

SC068803

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private organisation that also operates a number of other children's homes.

Inspection dates: 1 to 2 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Staff know young people well. Staff develop strong relationships with young people, and this helps them to progress.
- Young people are supported well to engage and achieve in education.
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted.
- Staff manage issues regarding young people's safety well.
- Good behaviour is promoted and challenging behaviour is managed carefully.
- Leaders and managers are effective.
- Good relationships with professionals support effective interagency working.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The location assessment lacks an evaluation of an aspect of the rural location of the home.
- The frequency of supervision does not consistently meet the organisation's standards.
- Records of sanctions are not logged in appropriate timescales.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2017	Full	Good
08/11/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
17/02/2016	Full	Good
20/10/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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
The registered person must ensure that— (a) within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— (i) the name of the child; (ii) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (iii) the date, time and location of the use of the measure; (iv) a description of the measure and its duration; (v) details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; (vi) the name of the person who used the measure ("the user"), and of any other person present when the measure was used; (vii) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (viii) a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result of the measure. (Regulation 35(3)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that records relating to sanctions are made within 24 hours of the sanction being issued.	31/11/17
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. (Regulation 46(1), (2)) In particular, the registered person must investigate whether the area around the home is used for shooting game birds. If this is the case, the location assessment must be reviewed to consider any risks that this poses.	31/11/17

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children (“a quality of care review”) at least once every 6 months. (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— (a) the quality of care provided for children; (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and (c) any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45(2)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is evidence in the six-monthly reports of children’s views and opinions being sought and considered.	31/11/17
For the purposes of this regulation, “the appropriate person” is the registered person, an officer of HMCI, an officer of the local authority in whose area the home is located or a police officer. (4) The registered person must ensure that all employees— (a) undertake appropriate continuing professional development; (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and (c) have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(3)) In particular, the registered person should ensure that the frequency of supervision meets the requirements of their own supervision policy. They must ensure that supervisors understand the links to other relevant policies and procedures and that the content of minutes provide clear plans and monitoring systems for any areas of improvement.	

Recommendations

- Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or any other matter as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaint procedure. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it as necessary. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 22–23, paragraph 4.13)

In particular, the registered person should review with young people whether they feel able to raise concerns about any issue. The registered person should act

on any improvements that they consider necessary to ensure that young people confidently and quickly make all of their concerns known.

- Advocacy is the process of representing the views, wishes and feelings of the child in matters which affect the child, or, of enabling the child to express their views, wishes and feelings. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.4)

In particular, the registered person should ensure that staff fully explore a child's views about the level of contact that they might wish to have with their family and friends so that a young person's views fully inform decisions made.

- The information set out in the Statement of Purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and placing authority that a placement in the home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. Emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home's Statement of Purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high quality care to children already living in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14-15, paragraph 3.5).

In particular, the registered person should ensure that any information regarding staff that they provide in the statement of purpose is regularly updated.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make progress because of the sensitive individual support provided by staff. During a difficult period when one young person's behaviours were extremely challenging, other young people's behaviour did not escalate, nor did they retaliate when he was extremely aggressive and threatening. The staff and young people acknowledged that this level of aggression affected the level of care and support provided.

Nevertheless, young people were generally positive about the home. Two of the three young people gave it a rating of seven or more out of 10. One young person said, 'It is pretty good (living) here.'

The staff know the young people well and develop strong relationships. A stable core group of young people have lived here for some time. The compatibility of young people is sensitively considered. The timing of an additional young person moving into the home and the implications for that young person, and the others already living here, are reviewed in depth. If a young person is not considered to be compatible, a placement is not offered.

Young people's health needs are met well. They are supported to develop healthy lifestyles and attend appointments. Good attention is paid to supporting young people to engage in appropriate therapy, and staff work well with therapists to understand young people's needs and improve their lives.

Staff help young people to engage fully with their interests and activities. This group of young people have developed a strong bond and made friends in the community through their love of scootering. An area of the grounds is being improved so that young people can add to their scootering skills and enjoy each other's company.

Educational achievement is supported and encouraged. This is a real strength of the home. Young people are inventively assisted to re-engage with their education if necessary, such as by finding online courses that they can take. The staff's persistence has meant that one young person is back in education after a long absence, and is making the transition well. This is a notable achievement.

Independence skills are promoted and assisted in line with a young person's plans, risk assessments and needs. When necessary, young people have appropriate pathway plans.

Young people can voice their opinions but, during the inspection, young people raised issues which were unknown to managers. While these are now being dealt with, it raises concerns that young people do not always feel confident to speak about their issues. During the inspection, there was good evidence that, if young people raise issues, these are treated with respect and dealt with appropriately. When staff make a mistake, they apologise and thereby set a good example for the young people to follow.

Contact is generally supported well, but it is unclear if the staff have explored with one young person what level of contact he wants with his wider family. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that a young person understands and can put forward his views about how he wishes to remain in contact with all of his family.

