

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	30/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC067810
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sebastian Ukegheson (application in progress)
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	30/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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	Good

SC067810

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are protected from harm. Comprehensive written behaviour management plans and risk assessments underpin the consistency, robustness and effectiveness of the safeguarding practice in the home.
- Good partnership working contributes to the young people's increased feelings of well-being, security and confidence.
- Behaviour management practice is effective at containing young people's challenging behaviours and promoting more constructive behaviours.
- Joint-working protocols protect young people who go missing from care.
- Young people receive good-quality care and individualised support that meet their needs and promote their development effectively.
- The manager and staff enable young people to have a positive experience of living in a children's home and being looked after.
- Young people achieve high levels of participation and engagement. Their communication skills and confidence have significantly increased.
- Staff are effective at fostering a culture of respect and non-judgemental attitudes in the home.
- Young people access a wide range of social, educational and recreational opportunities that promote their physical and emotional well-being and build their social skills and confidence.
- Staff work closely with parents to promote young people's meaningful and safe family contact and continuity of care, when appropriate.
- The manager actively monitors the quality of care provided and the impact of the service on the young people's progress, outcomes and life-chances.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that 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
Review of premises 46(1) The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year, taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). (2) When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. The consultation must be clearly evidenced. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	01/01/2017

Recommendations

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

- Conduct a night fire drill to enhance fire safety at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Develop a more structured approach to supporting young people to develop independence skills and prepare for adulthood. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.28)
- Improve the communication with the placing authorities, so that the home is aware of the outcomes of the placing authority's offers for the young person to have an independent return home interview, when they return home after an episode of missing from care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Continue with the implementation of the workforce plan and training to make sure that the home consistently delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

- Strengthen the admission process and make it more effective, in particular regarding consideration of the impact that the placement is likely to have on the existing group of young people. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people. Staff use a therapeutic approach to caring for young people who may experience social, behaviour and emotional difficulties. In addition to having two more children's homes, the company is also a registered education provider.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Good
30/03/2015	Full	Good
12/11/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people receive good-quality care and support. Staff work in close partnership with the placing authorities and other professionals to make sure that the service fully addresses young people's highly complex and diverse needs. Young people receive individualised support that meets their needs and promotes their development effectively. Young people experience stability in their lives. The manager and staff have a strong commitment to promoting stability of placements. They enable young people to have a positive experience of living in a children's home and being looked after. For many young people, due to their past experiences, building positive and trusted relationships with adults is hard. They have made good progress at developing trusting relationships with at least some staff members. Leaders and managers are keen to give young people the best chances to experience positive relationships and to develop secure attachments. For example, they noticed that a young person had a particularly positive relationship with an agency staff member. They then appointed this person as a member of the home's permanent staff and the key worker for this young person. The manager and staff enable young people's participation and contribution to the decision-making processes. Young people attend their reviews and contribute to their care plans. Staff encourage them to express themselves and to take active part in the life of the home. Regular community meetings, structured 'chats' and key-working sessions provide young people with ample opportunities to share their feelings, views and ideas, get involved and develop social skills. Young people's communication skills and confidence have significantly increased. They have become more articulate and engaging communicators. Staff listen to what young people have to say. They always take young people seriously. They show to young people that their views count. When staff members decide that it is not in the young people's best interests to act on their requests, they take time to patiently explain the reasons for not responding more positively. An example of this is their persistently reinforcing the rule of not smoking in the home, despite the young people's repeated requests to get rid of this rule. Other examples relate to discouraging gambling and cannabis use. Staff are effective at fostering a culture of respect and non-judgemental attitudes in the home, while at the same time keeping firm boundaries and consistently reinforcing positive, socially acceptable behaviours. Young people have a positive experience of living in an orderly, comfortable and well-maintained physical environment, in which everybody's contribution is valued.	

The manager recently allocated £100 to each young person to use as they wished, to personalise their bedrooms.

Young people effectively use the home's complaints procedure to assert their rights, views and needs. Through the complaints procedure, they have contributed to the home's improvement. In response to the complaints relating to washing young people's clothes, staff have developed clearer and more structured laundry arrangements.

Staff regularly talk with young people about healthy lifestyles and personal development. They highlight the importance of healthy eating, exercise and different types of activities, in having a good life. They encourage young people to leave behind any harmful habits and patterns of behaviour that they might have, such as overeating, engaging in harmful relationships or smoking cigarettes and cannabis. Staff give young people relevant information about specialist services and how they can be accessed. They present young people with options and talk with them about the impact of one's choices on one's health and well-being. They help young people to register with health services and attend their appointments. The home's safe medication procedure promotes young people's good health.

