

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066796
Inspector	Nicola McEvinney
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Registered person address	Wakefield Council, County Hall Bond Street WAKEFIELD West Yorkshire WF1 2QW
Responsible individual	Svetlana Shannon
Registered manager	Ian Fraser Henderson
Date of last inspection	05/03/2014

Inspection date	14/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people have made progress from their starting points. Staff are vigilant in taking steps to secure their safety, specifically where they are involved in risk taking behaviours. This is particularly commendable considering the age of some young people who are approaching adulthood. Young people say that they are safe and most are safe, although some individuals continue to put themselves at risk. However, the staff team's awareness of the young people's vulnerabilities helps to protect them. Young people do not go missing; when they choose to stay with their family staff undertake safe and well visits.

Young people feel well cared for by staff who provide good quality care. There is good engagement with some young people who enjoy some exciting trips with staff.

Management arrangements are strong with the management team addressing the shortfalls identified at this inspection. These shortfalls relate to training for the casual staff, missing person's protocols and regulation 34 reports. However, at this time these do not impact negatively on young people.

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.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2014	Interim	good progress
13/06/2013	Full	good
10/10/2012	Interim	good progress
20/06/2012	Full	inadequate

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
26 (2001)	ensure where a person works in the children's home in a care role, that person must attain or hold the required care role qualification by two years after the date on which that person started work (Regulation 26 (4)(a))	31/10/2015
34 (2001)	monitor the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months; supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him. (Regulation 34(1)(a) and (2))	30/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure young people's care plan, along with the placement plan include a strategy to minimise the risk of young people going missing and contain clear guidance to staff on what action they should take when a young person fails to return to the home when expected. (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.79)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people's progress is variable; some have developed in confidence and self-esteem and have an understanding of their backgrounds. This is supported by the use of life-story books containing photographs of significant places and people.

Some young people's health is compromised by their continued misuse of substances and sporadic engagement with health care services. As a direct response to this concern, the local authority is taking exceptional measures in supporting young people to improve their health by seeking legal orders. A health visitor is a regular visitor to the home and supports young people on a range of health issues such as sexual health, smoking cessation and nutritional advice. She speaks highly of the commitment of the staff team who are diligent in promoting young people's health, 'they are very instrumental in ensuring young people keep their appointments'. Young people are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. There is an emphasis on keeping fit and staff encourage young people by accompanying them to the gym. This helps to develop good relationships.

Some young people enjoy excellent attendance at their place of education. However, other young people have lost their educational placement or attend sporadically which impacts negatively on their life opportunities.

The young people and staff enjoy good community relations with their near neighbours. There are plans to do a fundraising event for a children's charity involving the local community. This helps young people to develop a sense of social responsibility.

Young people are well supported to have contact with significant people. For some young people, family members accompany them on activities. This helps to maintain and build family ties which are important to the young people's sense of identity in a relaxed environment.

Young people engage in opportunities to practice their independence skills. For example, they make snacks and occasionally help with meal preparation; they undertake their own laundry and look after their rooms.

Quality of care **good**

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff and they know that staff care about them. All the young people were able to identify someone they can talk to about any concerns or worries they may have. The home rarely experiences disruptive

behaviours. However, individual behaviour management plans identify triggers for unwanted behaviours and set out clear guidance for strategies to de-escalate potentially volatile situations. Young people get on well with one another but when there are disagreements, the home works restoratively to mend their relationships. This helps the young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

Young people's views are taken into account in all areas of their lives. An advocacy service supports young people to express their wishes and feelings in their formal reviews. Advocates regularly attend the home offering a drop-in session which enables young people to have an independent person to talk to. The use of the 'My Plan' document ensures young people can express how they wish to be cared for. However, there are occasions when young people are not happy about their plans. Staff work hard to engage young people and help them understand the reasons for the content of their plans.

Young people needs are set out in their care plan, this runs alongside each young person's daily routine which gives good guidance on how they are to be cared for on a day-to-day basis. This ensures consistency of care.

Young people know how to make a complaint but no complaints are recorded. However, there a number of compliments received from young people who have left the home commending the care that they have received.

Young people are well supported with their education. Prior to college interviews they were able to take advantage of mock interviews which helped them to prepare for the real event. The home has been proactive in sourcing alternative opportunities for those young people without an educational placement and has secured a work experience placement. The aim of this is to enthuse these young people by offering an opportunity to experience work in the career they aspire to. This is particularly pertinent for those young people who have attained good GCSE grades and hope to go to university. Young people's achievements are celebrated by attending award ceremonies.

