

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	30/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC064931
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Pear Tree Projects Limited
Registered person address	Peartree House, Bolam, DARLINGTON, County Durham, DL2 2UP

Responsible individual	David Bartlett
Registered manager	Michael Crisp
Inspector	Jamie Richardson

Inspection date	30/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
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 last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness. The manager continues to have good oversight of this service. A committed deputy manager assists him. Clear monitoring of information coupled with high expectations and aspirations ensures young people continue to achieve. The managers six-monthly report now meets with regulation to include the views of others, including young people. The external monitoring reports now satisfy the requirement set at last inspection. This assists management oversight by providing opinion that young people are safe and the home promotes their wellbeing. Young people enjoy living in this home. Their life experiences improve because of the opportunities they receive here. One young person commented 'Staff try their best to take me to as much as they can. I like table tennis, horse riding and football. I like everything here.' Young people also enjoy holidays to their own private holiday homes where they experience activities such as crab fishing. As a result of all the activities young people participate in, their social skills, self-awareness and independence grows. Some individuals are now managing their own free time for short periods and attending sports groups on their own. Young people report they feel safe and trust staff, some for the first time. One young person commented, 'All staff are here to look after you. I can talk to anyone if I am upset. I trust them here, not like the other places I have been.' Staff have high expectations and young people thrive in this highly supervised and structured environment. They enjoy the predictability of the routine and boundaries. As a result, young people's behaviour continues to improve and physical intervention is a last resort. There has been a recent reduction in its use. Since the recommendation set at last inspection around staff's use of language in recordings, staff have had training in this area. The issue has not been completely addressed and management recognise this is an ongoing development area. On occasion, the language they use still contains personal opinion and not fact. Therefore the recommendation regarding staff recording styles is repeated.	

Young people's education is highly prioritised. Bespoke education ensures young people continue to make good progress in all areas. Practical sessions, which include horse riding, looking after farm animals, and painting and decorating, capture young people's attention and motivate them to learn. This is preparing them well with the skills they need to find employment in later life.

Attendance at routine health appointments ensures young people's general health remains good. Individuals who need specialist support from mental health services or from hospital consultants receive the right services. Partnership working with health professionals ensures staff have a good understanding of how best to support young people. This helps to manage individual's health issues such as epilepsy. Young people benefit from a range of physical activities, which promote their physical health including walking and swimming. Encouraging healthy life styles benefits young people's wellbeing and will help them make positive choices in the future.

Staff continue to receive ongoing training that helps them to understand young people's very complex needs. Some staff have completed a managing challenging behaviour course, others are enrolled and awaiting dates. Some staff have completed attachment training. Training dates for those who need to complete this are awaiting allocation. The service delivers internal training regarding sexually harmful behaviour on an annual basis. This meets the recommendation set at the last inspection. Staff training around key issues such as safeguarding enables them to demonstrate good knowledge of procedures to keep young people safe. No young people go missing from this home. They are not involved in related issues such as child sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, staff continue to update their knowledge showing they would know how to respond if the situation arose.

Planning for new young people to come to live here is thorough. Visits before they arrive and information in the children's guide helps them to understand the expectations and running of this home. This helps to reduce anxiety and promotes achievement right from the start. Staff work closely with other professionals such as the youth offending team, school, health services and social workers to make sure there is effective sharing of information. Consequently, this strengthens the consistent approach to young people's care.

Information about this children's home

This section should outline:

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
24/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
26/08/2014	Full	Good
02/01/2014	Interim	Good progress
23/07/2013	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

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

- 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 is helpful to the child. (The Guide to 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 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 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*.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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