

SC066796

Registered provider: Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home. The home provides short-breaks accommodation for young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. In addition to this, the service provides intensive 'edge of care' outreach support for families. The home can accommodate up to four young people. One bed is reserved for emergency admissions.

Inspection dates: 15 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 6 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people receive good-quality care while on their short break. They engage well with staff and value the support they receive. In addition, young people feel safe and protected.
- The same staff team provides outreach and short breaks. As a result of this, young people and their families build good-quality trusting relationships.
- Good collaborative working relationships with other professionals mean that young people receive a seamless package of care. As a result, good-quality planning and support are achieved.
- Parents and carers highly rate the short-breaks service and they appreciate and value the support they receive from the staff team.
- The manager has a strong and coherent understanding of the service and its strengths and weaknesses. This enables him to plan effectively for the future.
- The staff team is well supported, motivated and enthusiastic. Staff are consistently child focused and strive to improve outcomes for young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/09/2016	Full	Good
10/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/10/2015	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home has recently undergone a significant change to its statement of purpose. The young people that lived here prior to the changes have moved on to appropriate long-term placements. Evidence suggests that this was well planned and young people were prepared for their move. In preparation for the change, the home has been re-decorated to a high standard. Each young person's bedroom has an individual theme. Young people can choose which room they would like to stay in for their short break. Although the home is large and purpose built, it is homely and warm. In the event that a young person is accommodated as an emergency, staff have care packs available with essential toiletries. This ensures that in any circumstance a young person has provisions. In turn, this helps them to settle into the home and reduces some level of anxiety.

The same staff team provides outreach support and short-break care. This means that in most cases young people already know the staff before staying overnight. Young people are central to all care planning and they are included in developing their plans. Staff use a signs of safety model in all their documents and assessments. This provides a simple and effective overview of care and risks that families and young people understand. As a result, young people know their care plan, they have some control and their views are listened to. Young people engage well with the staff, which enables them to take part in restorative work. In some cases where risks are too high to manage, the staff provide effective support to help young people move on to appropriate placements. A young person said, 'They [the staff] supported me to move on to a new placement. They were brilliant and they kept me informed really well. Staff helped me to settle in and they were great. When I was at [Name of home, I felt safe and cared for. It's a nice place.'

Staff work together with young people, parents and carers to provide intensive support. As a result, the staff build good relationships with families in need of assistance. Outreach support alongside short breaks has meant that some young people in crisis have been supported to return to their families. In some cases, long-term care has not been necessary and young people have remained with their families. A family member said, 'With having a break, it helps us to care for [Name of young person]. It's very hard. I cannot emphasise enough how helpful this service is. They [the staff] were there when we needed them in the evenings and the weekends.'

The health and education of young people remain the responsibility of their parents and carers. However, staff provide support with important meetings and work together alongside families to enable them to access appropriate advice. The staff work closely with social workers and the edge of care team to ensure that young people and their families receive a joined-up approach and service. A professional said, 'We work in tandem sometimes in order to manage a crisis point. This works really well, as they [the staff] work out of hours, unlike us, which is nine to five. Staff pick up the main crisis points at evenings and weekends. The service works well. It is really helping parents to cope at home.' This has been particularly effective for one young person and he is now engaging with school.

Activities provided are carefully planned around the family and what they can realistically achieve together. Activities are not expensive 'treats' and staff work with young people and their families to enable them to enjoy good-quality time together, for example, exploring the local community beauty spots and attending free local events that do not require significant travel. While on short breaks, young people have access to social activities in the home. This includes a well-stocked games room and an art room for creative activities. Young people are encouraged to work together as a team. This helps them to understand the importance of sharing and managing conflict or disagreements positively.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

An effective safeguarding culture within the staff team ensures that emerging risks are identified and addressed quickly. Staff are vigilant and well trained in identifying and managing risk. As a result, risk assessments are of good quality and based on sound knowledge and theory. In addition, staff are not risk adverse. Young people are helped to understand and manage risk for themselves out in the community and while using social media.