Young people access a wide range of social, educational and recreational opportunities that promote their physical and emotional well-being and build their social skills and confidence. Playing football, go carting and bouncing on a trampoline are particularly popular. Young people recently went to an activities-packed holiday that they have chosen. They had opportunities to try new activities, such as archery, clay pigeon shooting and quad biking.

Staff work in close partnership with teachers to promote young people's school attendance and learning. They consistently encourage young people to engage in education, learning and positive social behaviours. This has had a positive impact. Some young people were out of education for a long time. For them, even sporadic attendance is an important step forward. One young person is very much engaged in a drama project. He is building a successful acting career. This is an excellent achievement. He said that the staff helped him to 'go out there and find opportunities'.

Staff work closely with parents to promote young people's meaningful and safe family contact and continuity of care, when appropriate.

Staff sensitively welcome new young people to the home. When young people are leaving, good transitional work helps them to understand and adjust to the change. Staff promote positive endings regardless of their being planned or unplanned.

Staff help young people to develop practical independence skills, confidence and resilience needed for adulthood. These include supporting young people to learn to cook, budget, clean and maintain their environment, to develop skills for successful working lives and engage in safe relationships. However, the home's approach to supporting young people's independence is not systematic.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people live in a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment. All of them said that they feel safe in the home. This includes the young people who experienced harmful relationships and violence in the past, within their families and in gangs. They came to the home with high levels of anxiety and, in some cases, fear for their lives. To feel relaxed and safe in the company of other people is a great experience and achievement for them. A mother likened the home to a 'safe haven' for her son. He agreed with this description. The home has a positive atmosphere. Young people report having positive relationships with each other. There is no bullying or intimidation. They share positive experiences and develop friendships. The oldest young person, in particular, is an excellent positive role model. Some young people have mentors who visit them regularly to model positive, encouraging relationships. Staff are effective at protecting young people from harm. While showing that they listen to young people and understand their points of view, they keep clear and firm boundaries. At the community meetings and in individual discussions with young people, staff consistently promote safer behaviours. In collaboration with the police and the specialist substance misuse services, the home has provided workshops for young people on various topics, such as gangs, weapons, drugs and substance misuse awareness, criminality by association and sexual health. Grooming online and through real relationships was covered. The workshops have raised the young people's awareness of the risks to their safety, particularly of the risks that come with the involvement with drugs and gangs. Young people have received comprehensive expert advice on how to be safe in a range of different circumstances that present them with risks to their welfare. The manager has issued certificates of attendance for these workshops to celebrate young people's learning and positive engagement. Staff effectively use recognition and rewards to promote young people's positive behaviours. The manager and staff work closely with the police, youth offending services, social services, other partner agencies and parents to help young people to develop safer behaviours. Young people experience well-coordinated and consistent responses. Good partnership working contributes to the young people's increased feelings of well-being, security and confidence. The home provides an orderly environment with clear routines and expectations. At	

times, young people challenge staff and rebel against the house rules. On numerous occasions, including at the inspection, they strongly expressed their belief that they should be allowed to smoke in the home. Staff have effectively used sanctions to give young people a clear message that negative behaviours always lead to negative consequences. A consistent implementation of sanctions was instrumental in directing young people to stop smoking in the home. Some young people have now realised how good and enjoyable it is to have a completely smoke-free environment.

There have been no restraints in the home since the last full inspection. On some occasions, staff members have appropriately involved the police to help safely manage highly volatile situations and reinforce law and order. The home's ethos is to avoid criminalising young people, whenever that is possible.

The manager and staff have a very clear, firm stand on the possession and use of illegal drugs and weapons. The police are always called in those instances. The staff practice regarding room searches rightly prioritises the safety over the young people's right to privacy, when there are concerns. The practice in this respect is sound and supported by relevant assessments.

Comprehensive written behaviour management plans and risk assessments underpin the consistency and robustness of the safeguarding practice in the home. There are no current concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation in the home. The current concerns revolve around drugs, negative influence, gangs and violence. Those concerns are managed well within the working-together framework, with the particularly strong collaboration with the police and the youth offending services. Both the police and the youth offending service said that the home is doing a good job at keeping young people safe. They provided positive feedback about the communication and the links with the home. Information is quickly shared and risk assessments/management plans are kept under constant review and updated.

