

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 have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. It is provided by a private organisation. The manager has been in post for six months and is undertaking the registration process.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 September 2018

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: 13 September 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2017	Full	Good
17/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/09/2016	Full	Good
30/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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, 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 registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— a child protection enquiry involving a child— is instigated; or concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry). (Regulation 40 (4)(d)(e))	10/10/2018

Recommendations

- The relevant plan may include a strategy for a particular type of care, treatment or intervention (for example therapy relating to neglect or abuse). The care staff will need to understand the purpose of any such care and the way in which the past experiences of abuse or neglect may manifest themselves in the day-to-day life of the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.15)

In particular, strategies in young people's risk assessments should be explicitly clear. They should read in a way that is helpful for the young person to understand how they will be helped and protected by the adults who care for them.

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

In particular, that all members of the staff team receive training around self-harming behaviours.

- Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between 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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young people who live in this home are vulnerable and require safe and consistent care. The manager and the staff team work hard to ensure that the young people's holistic care needs are met to a good standard. From young people's starting points they are making progress in most areas of their lives. Educational attendance is 100% for all the young people.

The young people develop trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. The staff team gets to know the young people and help to promote their self-esteem and confidence. One young person commented, 'The best thing about being here is the staff. They really look after me. It is the best place I have ever lived, and I feel safe here. I love that I am listened too. It's just good to live here.'

Transitions to the home are well planned. Young people are sensitively welcomed into the home. A high court judge recently commended the manager and the staff team for the way in which they quickly engaged one young person and demonstrated an ability to provide the required level of care he needs. A professional commented, '[Name] had multiple placement breakdowns. Since his admission to the home he has just blossomed. They have caught his strengths and it's just worked.'

Young people's views are sought through varying means. Regular meetings with the young people as a group allow them to contribute to their care. Young people's views are listened to and acted upon. Complaints raised by the young people are dealt with in a speedy manner, and responses to the outcomes are recorded.

There are communal areas in the home that are well used by all the young people and the staff team. The manager is making cosmetic changes to the home to make it a more homely and inviting environment. She is in the process of developing a breakfast room. The aim is to provide a relaxed atmosphere and provide a positive start to the young people's day.

There is a good range of activities, toys, games and books that the young people can and do access. During the inspection, the inspector observed the young people play together with Lego as well as other toys. Some young people went out to attend the clubs and activities that they enjoy.

The young people are supported to have contact with family and friends where it is safe to do so. This helps the 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 is generally up to date and well detailed. Some records do not read factually and include opinion. To improve the recording of information, it should

be written in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information.

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

The manager and the staff team have a good understanding of the young people's individual vulnerabilities. Risk assessments are robust and identify strategies to mitigate risk of harm. Risk assessments could be strengthened by writing them in a way that is more explicit and helps young people to understand how they will be supported by the adults who care for them.

There is good evidence that young people are safeguarded effectively at this home. The supervision of the young people is risk assessed according to their age and level of vulnerability. When there have been safeguarding concerns the manager takes decisive action and ensures that safeguarding procedures are followed. Not all incidents that have led to child protection enquiries have been notified to Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate. This has been made as a requirement.

The manager and staff team have good relationships with a network of professionals. There is a good safeguarding culture in the home. Safeguarding matters are discussed within individual staff supervisions and team meetings. This strengthens risk assessments and the strategies identified to help keep young people safe.

The staff team supports young people to learn how to keep themselves safe via regular key-worker sessions. Topics covered explore emotions and staying safe in a range of settings, including staying safe online. For younger children, child-friendly recordings with visual aids are used to help them read and contribute to their records.

Missing from home episodes have significantly reduced for those young people currently living in the home. When young people have gone missing from home, the correct procedures are followed. Proactive steps are taken to reduce risk. This helps young people understand that the adults care for them.

The young people respond well to the clear boundaries in the home. There is a consistent approach to meeting the young people's needs. Subsequently, physical interventions have reduced.

There is no evidence of bullying within the home. The staff team has a good understanding of the dynamics among the young people and ensure that there are sufficient levels of supervision to intervene and disrupt negative behaviours.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post for six months. She has previously managed another of the company's homes. She has extensive experience of working with children looked after. The manager is supported in her role by senior management and a dedicated staff team. Collectively, they ensure that the home continues to meet the aims and objectives

as set out in the statement of purpose.

The staff team has a diverse range of skills and experience. There are several newly appointed members of staff. For those members of staff, they have received an appropriate induction for the post held. The manager is astute and utilises the skills of her staff team effectively.

The manager ensures that supervisions and appraisals are completed regularly on an individual basis and in a group setting. Supervisions provide the staff team with an opportunity to reflect on practice, discuss safeguarding concerns and promote professional development.

The manager is hard working and leads by example. The staff team and young people find her approachable. She is well organised, efficient and effective in her management style. She is clear on the home's strengths as well as areas that can be further developed. This is the first inspection with her as the home's manager, and she welcomed feedback from the inspector to help drive improvements forward.

The manager has a very good understanding of the young people's needs and advocates well on their behalf. She is appropriate in her challenge of other professionals. Where there have been shortfalls in the expected quality of care provided to young people, the manager swiftly responds to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

Professionals spoken to are confident in the home's ability to meet the young people's individual needs. One professional commented, 'Education, health and social needs are comprehensively assessed by [Team Manager] and her team. [Name's] needs were understood, and a care plan made in accordance.'

The manager has ensured that mandatory training is up to date. The deputy manager has recently completed training around self-harming behaviours. It would further strengthen the staff team's skills and knowledge if all members of staff accessed similar training.

Young people's records are held both electronically and on paper files. The electronic system is impressive but like any new system there are teething problems. The manager recognises the shortfalls in the system. At a wider management level this is being discussed to improve the effectiveness of the system in place.

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: Peartree House, Bolam, Darlington, County Durham
DL2 2UP

Responsible individual: David Bartlett

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jacqueline Tate, social care inspector

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