

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC068827
Inspector	Janet Hunnam
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Surrey County Council
Registered person address	Surrey County Council, Children's & Safeguarding Service Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road ADDLESTONE Surrey KT15 2EP
Responsible individual	Louise Warren
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Hannah Katherine Phillips
Date of last inspection	09/05/2013

Inspection date	14/05/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	A compliance notice was issued following the inadequate progress judgement at the interim inspection in January 2014. A compliance visit found that the notice had been met.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home accommodates up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and managed by a local authority. At the time of this inspection there are five young people living in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/05/2013	Full	adequate
06/03/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
14/06/2012	Full	adequate
28/02/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there has been physical restraint, children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that restraint is not used as a punishment, nor to force compliance with instructions where significant harm or serious damage to property are not otherwise likely with specific regard to ensuring the record of the restraint clearly outlines the reason for the restraint (NMS 3.14)
- ensure that information about the child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future with specific regard to recording the progress young people are making. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are making significant progress at the home especially when taking into account their starting point at the time of their admission. Highly individualised support helps young people develop trusting relationships with staff. This increases their confidence and self-esteem so they feel valued and respected. This approach provides opportunities for staff to talk through issues with young people and consequently reduces the incidence of young people's risk-taking behaviour. Young people who moved to the home with extremely low levels of self-esteem have been able to grow within the environment and feel more confident about themselves.

Young people benefit from close attention to their health needs. Staff support them to lead healthy lifestyles and they receive specialist guidance and intervention when necessary. The emphasis on young people's emotional health is enabling them to gain a more positive self-view and develop stronger emotional resilience resulting in improvements in their mental health. Young people are able to communicate more appropriately and relax knowing staff will support them and keep them safe.

Educationally, young people are making significant improvement. They gain from living in an environment where education is valued and is integral to their placement at the home. Young people with a history of poor school attendance show considerable progress in their attendance, allowing them to make progress academically. Improvement in their emotional well-being is having a positive effect on their education as staff support them to be emotionally ready to learn.

Young people participate in activities in the community to widen their social experiences and pursue their individual interests. These activities enable them to develop their social skills and positively build their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people benefit from the home's proactive support in helping them stay in contact with their families in accordance with their placement plans. Consequently, young people benefit from improved family relationships.

Staff prepare young people for a successful transition to independence or moving on from the home. Developing young people's daily living skills is a part of the routine of the home as they are encouraged to help according to their age and ability. Young people are keen to become more independent and develop their confidence through weekend jobs in the community. More structured plans for young people nearing the time of transition from the home help them to gain confidence in their independence. Young people receive valuable support when they move on with staff supporting them through the transition process by means of out-reach work.

Quality of care

good

Committed and enthusiastic staff provide nurturing care for young people. They are ambitious for them to achieve the best possible outcomes and value them as individuals. Staff are responsive to each young person and share trusting relationships enabling young people to build self-confidence and benefit from the support that staff offer. These relationships are friendly and good-humoured and young people have easy access to senior staff informally enabling them to voice their views and any concerns.

Young people have regular, individual sessions with their link worker and these together with weekly young people's meetings allow them to put forward their opinions and affect the day-to-day running of the home. A young person stated that 'staff are listening and they want to improve things'. Examples of how the home takes their views seriously are that new mattresses have been ordered in response to young people's comments on having uncomfortable beds. Also, the home is considering a young person's request to have a pet and staff have plans to build a shed in the garden as a 'chill out' room in response to young people's wishes. Some young people also take advantage of meeting with an independent visitor to put forward their views. This responsive approach from staff results in young people feeling that their views are valued and respected and thus develops their self-esteem.

The manager is introducing a new format for care plans so that they are more detailed and comprehensive. The care plans identify young people's individual needs and the support they require to make progress in all aspects of their lives. The new care planning process has a greater focus on involving the young person in the process. However, the progress and achievement of young people is not clearly recorded to demonstrate to the young person their development and advancement and thus increase their confidence.

Young people live in an environment that actively supports their physical and psychological well-being. Staff monitor their physical health closely and they receive relevant support from health professionals. The looked after children's nurse visits the home regularly. She has built up excellent rapport with young people, enabling them to approach her with confidence if they have any concerns about their health. She is proactive in providing workshops for young people on specific health related topics such as smoking and sexual health.

Excellent support is provided by 3C's (child adolescent mental health service, children in care team). This team works closely with staff basing their work on trauma and attachment theory evidence-based practice. This supports staff to understand the meaning of young people's behaviour in the context of their history. It also provides valuable advice and guidance for staff to provide the most appropriate support for young people to improve their outcomes. The team also provides direct, one-to-one therapy for young people to advance their emotional well-being and mental health.

Consequently, young people are benefitting from staff who are developing their knowledge and skills and are able to support therapeutic interventions. Young people are developing healthier and safer ways to express their thoughts and feelings.

