

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066010
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Quality Protects Children Ltd
Registered person address	Hill House Archway Road Huyton Liverpool L36 9XB
Responsible individual	Anthony Nolan
Registered manager	POST VACANT
Date of last inspection	11/12/2013

Inspection date	05/06/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None has taken place.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	adequate
Outcomes for children and young people	adequate
Quality of care	adequate
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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Young people benefit from being looked after by a staff team who are persevering and committed. Sound quality of care practices are established to address welfare, education and safety issues that overtime enables young people to move forward in their lives.

Care planning and care practice is individualised to meet young people's specific needs. In the main staff work in a coordinated way with young people, their families and relevant professionals to ensure they get the right help, guidance and advice they need.

Young people's views are pursued to assist in the running of the home and they are involved in decisions affecting their lives. Most young people state that the care and support they receive from staff is good; they do say that they have good relationships with a number of staff.

Young people are kept safe and supported to feel safe. Staff have a good knowledge of the risk young people face and effective care practice the welfare and safety of young people is promoted well by staff. Strong links with supporting agencies exist which assists in keeping young people safe. This has therefore achieved some positive progress for young people. However it has not yet had enough impact to

secure consistently good outcomes for all young people across all of their outcome areas.

A number of shortfalls exist in relation to education placement not being accessed promptly for some; not having all up to date information on young people from the placing authority; the building not being consistently maintained to a high standard throughout; not all direct work with young people being undertaken; gaps in the formal supervision of some staff; staff not receiving specialist training to meet specific needs of some young people and monitoring systems not being fully evaluative and effective to bring further improvement to the quality of care. These shortcomings do not have a significant impact on the welfare or safety of young people in the home. However they do impact on young people being able to achieve optimum outcomes.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four long-term placements for children.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/12/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
12/06/2013	Full	good
13/12/2012	Interim	good progress
30/05/2012	Full	adequate

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
18 (2001)	ensure proper provision for the care, education, supervision and, where appropriate treatment, of children accommodated there. In particular, ensuring young people's educational placements are arranged at the earliest opportunity (Regulation 11(1) (b))	28/07/2014
28 (2001)	ensure that the each child who is accommodated in the children's home has a record in a permanent form which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child. In particular, an up to date plan of care of the child prepared by his placing authority, and of the placement plan (Regulation 28, Schedule 3 (18))	09/07/2014

31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept of sound construction, in good structural repair externally and internally; is kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained consistently. In particular all rooms are decorated to a good standard and cleaning routines are upheld; the outside and garden is maintained.(Regulation 31(2) (d), (e) and (4) (b))	28/07/2014
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in full. In particular, all direct work sessions take place as specified in care plans ; risk assessment to demonstrate all the work undertaken and show the progress young people are making (NMS 25.2)
- ensure all staff have access to support and advice, and are provided with regular supervision by appropriate qualified and experienced staff, including agency staff (NMS 19.4)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people. For example, that they have access to self-harm and gang culture training and refresher training in up-to-date in a timely fashion (NMS 18.1)
- ensure there are effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the home. In particular, ensure the quality of care is evaluated; monitoring systems identify all omissions and deficiencies and lead to the registered provider and manager taking immediate action to improve the quality of care (NMS 21)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people are supported to feel positive about themselves and are encouraged to develop their own identity through individualised care planning and are making some progress. Most young people engage well and some have made positive attachments with key staff members and are able to talk about aspects of their life. However, for some young people they are still on a journey to achieve this. They continue to build trusting relationships with staff, who are committed and persevering in attaining positive attachments with young people.

Young people are well supported to maintain good health. They are assisted to develop healthy lifestyles and this includes young people attending routine health appointments. All young people are registered with health professionals and have health plans. Young people are involved in a variety of activities which assist them to keep fit, healthy and help them to participate in the wider community. This includes ice-skating; dancing and swimming. Emotional or mental health services have been quickly accessed to meet the needs of young people. This is to promote and improve young people's emotional wellbeing over time.

Young people benefit from open and honest discussions with staff about the detrimental effects of smoking, drinking alcohol and drugs. Staff respond appropriately, offer sound support and monitor health issues. However, some young people still engage in activities which could affect their health including smoking and self-harm. As a result, this does affect the overall health outcomes for some young people.

