

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	06/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC066796
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Registered person address	Wakefield Council, County Hall, Bond Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2QW
Responsible individual	Mark Barratt
Registered manager	Ian Henderson
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm

Inspection date	06/03/2017
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 improved effectiveness. Young people receive good-quality, individualised short-term care, support and protection from the staff team. The committed, motivated and approachable staff consistently strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people, whether the plan is for them to return to their family or to an alternative provision. Consequently, the young people move to suitable placements that meet their specific needs. Promoting young people's safety and welfare remains a high priority. The management team and staff are very responsive to the unpredictable and risky challenges within the changing group dynamic. For example, child sexual exploitation, missing events, fire-starting behaviour, drug and alcohol and substance misuse, self-harm and mental health issues. Safeguarding practices strengthen due to the positive relationships that staff nurture with the young people, promoting open and honest discussions. The positive bonds lead to minimal sanctions and physical intervention, which, considering some of the turbulent incidents, is testament to staff members' good de-escalation skills. Staff value young people's wishes and feelings and take their views seriously. These positive factors help the staff to take protective measures to safeguard young people. Staff encourage the young people to comply with plans to maintain their safety in the home. Specifically, a fire service visit was used creatively to educate the young people about the dangers of fire-starting behaviours. The highly effective and collaborative partnerships between the staff team, social workers, education, health, police and other professionals and families provide a protective shield around the young people's plans. Regular strategy meetings and communication with these professionals promote good practice. The young people's involvement in their safety plans and risk assessments provides them with a better understanding about keeping safe. A social worker complimented the staff team's approach to a young person given the 'ridiculously high risks', stating that staff went 'above and beyond' and, 'did everything they could to keep her safe'. The young person's very positive transition to a specialised provision underpins her good progress in understanding the risks to her safety and well-being.	

A reduction in missing from home incidents is keeping young people safer. Since the last inspection, the staff team has been involved in a 'missing from home' pilot. The registered manager meets regularly with the local police community support officers (PCSOs) and missing from care professionals. The young people's good engagement with these workers is helping them to build positive relationships through a range of planned activities in the home. This includes the local police visiting the young people to bake with them and provide offers to join specific groups in the community. This innovative development is helping young people to understand the potential risks that they face when they go missing. It also introduces them to an independent and friendly adult who they can approach with any concerns or worries.

Flexible education programmes help those young people who are disengaged from learning to be taught at home. This helps them to achieve their goals and develop aspirations. Support and encouragement from staff help young people who are not in full-time education to think about returning to their studies in preparation for moving on to leaving care services.

The registered manager has been able to reduce placement numbers and increase staffing ratios in order to meet the young people's diverse needs and risks. This currently provides for a relatively harmonious and settled home life for the young people. Their personalised bedrooms and well-maintained living space provide a comfortable and homely abode for them to progress to the next stage of their plans.

The resilient staff team remains positive and motivated. The lessons learned from significant incidents inform staff practice and prevent incidents from happening again. An allegation against staff has been investigated and resolved in conjunction with the local authority designated officer. The subsequent support and training has helped the staff involved to resume their duties and regain their confidence.

The registered manager has taken positive steps to meet the requirements from the last inspection. His monitoring and review systems have produced clear protocols and safe care practices for staff to follow. An assurance to end the practice of locking internal doors at night for no specified reason has been given by the registered manager with immediate effect. Autistic spectrum disorder training for staff is due to commence. The manager has acted on the recommendation to ensure that staff follow risk management plans, which promotes young people's safety and welfare.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home forms part of a wider range of provision and outreach support that is offered to children, young people and their families in the community.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/09/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/10/2015	Full	Good
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 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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