives young people a sense of security as they know that staff are concerned for their welfare. The home has protocols in place with local police regarding young people who go missing from the home. The number of incidents can fluctuate, however for some young people there is a significant reduction from their starting point. Young people are offered return home interviews either by their social worker, CATCH 22 or the Young Runaways project. This gives them the opportunity to talk to someone independent of the home about the reasons for being missing and identify any potential risks.	

Partnership working is effective, particularly for those individuals who are at risk of sexual exploitation. The managers attend strategy meetings when a young person's behaviour is a cause for concern and share information. This ensures a coordinated approach to safeguard young people.

Behaviour is well managed and young people say they get along with each other most of the time. Clear and consistent boundaries along with positive reinforcement means that sanctions are kept to a minimum. Sanctions are fair and followed up with consultation with the young people, who record their views. Staff do not use physical intervention.

Managers complete risk assessments for each young person, however these are not sufficiently robust. For example, there is no clear guidance for staff about how to manage a young person who maybe under the influence of cannabis. Furthermore, one young person's risk levels contradicted the levels identified in their referral information, which potentially could mislead or confuse staff.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The Registered Manager has over 30 years of childcare experience and demonstrates a clear commitment to improving outcomes for young people. She continues to work towards obtaining her Level 5 diploma in Leadership and Management. There is also a qualified and experienced deputy manager who supports the manager in the management of the home. There have been a few changes to the staff team since the last inspection. However, this has had little impact on the young people as any gaps in the rota are covered by regular bank staff. This provides young people with a stable staff team that they know well. A number of the core staff team have a suitable childcare qualification; new staff embark on the diploma Level 3 qualification in childcare on completion of a satisfactory probation period. Regular team meetings and supervisions enable the staff to reflect on their practice and review the progress of young people. They also access regular training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively meet the needs of the	

young people. However, there is no workforce plan in place to support the continuing professional development needs of staff.

The manager has a good understanding of the progress and development of every young person. She has taken appropriate action when she had concerns that decisions being made were not in a child's best interest. This demonstrates her strong commitment to advocate on behalf of young people, and her ability to challenge.

The home is achieving its aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. A number of key professionals involved in the young people's lives confirm the progress they are making, and put this down to the quality of care they receive. Managers and staff work proactively with other agencies to secure positive outcomes for young people. Professionals confirm there is good communication between them and the staff.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes positive action to address any shortfalls. There is regular monitoring of the home both internally and externally to ensure outcomes for young people continue to improve. The manager has addressed all the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection.

An occasional communication error between the Registered Manager and her deputy has meant that on a couple of occasions Ofsted have not been notified of concerns relating to the welfare and safety of young people in a timely way. That said, the manager has notified all relevant professionals involved in the care of individual 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 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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