Young people enjoy a good range of activities. For example, the cinema, swimming, playing pool, visits to the gym and other trips out. Some young people have been on adventurous trips such as climbing Mount Snowdon. These individuals were very proud of this achievement and had wonderful photographs as memories of this event. Other outings included going to the Rugby League Challenge cup played in the Capital. During the forthcoming half-term young people and staff are planning events to celebrate Halloween.

Needs relating to young people's religion, ethnicity and culture are well attended to. For example, during Ramadan young people were supported with fasting and had increased contact with family members. Relatives spoke highly of the support given during this time. There is a good gender balance and the staff team reflect ethnicity and religion of young people placed and are good role models.

Young people benefit from effective inter-agency working to address the challenges presented by some of them. Professionals speak highly of the commitment from the staff team who proactively coordinate inter-agency working to ensure young people's complex needs are addressed.

Young people enjoy living in this spacious well-maintained home which is well equipped and furnished. It is a homely environment for young people to live in.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people report that they feel safe in the home and there is no bullying.

Risk assessments are in place for each young person, the home and activities. These identify potential dangers with strategies in place to minimise the risk. These are regularly reviewed to ensure their efficacy.

None of the current group of young people go missing from care, but some regularly stay with their family despite this not being authorised. Due to the legal status of these young people, the home is struggling to change this behaviour. The local authority is proactively trying to address this in order to keep the young people safe where families are not deemed appropriate places for the young people to be, but this is difficult for those who are approaching adulthood. When young people are away from the home, staff make regular telephone contact with them and conduct 'safe and well' checks to maximise their safety. Parents say that the staff do all they can to ensure the safety of their children. The home has a missing person's policy which is in line with the local authority's missing from care policy. However, there are no individual detailed protocols for each young person. This means that staff are not fully informed about the action they should take if a young person fails to return to the home when expected. When young people return to the home later than expected they are always provided with food and drink including full meals if needed. This helps to reinforce for the young people that the staff are concerned about their welfare.

Young people are protected by the awareness of the staff team about safeguarding issues. They work closely with other organisations involved with safeguarding young people, including the local police. The home also accesses the services of the fire officer to discuss with young people any actions that may put themselves or others at risk.

The management team have a good understanding of safe recruitment practices including verifying references. This ensures that only suitable people are employed to care for young people in the home.

Young people's behaviours are well managed. The home has adopted a restorative

practice approach which helps young people to understand the impact of their actions on others. There have been a few incidents of physical intervention; these involve guiding young people away from potentially volatile situations to prevent behaviours escalating. A number of sanctions are recorded which are appropriate.

Young people are protected by all health and safety checks carried out regularly, including regular fire drills so that the young people know what action to take in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

good

This is a well-managed home with the Registered Manager (RM) attaining a level 5 Diploma. He has been the manager for 18 months, was previously the manager of another local children's home and has worked in children's residential services for 21 years. He is ensuring compliance with the new regulations and quality standards and strives to improve the outcomes for young people.

The RM leads a team of well qualified, enthusiastic and committed staff who provide a good quality of care to young people. Staff say that they feel well supported and have good access to training. All permanent staff members have attained the level 3 Diploma or equivalent with some staff having relevant degrees or social work qualifications. However, the home employs a number of regular casual staff to supplement the rota but not all of these hold a relevant qualification.

A key strength of the home is the skills of the staff team who persevere with young people and this is nurtured well by the RM. Staff build good relationships with young people which continue after they have left the home. The RM responded promptly to the weaknesses identified in this inspection and took immediate steps to address them.

There are good monitoring systems in place. The manager monitors young people's files to ensure they contain all the required information and undertakes monthly monitoring in line with Schedule 6. However, these reports are not forwarded to HMCI at three-monthly intervals which does not ensure that the regulatory body can monitor the home. Independent oversight is strengthened by monthly visits from an Independent Visitor who monitors a wide range of the home's activities. The Independent Visitor seeks the views of young people, staff and relatives in order to get a full picture of the care provided.

The requirement raised at the last inspection has been met; systems are in place to ensure that references are verified for new employees which ensures a more robust approach to recruitment.

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.