Clear, joint-working protocols protect young people who go missing from care. Young people go missing less than before they lived in this home. However, for some, this is still an issue. Each young person has a safety plan that clearly identifies strategies to minimise the risks of their going missing, as well as the strategies to protect them when they are missing. The home implements the joint-working protocol smoothly to ensure that there is a strong, protective response from all agencies. Staff welcome young people back home after a period of missing. The police regularly conduct safe and well checks, once the young person has returned to the home. However, the manager does not always know if the placing authority has offered a return interview to the young person or what the outcome of that was.

The home has effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the designated person for child protection. The manager has appropriately referred all allegations regarding the staff's conduct to appropriate professionals. None met the threshold for their involvement. The outcome of the internal investigations was

that each one was unsubstantiated.

The organisation's procedure for recruiting staff members ensures that they are thoroughly vetted and suitable for their roles. Young people have helped the staff recruitment process by contributing to the interview questions.

Health and safety are managed well in the home. This includes good arrangements for fire safety. However, it has been more than a year since the home had a nighttime drill.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager has been efficiently and effectively leading and managing the home for over a year. He has relevant qualifications and many years of experience in the management of children's social care and law enforcement. His registration with Ofsted is in progress. Leaders and the manager have successfully managed a transition of the service. From catering for the needs of young people who have an autistic spectrum disorder, the home has become a service for young people who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service has been restructured to make sure that it can fulfil its revised statement of purpose. The changes in the statement of purpose have led to the changes in the staff job descriptions and the training programme. To make sure that the service consistently delivers its stated ethos, approach and outcomes for young people, it is essential to continue with the implementation of the home's workforce plan and training programme. The relatively new team has continued to develop a skills base to effectively meet the highly complex and challenging needs of young people. A development ethos and a wide-ranging training programme have underpinned the successful evolution of the service. In line with the therapeutic nature of the service, all staff have recently received relevant therapeutic training. The experienced staff members have appropriate qualifications. Other staff members are working towards obtaining an appropriate qualification. The newly recruited staff members are undertaking a comprehensive induction programme that effectively equips them with the knowledge that they need for their work. Staff receive good-quality supervision. Each of them has a clear personal development plan. In addition to the ongoing review of staff practice, formal	

appraisals of their individual performance take place at regular intervals.

Leaders and the manager actively monitor the quality of care provided. Good record-keeping underpins good monitoring processes. Staff practice is the subject of ongoing reflection and evaluation. An independent professional completes regular monthly monitoring reports on the effectiveness of the safeguarding practice and promotion of young people's welfare. The home has recently joined the Community of Communities, a therapeutic quality-improvement and accreditation programme. A peer review was in progress at the time of this inspection.

Internal and external monitoring contributes to the manager's clear understanding of the service's strengths and areas for improvement. The manager meets regularly with managers of other children's homes to discuss issues and share good practice. A comprehensive action plan is in place to embed good practice. The manager has achieved compliance with the requirements and put into practice the recommendations from the previous inspection.

Leaders and the manager have created a positive ethos in the home. They actively monitor the impact of the service on the young people's progress, outcomes and life chances. Visiting professionals and parents are clear that in this home young people always come first. They describe the manager as fantastic and going out of the way to make sure that young people receive the support that they need. The quality of working in partnership is good. The manager works closely with the placing authorities and professionals from other agencies to contribute to the young people's care plans and reviews.

The home's records regarding admissions demonstrate that the manager takes great care to assess whether staff are likely to be able to meet the young person's needs and the likely impact on the young people who already live in the home. However, a mother noted that, at times, young people have had a negative impact on each other. She described it as 'developing a pack mentality'. The unplanned endings also point out that the home's admission procedure has not always been fully effective.

Young people are comfortable in their environment. The premises are appropriately maintained. Some areas have been repainted recently, and more work is in progress.

The manager reviewed the fitness of the home's location in January 2016. He had various conversations with professionals from the local services in relation to its appropriateness. This is particularly significant, taking into account the young people's histories and, for some, the likely continued involvement with gangs, drugs and the criminal justice system. However, this consultation has not been recorded.

The manager and staff are keen to continue to build positive relationships in the local community. They responded swiftly to two complaints from the neighbours. They talked with the young people about the importance of being a good

neighbour. The young people understood and adjusted their behaviours. For example, they stopped playing music too loudly. The issues have been resolved amicably.

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 that 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 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 whom 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'.

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