Staff in the home work closely with the edge of care social work team to provide safety advice and guidance to young people and their families. Young people have access to child sexual exploitation training and weekly information groups. They understand the indicators of child sexual exploitation and use this to identify potential risks to themselves. There is good attendance and engagement. Young people have an understanding of risk and know how to keep themselves safe. In addition to this, young people benefit from targeted individual support when they are staying in the home.

Since the change in service, there has been one short episode of missing from care. This was managed well. Staff responded swiftly and located the young person, with the support of the police. In addition to this, staff continued to provide care and support throughout the night at hospital for the young person. Although missing from care is not a particular feature of the short-breaks service, staff are confident in the procedures to follow in the event of a young person going missing. Young people feel safe here and view the support as a break.

Staff are responsive to young people who present with unpredictable and aggressive behaviours. They are highly skilled in de-escalation and distraction techniques when managing behaviour. Staff use a calm and consistent approach to boundaries and routines. This gives young people a sense of security and safety. Staff use the positive relationships they have built with young people to successfully de-escalate situations. Although staff are trained and competent in physical intervention, its use is viewed as a last resort. As a result, there have been no incidences of physical intervention.

The home is equipped with sensors that alert staff if young people leave their room. In addition to this, the home is covered with an alarm at night, and two staff members sleep in. Parents and carers are aware that these alarms may be used in line with a

young person's risk assessment. Appropriate permissions are sought when required. However, there has been no reason to use the alarms on young people's doors.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2014. He has extensive experience of working with children and young people and he has the required qualifications. The home is managed effectively in his absence by an equally capable assistant manager who holds a social work qualification. The management and staff team have successfully worked through a busy period exacerbated by absences due to illness. This has had no impact on the service.

The home has undergone a significant change in service from a children's home to an edge of care short-breaks service with outreach support. As part of this change, the staff team has reduced in size and five staff members have taken voluntary redundancy. The current staff team is stable; many of the current staff have been working here for over 10 years. Staff have changed their roles significantly to deliver a new short-breaks service. Careful planning and consultation have ensured that staff are enthusiastic and excited about their new roles. In addition to targeted training, advice and guidance, staff members said that they have received high-quality support from managers.

This new service is in its infancy and has been running since November 2017. The manager is undertaking three-monthly reviews of the service. This is evaluated well, using a signs of safety approach. The manager knows the strengths and weaknesses of the home and outreach service well. As a result, he is prepared for potential pitfalls and has strong contingency plans in place. The manager shows insight and understanding of the service provision and of what it hopes to achieve. In addition, the staff team is using a similar service in an adjacent area to compare team members' progress. This also provides additional learning and support.

The manager and staff team are proactive at informing other professionals of their change in service. By attending team meetings and training events, the manager is ensuring that the service is used appropriately. At this stage, the short-breaks service has had minimal usage. This is a result of the targeted outreach support that is provided to families. In turn, this has had a significant impact in keeping families together.

The manager and staff team work well with other agencies. In particular, there is close and joined-up working with social work teams and edge of care services. This has enabled one young person to move into long-term care. This was successful due to the careful planning and collaborative working with the young person and his new home. A professional said, 'It was a pleasure to work with them [the staff]. They are extremely child focused. I have facilitated many transitions, but this was a great one, really positive.'

Supervision is regular, effective and valued by the staff team. Team members feel supported and empowered to perform their new roles. As a result, they are taking on new challenges with enthusiasm and positivity. In addition, staff receive good-quality

training, some of which is new and different. They have embraced the changes and have confidence in their ability. A member of staff said, 'There is a completely different atmosphere now. Everyone is enjoying their new role. It is challenging, but we have great support from the managers.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC066796

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Wakefield Council, County Hall, Bond Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2QW

Responsible individual: Marium Haque

Registered manager: Ian Henderson

Inspector

Abigail Maspero, social care inspector

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