

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	29/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC064663
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered persons	Jim Buchanan and Ivy Thompson
Registered person address	Eastfield Group, 6d Ryeground House, Ryeground Lane, Formby, Merseyside L37 7EQ
Responsible individual	Ivy Thompson
Registered manager	Ivy Thompson
Inspector	Lisa Mulcahy

Inspection date	29/09/2016
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

SC064663

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Young people are cared for by a committed and supportive staff team, which knows them well, listens to them and promotes their safety and well-being at all times.
- Young people have positive experiences and make good progress in their lives through living at the home. They develop positive and trusting relationships with others.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are given the highest priority. There is regular consultation using direct work sessions, consultation forms and person-centred support plans. Staff respond positively to their views and either act on these or explain clearly to young people if they are unable to do so. Young people respond well to the expectations set about the standards of behaviour in the home and they benefit from a reward system that promotes positive behaviour.
- Effective partnership working promotes the safety and well-being of young people and ensures that they receive the appropriate support and intervention with their education, health, emotional well-being and managing risks. Staff continually strive to improve outcomes for young people and will challenge professionals to ensure that this happens.
- Young people have access to a wide range of social and recreational opportunities, both inside and outside the home.
- The home is managed effectively in the best interests of young people. Staff receive good quality support, training and regular effective supervision to enable them to care for young people well.
- The home's internal and external monitoring systems need to be strengthened in order for them to provide a robust review of the home's practice relating to the quality of young people's care. This would contribute to the home's development plan and improvements in the home's function.
- Records within the home need to be clear to provide an accurate account of incidents and risk levels.
- Staff recruitment practice in the home needs to be strengthened, in particular in relation to the references obtained for new staff.

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
32: Fitness of workers The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that the individual is of integrity and good character, the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform, and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. (Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(3)(a)(b)(d)).	09/12/2016
46: Review of premises The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purpose of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12 (2)(c). (Regulation 46 (1)) In particular, ensure that the review addresses all known risks within the community.	09/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. Those undertaking the role should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. In particular, if the information provided is

inaccurate this will need to be challenged and amended. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes fact, opinion and third party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/12/2015	Full	Good
03/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
24/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive a good quality of care that is making a positive difference to their lives. The staff have a good understanding of young people's individual needs and meet these well. Consequently, young people are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the home. A young person said, 'I am happy at the home and one word to describe it is marvellous.' A parent said, 'The home helped her come so far and she is doing really well. This is down to the support from staff, they have done a really good job and I can't thank them enough.' Young people have strong, trusting relationships with the staff who listen to them and have developed robust ways to obtain their views, wishes and feelings. For example, through direct work sessions, young people's meetings, consultation forms and person-centred plans. The views of young people are central to plans and decision-making for them. A young person said, 'Staff listen to me and take on board my ideas, I tell them what food I like and what activities I want to do.' Young people benefit from a wide range of social and recreational opportunities with the staff team and their peers. This includes going to the shops, the cinema and the gym. Young people are supported and encouraged to pursue their individual interests. For example, one young person engages in karate and free-running and the home has paid for him to have the appropriate clothing to partake in these and also for the testing for him to progress through the various award levels. The wide range of opportunities for young people has supported them in building their social interaction, confidence and self-esteem. Young people have good attendance at their education provision and are making progress. This is due to the support and encouragement from staff. They work effectively with education professionals to ensure that young people are being supported to achieve successful outcomes. One young person was well supported to revise for her GCSEs and has had success in passing these exams. The home has challenged the local authority due to a delay in the young person starting at college because of a funding issue. If young people are not engaging in education the home ensures that they receive home tuition until appropriate education provision is in place. Young people's health needs are known and understood by staff. Healthcare plans are detailed and clearly outline individual health needs and how these are being met. Young people are encouraged to attend medical appointments and staff will support them with this. Staff have effective relationships with health professionals and keep them up to date to ensure that the correct care is provided. Furthermore,	

they ensure that young people get expert advice and guidance from specialist services, including substance misuse services, therapeutic services, and child sexual exploitation and sexual health professionals. A substance misuse worker said, 'The home is proactive in accessing the service, not only for young people who have substance misuse issues but also as a preventative measure. They have built strong links with the service and are keen to accept any advice and guidance. This home is one of the more proactive homes I work with, and I only have good words to say about them.'

