

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC066796
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Registered provider 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	13/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC066796

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- The home provides a good, individualised, well-integrated and flexible service for young people and their families in crisis. This works well.
- Young people benefit from short-term, nurturing placements. Strong outreach services provide young people and their families with good help and support when they need it.
- Skilled staff are adept at forming good, trusting relationships with the young people. They can see the positives, irrespective of the challenges and high levels of risk that some young people pose.
- Young people's wishes and feelings are embedded into service delivery and their views are taken seriously.
- Young people get the right help and support to move on to independence. The continued support from the staff team acts as a lifeline to the young people and mimics family life.
- Effective relationships with social care, education, health, police and other key professionals and families are strengths of the service and ensure that young people have good opportunities to progress and move on positively.
- The registered manager and staff team are very conscientious and committed to skilfully carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Team morale is good.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard 2) in order to meet the leadership and management standard with particular reference to clearly evidencing how risks are minimised in light of high risk behaviours, making clear the action taken when young people return home under the influence of illegal substances and review the practice of locking doors to ensure transparent practices, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	30/12/2016
The registered manager must ensure that all employees – undertake appropriate continuing professional development. (Regulation 33 (4)(a)) Specifically, consider a training needs analysis to capture any current or anticipated learning gaps.	30/12/2016

Recommendations

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

- Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary when there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child's or another person's safety or well-being ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 16, paragraph 3.20). Specifically in relation to complying with the current risk-management plans.

Full report

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 with emotional and 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
10/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/10/2015	Full	Good
25/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/10/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people continue to benefit from a good, individualised and well-integrated family support service that helps them and their families in crisis to work through and resolve their difficulties within a time-limited period. Incorporated in the home is the strong and successful outreach service that enables young people and their families to receive good help, support and protection when they need it. Caring and friendly staff welcome young people into the home, often in an emergency. Their skills of engagement are used to good effect, which helps the young people to quickly settle in and feel safe and secure. A young person consulted about the home said, '[Name of the member of staff] is really good at what she does, she's supportive and a really good listener because she actually cares and can get people to listen to her because she doesn't talk rubbish or lie to you – you get it straight.' Parents' involvement with the home has been used to good effect. For example, a parents' guide for the home, developed with the help of a parent, shows what services their children can expect to receive, which may allay some of their worries. Since the last inspection, current placement numbers have significantly reduced to accommodate safely a young person with high levels of need and risky behaviours who was placed in an emergency. This works well with the current dynamics and the moving on plans are in place, which prevents drift. A young person who lived at the home for over two years has successfully moved into independence. She said that different young people moving in and out of the home, 'didn't faze me very much', and expressed positive experiences about home life. She said, 'I did enjoy living at [Name of the home].' Good access to advocates ensures that young people are listened to, and their views are represented in a range of arenas, which values and respects their rights. A young person said, 'If I needed to complain, I understood the procedure from day one.' The home receives a number of compliments from young people, their families and professionals, which reflects the team's child-focused care practices. The views of young people who have stayed and moved on from the home indicate their positive experiences. Typical comments include, 'I had a really good relationship with all the staff at [Name of the home]. They all respected me and I respected them.' A social care professional said, 'I have had a number of young people who have resided at [Name of the home]. These young people have been happy, settled and at times not wanted to leave to transition to long-term	

placements.' Where possible, moving on and rehabilitation plans for those young people returning to families involve young people, their families, social care professionals and staff from the home. This ensures that their departure not only promotes their wishes and feelings, but also ensures a smooth transition and continued support to prevent further breakdowns. The promotion of young people's safety and welfare is promoted through the effective relationships between the staff team and families.

Staff champion young people's culture and heritage, primarily through contact with their families. Young people's access to resources that reinforce their identity, such as living in a familiar location and engaging in familiar routines, reflect their cultural norms and values. Young people who have unaccompanied asylum-seeker status are supported to communicate with staff with the help of interpreters and the services of a dedicated external team to ensure that their short-term needs are suitably met during their often very short stay.

Staff promote the value of education so that young people can reap the benefits of learning, irrespective of their length of stay. Young people confirm that staff help them to progress educationally. One young person said, 'I knew I had their support throughout my education blips and stuff and they helped me sort myself out.' Another young person consulted about the home said, 'All the staff supported me in making good decisions about my education and about other things as well.' Good links with education professionals seek to locate the most appropriate education provisions for young people, which for some is helping to overcome barriers. This includes home tuition and engaging in educational visits to the museum and other places for enlightenment, and to help maintain a daytime structure. Young people's involvement in leisure activities, such as playing board games and on games consoles, pool, watching DVDs and going out on day trips, provide them with time for relaxation and enjoyment.