Those young people who have lived at the home for a time are making sound educational progress. School placements and other educational packages have been sourced and are about to commence for young people recently admitted to the home. However, the home is not always ensuring at the point of referral that placing authorities along with themselves are proactive enough to ensure educational placements are immediately put in place. In such circumstances, while placing authorities agree appropriate educational resources, the home provides some basic learning activities. Some young people participate in these very well. This helps young people to remain engaged in some form of education but this means they can achieve only satisfactory progress.

Independence decision making and practical skills is encouraged even among younger children. They are helped to develop the skills they will need in later life, such as cooking meals and taking care in aspects of the house and budgeting. Pathway planning for independence and leaving care has commenced for older young people in line with their care plan to assist in them being fully equipped to care for

themselves successfully as young adults.

Quality of care

adequate

Staff strive to build positive relationships with young people. They establish a rapport with young people; this enables them build trust, care and work with young people in a meaningful way that brings good outcomes over time. Relationships have formed or are forming between staff and young people. The staff team demonstrates a good understanding of young people's individual personalities, needs, interests and strengths. A young person said, 'some staff are ok; I get on with a number of them, but we could do with some new staff.'

Young people say that they are listened to most of the time. It is clear that young people have a say on aspects of their care and the running of the home, such as décor of their bedroom, menus, activities and residents meetings and family contact. Some young people regularly read their file and are aware of the content of their care plans. Young people say that they attend their statutory reviews. This helps them understand their histories and have a say in the way they are cared for.

The staff team takes responsibility for supporting the young people, and regular team meetings include discussions about all the relevant issues relating to the young people to support their continuity of care. Placement plans have all been reviewed and updated; these outline the young people's individual needs. Placements plans provide suitable guidance for staff on how young people should be cared for. However, not all direct work is occurring at the frequency specified in care plans and risk assessments. Not all Looked After Children's documentation is complete and up-to-date for some young people admitted as an emergency, although this information has been requested several times. This does not ensure and provide staff with all the relevant information required to ensure the needs of young people are fully met.

Staff recognise the importance of promoting positive behaviour and that this is essential to the quality of care that they provide. Professionals state that staff support young people to behave well and help them to manage difficult behaviour. The staff team is striving to manage negative behaviour through building positive relationships and ensuring that consistent boundaries are maintained with young people. Staff are clear on the individual behaviour strategies that are in place for each young person. Positive behaviour is being more consistently sustained and risk-taking behaviour is reducing but has yet to be sustained in the longer term.

Young people influence decision-making through a range of avenues. Daily discussions, house meetings, key-work sessions and statutory reviews provide an

opportunity to express their opinions. Young people know how to complain. Four complaints have been made by young people since the last inspection. The majority were addressed, with action taken and the outcome recorded, with the latest two still being investigated at the time of the inspection. Young people are satisfied with the outcome of the complaints addressed which indicates that their views are being listened too.

Young people enjoy spending their time with friends, family and undertaking variety activities. Young people went to the cinema and out for lunch during the inspection. Staff are supportive and facilitate young people to see their family. Young people have a say and plan weekly activities they wish to take part in. This extends their life experiences and enjoyment in age appropriate activities.

Young people live in detached property, which is close to local shops and accessible public transport. The home provides suitable environment for young people overall. A number of rooms in the home are showing signs of wear and tear; decoration damage; with marked walls and wood works. The garden area is over grown and the paths have an abundance of weeds growing. Two young people said, 'we think this house needs decorating a lot! It looks awful we have complained about this.' Some staff are not carrying out all routine cleaning tasks which means the home is not as clean as it should be in places. Young people have their own bedrooms, which they are starting to personalise to reflect their individuality. A young person said 'I've decided how I'm having my room decorated and am going shopping to buy the wall paper and paint.' Although, there is an allocated person to do maintenance work this is not always being carried out promptly. This does not ensure young people are living in a home that is pleasant and of a high standard to meet their needs fully.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people live in a home where safeguarding is a given high importance. Young people say that staff explain and talk to them about activities that can put them at risk and how they can keep themselves safe. Professionals state that young people are kept safe and that the staff have good dialogue with other agencies. As, a result young people are kept safer.

Individual risk assessments are available for each young person. These assessments link into the behaviour and placement plans. This enables staff to be clear on the identified risks young people face and outline effective strategies to ensure their welfare is promoted, protected and they are kept safe. Risk assessments are updated regularly alongside any change required to behaviour and care plans where identified. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the welfare and safety risks to each young person. They are able to describe the work they are undertaking with each young person to reduce or eliminate the identified risks.