The staff have a detailed understanding of the young people, their individual needs, their views, the risks they face and how best to help them. The staff follow young people's placement plans and ensure that they receive good individual support and guidance. They work well with a range of professionals, including social workers, police, safeguarding professionals, and education and health professionals, to make sure that young people get the right support from the right services at the right time. A social worker said, 'The home worked effectively with myself and other professionals to prevent a placement breakdown for a young person, and ensured that she received the correct support to deal with the crisis situation. I am fully updated on the young person due to the high levels of communication with the manager.'

The home has improved its admission procedures so they are able to assess fully if they are able to meet young people's needs effectively. For example, they ensure that each placement application contains necessary, detailed information. In addition, the staff now complete detailed impact risk assessments that identify young people's individual needs and carefully consider their compatibility with the existing group of young people. In considering the application for one young person, a discussion took place at both the staff team meeting and the young people's meeting prior to the admission. This ensures that there is increased rigour to the decision-making, in order that staff can confidently meet young people's needs effectively.

The home is welcoming and decorated to a good standard. However, some of the young people's bedrooms were untidy and a number of items were stored on a landing. One bedroom, in particular, had clothes strewn all over the floor, which presented as a hazard. The home needs to have systems in place to ensure that bedrooms and access areas are tidy and do not present a hazard, as young people could trip over and hurt themselves.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people are safe and protected because staff give the highest priority to their safety and well-being. Effective multi-agency working also helps to keep young people safe. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and are aware of actions to take if they are concerned about young people's welfare. Furthermore, they have a good understanding of the young people's needs and risks, and these are identified in placement plans and risk assessments that inform and guide staff responses. This helps to promote the young people's welfare and safety. Risk assessments clearly identify risks and how they will be managed. They are regularly reviewed and updated. In addition, a child sexual exploitation assessment tool is in place for all young people, and impact risk assessments help staff to consider and plan for new young people coming to the home. Each of the assessments contribute to the robust safeguarding practices within the home and to reducing risks to young people. For example, following an impact risk assessment being completed for one young person, measures were put in place, such as unsupervised contact and supervised spends, to ensure that he was safeguarded in the local area and that he did not go missing from the home. This resulted in a reduction in the occasions that the young person was missing from the home, and the young person having an improved understanding of the risks he was taking and the negative impact this could have on him. The approach to behaviour management in the home is clear and well understood by the staff and young people. Behaviour management plans are in place for young people and outline clearly the behaviours of young people and how staff will manage and respond to these. Meetings take place between young people and staff following any negative behaviours, in order to reflect on their behaviour and what strategies young people may use in future to manage their emotions more productively. Young people's behaviour is generally good due to the good routines, boundaries and structure in place. This is enhanced by the positive reward system. Young people respond well to the reward system, whereby they can earn additional monies above agreed weekly allowances. This system has resulted in some positive behaviours and reduced the number of consequences used in the home. A young person said, 'I like to earn my reward money for good behaviour. There has only been one occasion when I lost 50 pence due to my behaviour, but this was fair and stopped me behaving like that again.' Physical intervention is rarely used in the home. There are good systems in place to record such events. For example, the record clearly identifies the behaviours that lead to any intervention, the details of the intervention and its effectiveness. In the event of a physical intervention, there is a full debrief and the record is signed by the young person and staff involved. Although there has only been one	

physical intervention since the last inspection, the approach to managing this meant that the young person was able to reflect on the incident, discuss his views about what happened and gain an understanding of why the measure was necessary. Not all staff are suitably trained in restraint, so arrangements are in place for this.

The manager and staff have a clear understanding of the risks associated with young people who go missing from home. They are proactive in their approach, assessing the risks and putting arrangements in place to protect young people. When young people go missing, staff act appropriately by contacting them and their friends and family, going out looking for them and informing relevant professionals that they have gone missing. When young people return safely to the home they are welcomed home and receive an independent return interview to give them the opportunity to discuss why they went missing and the risks and issues they faced while they were missing. The home has established strong links with missing from home coordinators, which has contributed to the robust missing from home procedures in place at the home. A social worker said, 'Prior to living at the home she was going missing all the time, which placed her at significant risk. This has reduced significantly due to the procedures in place and staff support.'

