

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	17/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC064931
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	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	Michael Crisp
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	17/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The young people continue to make progress in this home. They are afforded good opportunities in education and access to a range of activities. This improves their overall emotional and physical well-being. A young person stated: 'It has been a good move for me coming here. I would not have done half the things I have if I was at home.' The home is large and comfortable. Recent re-decoration has been effective in maintaining the environment for the young people. However, fire doors that close easily and fully continue to be an issue that needs addressing to ensure the safety of the young people. The group of young people remains consistent with the exception of one young person who has moved to another home within the provider group. This move was well planned. Taking into account the views of the young person and his social worker, it was felt that the new home met his needs more appropriately. Education is highly prioritised in the home. Bespoke education, through the provider's nearby school, ensures that the young people experience consistency of care, enabling progress in both areas. Practical sessions at the school, which include horse riding and looking after farm animals, help to capture the young people's attention and to motivate them to learn. The majority of the young people continue to achieve 100% attendance at either school or college, and a number are on course to achieve good results in their forthcoming exams. However, no work or education provision has been identified for one young person who is currently moving home. The staff continue to assist this young person to consider their options. The number of incidents of young people going missing from the home continues to be low. However, the number of times that staff use physical intervention has increased. The records show that these incidents were appropriate and recorded well. Significant incidents, in which safeguarding is an element, continue in the home. Records viewed at inspection identified incidents that should have been notified to the regulator and were not. The responses that have been recorded show limited understanding of the wider aspects of safeguarding and need to be addressed.	

The staffing levels are high. As a result, young people are offered protection when they are in the home. However, the young people expressed that they feel as if they are 'being followed around all of the time'. Some of the older young people do manage their own free time and travel freely to clubs and family contact. This improves their resilience prior to moving on from the home.

Recording and risk assessing have improved, but the quality remains inconsistent across the staff team. The management of the home recognises that this is an ongoing development area and has been for some time. Therefore, the requirements and recommendation in respect of this area of practice are raised at this inspection.

The staff team continues to work well with other agencies to support the needs of the young people. A social worker commented: '[Young person] has made massive strides while here and has embraced the opportunities given.' The reports written by the staff, which constitute reviews of the young people, offer a complete picture of the achievements and progress of young people over their time in the home and are a strength of the service. A social worker stated: 'The review reports are great.' The management team has been increased with the addition of another deputy. This will strengthen the monitoring of care provided by the staff. While there are improvements in management oversight since the last inspection, there are areas of practice and training that need to be addressed.

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of supervision of the staff with the introduction of reflective practice. This enables the team members to examine practice and learn from each other. Training has been delivered to the staff team to assist with its understanding of the needs of the young people in the home. While the service continues to deliver internal training regarding sexually harmful behaviour, on a bi-annual basis, this is insufficient to address the complex presenting behaviours of the young people. Updates on wider aspects of safeguarding would also enable the team to improve the service delivered to keep young people safe.

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to eight young people who have emotional, behavioural and/or learning disabilities. It is provided by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/09/2016	Full	Good
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/08/2014	Full	Good
02/01/2014	Interim	Good progress

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) meet(s) 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
12. In order to meet the protection of children standard, with particular reference to ensuring that risk assessments are updated and clearly state the steps staff must take to mitigate against the risk and that fire doors close fully, the registered should ensure— (2)(a) that staff— (i) 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; (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.	17/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees undertake appropriate continuing professional development (Regulation 33(4)(a)). In particular, staff should receive in-depth training in the specific identified needs of each young person.	17/03/2017
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— (a) a child is involved in or subject to, or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual exploitation; (b) an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; (c) there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person	17/03/2017

working there; (d) a child protection enquiry involving a child— (i) is instigated; or (ii) concludes (in which case, the notification must include the outcome of the child protection enquiry); or (e) there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. A notification made under this regulation— (a) must include details of— (i) the matter; (ii) the other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and (iii) any actions taken by the registered person as a result of the matter; (b) must be made or confirmed in writing (Regulation (40(4)(5))).	
--	--

Recommendations

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

- 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 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 62, paragraph 14.4)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Text phone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017