Some young people have a history of high-risk behaviour which is reducing. For

those young people who have lived in the home for some time, steady progress has been made. Incidents of young people going missing from care is low. When young people do go missing from home, staff always take action to minimise the risks and secure young people's safe return. Young people state that when out the staff routinely check out their whereabouts and agree times to return. Staff undertake direct work with young people to address this risk taking behaviour. A police officer said that 'the staff have worked very well with us to safeguard young people from exploitation, passing all relevant information on promptly and have put the young persons safety first; taking action to keep the young person safe.' Staff work effectively with a number of agencies to ensure a proportionate response is taken, based on the individual concerns and the level of risk to keep young people safe.

Some young people do present challenging behaviour. Staff have a good awareness of potential negative behaviour and triggers; they closely supervise and monitor young people and positive behaviour management strategies are implemented. These are regularly reviewed to support and assist young people to develop positive behaviour. Sanctions are appropriately used, proportionate to age and understanding. Staff are trained in physical intervention and understand the need to encourage improved behaviour. There is a focus on giving rewards and individual incentives to further encourage good behaviour for each young person. The use of physical intervention is minimal and only used to keep young people and others safe. Staff use negotiation and diffusion with young people, only considering restraint as a last resort. The homes approach to managing behaviour is assisting young people to improve their behaviour over time.

Young people benefit from a strong focus on keeping them safe. An independent reviewing officer said 'staff took appropriate action to protect a young person from exploitation; that the young person had said she loved living at the home, she felt safe and the staff cared for her.' Clear safeguarding procedures are followed by staff in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures and because of this are able to promote and protect young people's safety.

Young people say there is no bullying at the home and say staff have explained what bullying is and that it is not tolerated. This ensures young people are clear on what bullying is and that it is not acceptable.

Young people are protected by all health and safety checks being undertaken. Equipment and appliances are subject to regular maintenance. Fire system checks and evacuations are regularly held to ensure young people are familiar with the procedure. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to keep young people safe.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home is currently registering a new manager. This person has the relevant experience and has worked at a senior level at the home for the last seven years; they are enrolled to undertake the level 5 diploma in Management. Young people receive care from an experienced stable staff team which helps them to experience stability over a long period of time. Staffing levels are sufficient to meet young people's needs and have been increased recently to safeguard them further.

The requirements made at the last inspection have been addressed which include improvement in consulting with parents; young people and the placing authorities. Records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each written entry. The recommendations made have been implemented to ensure that staff working within the home know and implement the local authority and home's policy in relation to children going missing and are clear on their role in implementing this policy. The recording of significant events relating to children accommodated in the home are specific and detail the relevant information.

Overall staff are trained in a variety of safety and childcare matters. However, there are some shortfalls in the on-going programme to provide regular refresher training. For example; some staff refresher training in first aid and fire safety has not been provided within the timeframes set by the provider. The majority of staff have not received training in how to support and care for young people who self-harm and gang culture. As a result this does not ensure that all staff are suitably equipped to meet the needs of young people at all times.

Staff state there is good support from the new manager; there are regular team meetings and handovers, which aid good communication. However, not all staff benefit from receiving regular formal supervision and this includes agency workers. This is not in line with the home's Statement of Purpose and guidelines. Therefore, this does not consistently provide routine and suitable support to all staff to access continuing advice and guidance in relation to their care of young people.

Young people live in a home which adequately furnished. All serious health and safety requirements are met which ensure young people live in a safe environment. However, the home is not well resourced and maintained throughout. Damage to decoration; minor repairs; garden and grounds maintenance are not promptly attended to. There is a lack of attention to ensure the home is clean and maintained to a high standard throughout at all times. More recently there have been delays in cash being accessed to purchase food supplies on the planned day to undertake the shopping. These matters reflect deficits in the management of the home by the manager and the provider.

Management monitoring systems of the home's operation are improving but are not yet robust enough in all areas. This has meant that identified omissions and deficiencies have not always been efficiently and effectively rectified. The new

management team has commenced an audit of the service; this has identified areas for development which have been included into the home's revised development plan. Regulation 33 and 34 monitoring of the home are routinely undertaken. While these cover the essential and required areas these are not yet fully evaluating the quality of care provided to young people. Therefore, this does not demonstrate fully how effective the home is operating or how the quality of care provided is to improve further for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.