Some young people have previously experienced child sexual exploitation. The manager and staff work hard to safeguard young people from this. Staff have worked effectively with young people, child sexual exploitation professionals, safeguarding professionals and the police, so should there be a concern, proactive strategies are in place that staff understand and follow. In addition, the home has developed strong links with the substance misuse service and has sought advice and guidance from it to ensure that young people have the appropriate support and intervention to prevent and manage substance misuse, which reduces risks to them. This means that young people are well supported to understand risk and are safeguarded effectively from child sexual exploitation and substance misuse through good multi-agency working.

The health and safety practices in the home are good. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure that the premises are safe and young people are able to respond in an emergency. There has been a recent fire drill full evacuation at night to ensure that a quick response happens during the day and night. Medication is stored securely and records are clear and accurate. The home has a designated staff member who is responsible for the management of medication. However, all staff are trained in this area. The robust health and safety practices in the home ensure that young people's safety and well-being is paramount.

There is a review of the home's location in place, but it does not address all known risks within the community, such as the close transport links, shops, bars and the location of other children's homes. The managers have not evaluated the information available to them to show what this would mean in considering a new

placement or the impact that this would have on young people in the home. In addition to this, the recruitment procedures in the home need to be strengthened. Checks on staff recently employed at the home are not complete. Appropriate references have not been received or verified. These shortfalls mean that young people could be placed at risk.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager of the home is suitably qualified and experienced. She has recently appointed a deputy manager who intends to apply for the role of the registered manager. This will allow the current registered manager to pursue other opportunities for the company. The deputy manager is suitably qualified and shares the same level of commitment to the home as the registered manager. He has in excess of six years' experience of working in residential children's homes and has held previous managerial roles. The leadership and management of the home are good. Relationships between young people, the managers and staff are good. The needs of young people are clearly understood by the managers and staff. They do well in providing young people with a safe and motivational environment where there are good levels of care and support. Young people are provided with positive experiences in the home and generally make good progress. This is due to the strong commitment and motivation of the managers and staff. The staff team feels supported and receives regular effective supervision that reflects on their practice and the needs of young people. Supervision for new staff is more frequent, and is part of their induction plan that is reviewed after six months. Records of supervision are detailed and include the aims and objectives for staff. However, the home needs to ensure that all supervision records are maintained and stored safely, as one record of supervision was not available during the inspection. Team meetings are frequent and are reflective in nature, with young people being at the centre of discussions. A staff member said, 'I feel supported by the managers in the home and can go to them at any time if I have an issue. We work well together as a team and we all enjoy working here.' All the staff are either suitably qualified or plans are in place for them to work towards gaining their qualifications. They receive a wide range of training to develop their knowledge and skills and improve practice, including in safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, missing from care, managing allegations, recording and autism spectrum disorder. In addition, they keep up to date with new legislation	

and guidance around female genital mutilation, forced marriages and radicalisation. This means that staff are well qualified and trained and supported to meet young people's needs.

The requirement and two recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed, which demonstrates the home's capacity for continual improvement. The managers recognise the value of internal and external monitoring processes in helping them to drive up standards for young people. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, the monitoring systems in place could be developed further by including more detailed information, contributions from young people, professionals and family members, and action plans to address the matters identified. Likewise they would benefit from more evaluation. This would support the managers to ensure their continuous improvement by making use of the detailed information available to them.

The home is operating in accordance with its statement of purpose, which outlines clearly the ethos and philosophy of the home: 'Our philosophy is to provide a caring, safe and holistic environment for young people.' The statement of purpose has recently been updated to reflect the staff changes and the introduction of waking night staff. This was introduced as it was felt that it would offer appropriate levels of support to the young people and ensure that the home was able to respond to any situation, 24 hours a day. This confirms the commitment that the managers have to providing young people with good-quality care that meets their needs and keeps them safe.

Professional relationships between the home, social workers, independent reviewing officers, the police, missing from care coordinators, safeguarding, health and education professionals are good. Professionals share information regularly about young people to ensure that the appropriate support is in place to meet their identified needs. Furthermore, this results in a consistent approach in supporting young people in all areas of their development. A social worker said, 'The placement is fantastic, the home has stuck by the young person and has good relationships with her and her family. I know exactly what is going on with her as the home keeps me fully informed.'

Although there have been some improvements in the recording systems within the home, some of the records were not clear. For example, the consequences log had large gaps in the dates they were recorded, and not all of the logs were available at the home during the inspection. This did not reflect accurately the consequences that have been imposed. However, the managers have secured training for all staff on recording information that will support them, strengthening their practice in this area.

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 children looked after 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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