

SC064931

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to eight children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. It is operated by a private organisation. The manager was registered in November 2018.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 December 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/09/2018	Full	Good
13/09/2017	Full	Good
17/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/09/2016	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, the 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(ii))	10/01/2020

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Regulation 19(2) details sanctions that are prohibited in behaviour management. Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There have been cosmetic changes made throughout the home since the last inspection. It now presents as warmer and more inviting. The pictures and photographs displayed help create a family feel in the home. Carers use de-escalation techniques to manage behaviours well. There have been minor damages in the home, but carers quickly address repairs. This gives children and young people the message that they are valued.

Carers work well with a range of professionals in relation to the health, education, and emotional, social and psychological well-being of the children and young people. This has helped children and young people make good progress in all areas from their starting points.

Children's and young people's views are listened to. The registered manager and the deputy manager participate in house meetings with the children and young people that are regular and effective. This means that children and young people can communicate their views directly to the management team. Children and young people are confident about complaining if they are not happy about aspects of their care or treatment. This demonstrates that they know the registered manager will listen to their concerns so as to make positive changes.

There is a good range of activities, toys, games and books that the children and young people can access. Activities such as guitar lessons, song night and scouts are preferred activities for the children and young people currently placed. This enhances their opportunities to socialise, achieve and find enjoyment in their chosen activities.

Family time is supported well where it is safe to do so. This helps children and young people to have a sense of belonging, and enables them to have positive experiences and maintain links to significant people in their lives.

The recording of information since the last inspection has improved. Key-working sessions are written up in a way that helps children and young people to see how they are making progress, and how they will be supported by their carers.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children's and young people's individual needs are identified and well understood. This means that carers are able provide safe and consistent care. Carers receive relevant training to help them identify and respond to risks. When safeguarding incidents occur, carers respond swiftly and follow appropriate protocols. This means that children and young people are kept safe.

The recording in risk assessments is not clear. Some information reads as ambiguous and is not up to date. While children and young people are kept safe, it is difficult for children

and young people to see how they are making progress. A requirement has been made to address shortfalls in this area.

Safeguarding issues are well considered in staff supervisions and team meetings. The registered manager facilitates group supervisions when new concerns arise, or previous concerns re-emerge. This means that serious incidents are highlighted promptly with carers, so they can respond accordingly. Effective individual supervisions also take place to ensure that practice is consistent.

Carers support children and young people to learn how to keep themselves safe via regular key-worker sessions. Topics covered include exploring emotions and staying safe in a range of settings, including staying safe online. Carers, children and young people can learn about topical issues. This has included knife crime and county lines. This means that carers, children and young people have an opportunity to understand wider issues regarding current affairs.

Children and young people go missing from the home. Such episodes are infrequent and often turn out to be late returns rather than missing-from-home incidents. Carers follow the appropriate protocols to aid the safe return of children and young people. Children and young people are provided with opportunities to speak to an adult on their return, often a police officer or a duty manager within the organisation. This process would be strengthened if these conversations were facilitated on every occasion by a person who is independent of the organisation.

Physical interventions are used rarely, and only as a last resort, to safeguard children and young people. They are appropriately recorded, and the manager ensures that children and young people are consulted afterwards. This provides opportunities for children and young people to communicate any concerns that they may have to a senior member of the team.

Children and young people have positive relationships with their carers. These are based on consistent boundaries and guidance. Low-level negative behaviour is managed well. Sanctions are well recorded. However, records do not reflect whether a restorative approach has been considered on each occasion. This would encourage children and young people to reflect on and learn from their behaviour.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and experienced for the position she holds. She is supported in her role by an experienced deputy manager and a skilled staff team. Since the last inspection there have been two new members of staff recruited. They have received in-depth inductions. This means that children and young people benefit from the range of skills and experience of their carers.

The registered manager monitors all records monthly and this enables her to have insights into the children's and young people's progress. Feedback received from a range

of professionals during the inspection was positive. Words and phrases such as 'great communication', 'know the children well' and 'confident' were commonly used when describing the work of the staff team. This means that the registered manager and her team advocate well on behalf of the children and young people.

The registered manager recognises the importance of having a skilled and knowledgeable staff team. She ensures that her staff have opportunities to learn and reflect. This supports their professional development. Her staff feel valued and motivated as a result.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC064931

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pear Tree Projects Limited

Registered provider address: Pear tree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham
DL2 2UP

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Diana Hewick-Crawford

Inspectors

Jacqueline Tate: social care inspector

Mark Proffitt: social care inspector

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