Good health promotion and effective relationships with health professionals enable young people to access the health services that meet most of their specified needs. This includes young people's discreet access to smoking, drug, alcohol and sexual health advice services. A nurse allocated to the home reports good communication from the staff team, enabling her to have an oversight of the young people at any given time. A young person consulted about the home said, 'I had a looked after children's nurse come and see me once a week to make sure I am healthy and to see if there were any problems.'

Young people are supported to undertake independence skills, which helps them to develop lifelong skills that enable them to prosper. A young person who made an exceptionally good transition into their own accommodation remains in touch with the staff team. She said, 'The move worked well.' The young person spoke very highly of how staff helped with the move and how they continue to visit and

support her on an outreach basis, which mimics extended family life.

Young people live in a spacious, clean and homely place that provides a welcoming and comfortable home. Recent redecoration of the lounge areas, including new carpets, ensures the upkeep of the home and values the young people who live there. The locking of some doors in communal areas is not clearly represented in any of the documentation, which does not promote transparent practice.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
To a large extent, the promotion of young people's safety shields them from threats to their vulnerabilities and well-being. Young people confirm that they feel safe, making comments, such as, 'I felt really safe and secure because all the staff are really nice and they make sure you are well looked after and make sure you keep safe,' and 'I felt safe at the home.' A family member said, 'He is safer than where he was.' Effective working relationships with other professionals and most families heighten everyone's awareness about the young people's presenting risks that could, if left unmonitored, result in their significant harm. Consequently, there is a clear understanding of the service's limitations to maintain the safety of a young person placed. The reduced placement numbers and increased staffing ratios acknowledge and support this concern. Staff training in the Signs of Safety model is embedded into practice and ensures a clear focus on what the team is worried about, what is working well and what needs to happen. Young people who go missing from care are protected by the proactive measures taken by the staff team in partnership with the police and other professionals, which ensures their safe return. Staff go out and they follow and search likely places when young people leave the home without permission. An independent reviewing officer who said, 'Staff have taken the appropriate measures, following him,' confirms this good practice. The 'safe and well' and 'return home' interviews are offered to young people. This allows them to discuss their reasons for going missing to the police and to a dedicated visitor who conducts the 'return home' interviews. Safety plans monitor young people where concerns, such as missing from care, child sexual exploitation and other lifestyle issues may arise. Staff are skilled in behaviour management techniques. Their calm approach enables them to manage highly challenging behaviours well, which minimises the opportunities for these to escalate into more serious incidents. This is strengthened by the positive affirmations and the good relationships shared between the staff and young	

people. A restorative approach is endorsed where possible to keep physical interventions to a minimum and to avoid unnecessarily criminalising young people.

Incidents of bullying have been taken seriously and they have been acted on when detected.

Young people's health and safety is supported by the regular checks of fire prevention equipment. Risk management plans are intended to keep young people safe. However, not all of the plans include all of the strategies to minimise risk. Furthermore, not all room searches are carried out in accordance with the risk management plans, so it is not clear how risks reduce over time.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The manager has been registered with Ofsted since March 2014. His significant childcare and management experience and the required level 5 diploma empower him to carry out his roles and responsibilities with skill and confidence. Although the manager uses suitable internal and independent monitoring systems to drive forward improvements, he has missed opportunities to ensure that there is robust care planning documentation that supports staff practice. Specifically, the manager has not clearly evidenced how certain high-risk behaviours, such as fire starting, will be minimised. He has not made clear the actions taken to monitor young people when they return home under the influence of substances, nor has the practice of locking doors been reviewed to ensure transparent practice. Not all staff training has been completed to enable the team to enhance its understanding of issues such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism. A conscientious, experienced and stable staff team shows affection towards the young people and really takes the time to get to know their personalities and traits. They are enabled by the management team to take on additional responsibilities, which keeps them motivated and boosts their confidence. Supervision and regular communication, through handovers, team meetings and ad hoc discussions, help the staff team keep up to date with the young people's progress. Significant events involving young people have been notified to Ofsted and other appropriate authorities, and reports include the action taken. This promotes young people's safety and protection and enables Ofsted to carry out its regulatory duties. The staff team's collaborative working relationships with professionals and families fulfil the statement of purpose. This is a strength of the service. Professionals share	

positive views about the home and specifically indicate that they are happy with the quality of communication. One social worker said, 'Overall, staff at [Name of the home] are proactive in meeting his needs,' and an independent reviewing officer said, 'They will endeavour to meet his needs to help him move on.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016