

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064931
Inspector	Michele Hargan
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered person address	Toy Top Farm Houghton Bank, Heighington Darlington County Durham DL2 2UQ
Responsible individual	David Anthony John Bartlett
Registered manager	Michael Crisp
Date of last inspection	26/08/2014

Inspection date	24/02/2015
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

A stable staff team are in place providing consistency for young people and maintaining high levels of supervision and structure. As a result, young people experience predictable routines and reliably available adults helping them feel increased levels of trust and security.

Young people continue to live in a well maintained and high quality physical environment. A senior member of staff said, 'We have had the outside of the house all painted and bathroom repaired.' Bedrooms are refurbished as necessary and there are plans to upgrade all shower facilities. Ensuring good upkeep of the property helps young people feel valued and promotes self-worth.

Actions staff take when a child goes missing are not clear nor is a log of this kept within the home. This recommendation was made at the time of the last inspection and remains outstanding. As a result, the effectiveness of any measure taken to reduce the risk of young people going missing is not clear. This also reduces the accountability of staff responsible for ensuring young people are safe. A requirement has been raised at this inspection.

Staff do not consistently make clear within the sanctions log, details of young people's behaviour leading to a disciplinary measure, nor does the log record the name of staff doing so. As a result, it is difficult to deduce any patterns or themes in relation to behaviour. These omissions also hamper evaluation of the effectiveness of any sanction. A recommendation has been raised at this inspection.

The requirement from the previous inspection about recording complaints has been met. Details of the matter this related to at the time of the previous inspection is now logged. A recommendation about not routinely expecting young people to sign for aspects of their care has been responded to. As a result, young people no longer

sign their review reports, fire drills and house meetings. Young people said, 'It's better now, it's annoying signing for things, not signing for stuff makes it feel a bit more like a home.'

Young people experience a broad based curriculum including land based activities in addition to core academic subjects at Pear Tree school which young people attend. A young person said, 'I have never been in a classroom for two years before I came here I'm back to entry level 3, I don't think even if I had been to mainstream school I could have done that.' Enabling young people to experience these types of learning experiences builds confidence and promotes increased academic achievement.

Young people's health and wellbeing are promoted through a planned and varied range of regular physical activities. Young people said, 'We do activities every night, I like going to the holiday homes, Danby and places like that.' These experiences improve social skills, build confidence and help young people learn how to make good use of their leisure time. Staff are effective at joint working with health professionals. They closely monitor the effectiveness of administered medication and request a review so that where possible, consideration is given to reducing or discontinuing it.

Staff work effectively to maintain and improve contact between young people and their families where this is in their best interests. A senior member of staff said, 'We want home contacts to go well because it affects young people's behaviour here if they don't.' Establishing meaningful relationships between staff and young people's families enables young people to learn about compromise and cooperation. This also helps reduce tensions and anxieties that can arise at times of contact.

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/08/2014	Full	good
02/01/2014	Interim	good progress
23/07/2013	Full	good
05/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint, or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include details of the behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the name of the person using the measure, and of any other person present. (Regulation 17B(3)(b)(e))	31/03/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records are kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any action taken in light of those reasons. In particular, to make clear within risk assessments what action staff have taken and may need to continue to take to reduce risks to young people. (NMS 5.10)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.