Staff actively promote young people's education within a culture that supports and encourages learning. Education is highly valued at the home. Staff support for young people's education improves their chances of achieving their education capability and enhances their opportunities in adulthood. When young people are reluctant to engage in education, staff endeavour to seek alternative arrangements appropriate to their needs. During leisure time, staff encourage young people to pursue individual interests. Young people attend youth clubs, church, army cadets, horse riding and other community activities. They are learning to use their leisure time positively in ways that enriches their social experiences and develops their social skills and confidence.

Young people live in a comfortable, well-maintained home. Recent improvements include redecoration of the house and refurbishment of bathrooms. It is pleasing and homely for young people. Young people are engaging with staff in plans for using the spacious grounds to grow vegetables, install a garden pond and develop different sensory areas for young people to relax and socialise with their friends. Staff encourage young people to personalise their bedrooms and decorate them to their personal taste, which helps them develop a sense of identity and belonging.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Structure and boundaries enable young people to feel safe at the home with strong relationships between staff and young people underpinning their safety. Young people report they feel safe at the home and there is no bullying. The recent installation of alarms on young people's bedroom doors has had a positive impact on helping them to feel safe at night. Individual risk assessments are reviewed monthly ensuring staff identify young people's current needs and specific vulnerabilities and implement appropriate measures to keep them safe.

Clear procedures are in place if a young person is absent from the home without permission in line with local police protocols. This ensures that the home and the police work closely together in the event that a vulnerable young person is missing or absent without permission. Young people who have a history of being absent without permission before living at the home show a reduction in this risk taking behaviour. Staff are proactive in addressing such behaviour and work with the local authority to review the young person's care plan to keep them safe. When young people have been absent, they are welcomed back into the home by staff. Their link worker or an independent visitor discusses the occurrence with the young person, providing an opportunity to find out information which will help protect the young person in the future. This supportive approach of listening and responding to young people's needs helps staff to keep young people safe.

Incidents requiring physical intervention by staff are infrequent. Staff have a positive ethos of promoting appropriate behaviour and use physical intervention as a last resort to protect young people and others. Staff record such incidents in line with legal requirements but do not always provide sufficient clarity and detail to highlight the reason for the restraint. On one occasion, the report of the physical intervention did not make it clear that a young person was at risk of serious harm rather than being non-compliant to staff instructions. On another occasion, staff did not record that medical assistance was offered to a young person following physical intervention. Staff receive training in using physical intervention but strategies to support young people and calm them during times of distress and challenging behaviour are effective. The home uses a restorative approach to deal with inappropriate behaviour, encouraging young people to take responsibility for their action and understand the impact on others.

Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training to protect the welfare of young people living at the home. The home has positive links with external agencies ensuring that staff promptly refer any issues relating to young people's welfare to the appropriate authorities.

Excellent health and safety measures are in place to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm. Staff implement regular fire safety checks and fire drills. A robust system is in place for administration of medication, ensuring staff administer medication safely.

Leadership and management

inadequate

The home has been without a Registered Manager since July 2013. The assistant manager, with the support of a local authority senior manager, oversaw the operation of the home until March 2014 when a new manager was appointed. The manager has applied for registration and Ofsted is currently gathering the required information to assess her suitability. The judgement for leadership and management is inadequate due to the fact that the home has been without a registered manager for more than 26 weeks. However, this judgement does not truly reflect the standard of leadership and management at the home.

Despite this lengthy period of the home being without a registered manager, the home has made considerable improvements and developed the provision resulting in good standards of care, which promote positive outcomes for young people. The assistant manager and the staff team have been successful in changing the culture within the home. Managers have eradicated the previous institutional feel within the home and replaced it with a friendly, family-like environment, which has enabled young people and staff to establish positive and meaningful relationships. Management have successfully developed a positive ethos amongst the staff team and they are working cohesively and with renewed vitality to support young people.

Managers clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have initiated change to improve the provision.

The home has addressed the requirements and recommendations made at the previous inspection. Individual risk assessments are in place to protect young people. Systems are in place to include consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities as part of the process for monitoring the provision.

The detailed development plan for the home clearly outlines the areas for improvement and demonstrates the home's capacity for continuing improvement. The new manager has passion and enthusiasm to maintain this pace of improvement. She leads the staff team with aspiration and ambition to provide the highest standards of care to benefit young people and provide them with opportunities to enhance their future life chances.

The statement of purpose is clear and informative. The home meets the expressed aim of enabling young people to work through their experiences of past trauma, loss and separation in a safe, consistent and stimulating environment.

Monthly monitoring visits take place regularly and the resultant reports highlight any specific shortfalls. The visitor consults with young people, staff and professionals to gain their views on the service. Managers monitor records and practice on an on-going basis and produce reports, which are submitted to Ofsted.

An experienced and committed staff team provide consistent support to enable young people to make progress and feel safe. Training has a high priority at the home and staff report that 'training is excellent'. They also report that support from managers is of high quality and managers are available to staff to discuss any matters of concern at any time. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to ensure they are competent and confident in meeting young people's complex needs.

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.