

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	23/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC065679
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Vacant post
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	23/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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 judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Since the last inspection, the home has remained comfortable, welcoming and well maintained. The spacious sitting rooms and bedrooms are comfortable and creatively decorated with age-appropriate posters. Young people are able to bring some personal items from home for their short break if they wish. Young people enjoy coming for their short breaks and feel supported and listened to by caring staff. The young people speak warmly about the staff and describe relaxed and easy relationships with them. Young people enjoy the wide range of activities that enthusiastic and proactive staff provide, and that are displayed on large colourful boards in the corridors. These include art and crafts, music, bike riding, going to galleries, going to a trampoline centre and playing badminton. Young people feel safe. They do not go missing from care and there has been a significant reduction in young people engaging in antisocial behaviour or using alcohol. Staff and the registered manager ensure that detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans are up to date, relevant and regularly reviewed. Staff undertake key-work sessions with young people to help them learn to keep themselves safe and young people understand that handing their mobile telephones in at night is for internet safety. Young people make progress in their social development, managing their own behaviour, attending education and securing better family relationships. The mother of one young person told the inspector that her daughter 'has made so much progress. There is lots of improvement in her behaviour and family relationships. She loves going there.' The service has very few incidents, due to the manager ensuring that she carefully matches the young people for their short breaks and the skill of staff in managing behaviour. When incidents do occur, staff clearly record them and discuss the matter with young people in order to help them learn and reflect. The child-focused manager started in post in August and is awaiting her registration. She has worked hard to implement the new short-break service and to support staff to adjust their practice. The service aims to prevent young people from entering the care system and there is some evidence that they are already achieving some success in this. One staff member commented that he now feels 'buoyant' with a new manager and several new staff members. Of the new	

manager, he commented that she is 'a breath of fresh air. She's always around, she comes in early and her communication is excellent.'

The manager ensures that staff have regular supervision and that their training is up to date and relevant. Her recent focus has been on diversity training, both online and in team meetings. Since the last inspection, she challenged the local authority when senior managers directed the short-break service to accept inappropriate emergency placements that are not in keeping with the statement of purpose.

Feedback from parents and professionals is very positive and the service is highly valued. One worker from the intensive prevention service told the inspector, 'The service is an absolute life-saver for families in crisis, providing respite. The staff are fantastic. Nothing is too much trouble. The manager is very accessible and staff are very supportive.' One mother commented, 'Staff are always available. They always invite us in when we drop my daughter off. We have meetings with staff and they come to the school meetings to represent her.'

There has been a positive response by the manager to the requirement and recommendation in the previous inspection. This has resulted in improved recording by staff and the home working in keeping with the statement of purpose due to a reduction in taking inappropriate placements.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is managed by the local authority and provides residential short breaks for children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged between 12 and 17 years. The home also provides outreach services to support children, young people and their families.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
05/08/2015	Full	Good
11/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
25/11/2014	Full	Good

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 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 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'.

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