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

Young people are supported to keep themselves safe and are kept safe by the staff, who have a clear understanding of the level of protection that each young person needs. The staff know what action to take and follow regarding safeguarding concerns. They act appropriately if a concern arises and have a good knowledge of the various issues affecting young people, such as child sexual exploitation.

Well-written risk assessments identify, monitor and minimise the issues that young people have. Monthly reviews and 'summary of progress' reports of risk assessments and profiles help staff and young people to focus on the changes necessary.

The staff help young people to behave well, and they manage poor behaviour effectively. Detailed behaviour management plans provide staff with good, individualised guidance on how to support young people. Rewards are clear and young people know what they have to achieve, and they are supported to achieve this through regular discussions with staff. Goals are relevant to young people's needs and their care plans. Changes are quickly made to recognise a difference in behaviour or when a target is achieved. Young people do not go missing very often: just four times in the last nine months. The staff follow young people if they leave the home without permission and are mostly

successful in persuading them to return home. If young people do go missing, the staff take appropriate and immediate action to ensure that they are found quickly. They have links with local safeguarding teams and the police, and they keep them informed about where the young people might be. When young people return, the staff follow up on why the young person went missing and make any necessary changes to their care plan.

Sanctions are appropriate and relate to the issue of concern. Managers review sanctions and seek clarification when required. The staff do not always complete the sanction record within 24 hours. This does not ensure that records can be reviewed sufficiently quickly to inform changes in practice.

The recruitment files are well organised, and they evidence that checks are followed up and verified, if appropriate. Staff's and young people's views about an applicant's suitability are sought and taken into consideration when appointments are made.

Health and safety is managed well and results in young people living in a well-maintained home. There is appropriate documentation relating to various aspects of health and safety which shows that actions are taken to improve any deficits and reduce risk, where appropriate. For example, when young people started climbing on the premise's roof, action was taken to reduce the risk. While there is a location assessment, this does not state whether game shooting occurs in the area surrounding the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Strong leaders and managers positively influence young people's care, develop the staff's skills and knowledge, and assist a strong focus on the things that make a difference to young people.

The manager proactively ensures that her own development and learning positively enhance the services provided, and aids her in supporting the young people and the staff team. This proactive management enabled the staff to team to hold together during a difficult time during the summer. The manager continually supports the staff to focus on how to improve the progress and experiences of young people, which staff appreciate. The staff consider the manager to be approachable and caring, yet note that she will challenge their practice and thinking when necessary. Managers investigate any concerns raised about staff practice well and undertake any identified actions quickly.

Good-quality assurance systems assist managers to reflect on and review practice and develop appropriate improvement plans. The statement of purpose is well written, but it lacks an up-to-date list of staff profiles. The regulation 44 visits are used well to ensure that practice meets young people's needs, and the manager spoke positively about how the visitor enables her to challenge her own thinking. Regulation 45 reports are extremely detailed, yet do not contain young people's views about the care that they receive.

The sufficiency of staffing has been variable, but is improving. During the summer months, a few staff changes affected the ability of the team to cover all shifts. This

resulted in some of the staff working long hours during this period. Since September 2017, this has improved. Managers have recruited one new member and another is awaiting final checks to be completed. The staff were clear that, while this had been a difficult period, the strength of the team was shown in how staff worked together, and that the support provided by the managers had helped them.

Staff have either achieved or are undertaking relevant qualifications. There is a full training plan, and staff confirmed the different training events that they had attended. In addition, the manager uses team meetings to look at areas of particular practice. This enhances the staff's knowledge and understanding of young people. One member of staff said that the session that they had undertaken on genograms of young people's life histories had helped them to put into perspective the difficult behaviours that young people display. He indicated that the session had enhanced his resolve to find innovative ways of supporting young people to achieve. Some staff lacked knowledge about any delegated authority that they may have in relation to a young person's care, or what this term meant and how it should influence their practice.

Work to improve the staff's recording has been successful. One member of staff showed how he integrated the plans that he makes, and reflects to ensure that each plan fits the overall aims for a young person.

Supervision has not always occurred at the frequency laid out in the organisation's supervision policy. Supervision records do not always provide a clear plan and process for monitoring and improving individual members of staff's practice. Other aspects of supervision sessions are generally good. The staff consider that they receive good supervision which helps them to reflect and develop their practice. While supervisors are confident about how supervision sessions should be undertaken and have received training, they are less clear about how supervision links to other relevant policies, for instance disciplinary policies.

Good relationships with professionals are established quickly and maintained well. Staff work effectively with other professionals to support meeting young people's needs in a timely manner. Two professionals spoken to were very positive about how the staff team keeps them up to date on the young person's needs. The staff promptly provide good-quality reports for reviews and engage effectively in meetings about young people. The management team also works well with Ofsted, alerting it to potential concerns and meeting all requirements and recommendations.

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 difference 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: SC068803

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ethelbert Specialist Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 17 Leigh Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 5EU

Responsible individual: Leslie Davenport

Registered manager: Natascha Field

Inspector

Ruth Coler, social care inspector

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