

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC356963
Inspector	Stella Henderson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Kirklees Council
Registered person address	Kirklees Council 30 Market Street HUDDERSFIELD HD1 2HG
Responsible individual	Paul Johnson
Registered manager	Victor James Szczesnowicz
Date of last inspection	18/02/2014

Inspection date	12/08/2014
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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	good
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 experience good quality care at the home. The home is well managed and young people are safe here. This enables them to feel secure, make good progress and achieve good outcomes across all aspects of their development.

Young people live in a nurturing, relaxed and safe environment. This provides them with a starting point from which they can begin to feel better about themselves and address their problems. This helps them to take advantage of the opportunities that will improve their lives, such as continuing with their education, managing their behaviour better and reducing risks to their safety.

The stability and longevity of placements gives staff the chance to get to know young people really well. This enables care planning to be uniquely focused on young people's diverse needs. There is effective monitoring of young people's progress to ensure they are on track to make progress in their lives.

Two requirements are set in relation to monitoring reports. A recommendation is also set with regard to young people's records. These are procedural matters that have no impact on the safety or welfare of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for six young people who experience behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/02/2014	Interim	good progress
30/04/2013	Full	adequate
10/09/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
11/05/2012	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
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent visitor forms an opinion as to whether children accommodated at the children's home are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the children's home promotes the wellbeing of the children accommodated there (Regulation 8)(a)(i)	12/09/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34)(3)	12/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- 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. (I 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress at the home. This journey is not always easy or straightforward. It sometimes means 'one step forward and two steps back' as young people deal with significant events in their lives. There are sometimes very strong 'pull' factors outside of the home which distract young people and cloud their thinking. As with many teenagers, young people do not always make sensible decisions as they find their way in life.

One thing that helps young people to achieve good outcomes is the nurturing support provided by the home. This leads to meaningful relationships with staff who convey their care and concern for them. It provides them with opportunities to address their problems and deal with them in more constructive ways. As a result young people can learn overcome any set-backs and move forward with their lives.

This is evident in the fact that all young people remain engaged in some form of education and wider learning. Some have recently completed national examinations and will embark on further education courses. Others are clearly intend on going to sixth form and getting to university. Older young people are taking advantage of voluntary work experience and 'employability' courses. One young person has learned to drive a car, another has passed the first part of the motorcycle test.

These experiences help young people to increase their educational and career prospects. They constitute a valuable part of young people's preparation for independence. More importantly they help young people to gain confidence and feel good about themselves. This helps to improve their emotional well being and develop some resilience against the disappointments and set-backs of life.

Young people generally enjoy good physical health. Many are now of an age where they take responsibility for arranging appointments if they need check-ups and treatment. They take sensible precautions to guard against pregnancy and protect their sexual health. Some regularly engage in activities to keep fit, such as kick-boxing and going to the gym. All are aware of the benefits of a good diet and regular exercise.

Preparing for independence begins as soon as young people arrive at the home, for example in learning to undertaken basic household tasks. As young people mature they are given more responsibility for decision-making, taking on more aspects of their self-care and in dealing with external agencies.

Young people take the lead in deciding how much help they need in preparing for independence. However staff are always there to provide support when things don't work out quite as young people had expected.

The majority of young people make their own decisions about contact with family. These arrangements hold particular significance for some young people. Staff provide excellent support to young people to manage these situations. This helps young people to prepare for future significant changes in contact arrangements.

Quality of care

good

The quality of care is good because staff persevere in helping young people to feel safe and secure, maintain their education and make better decisions about their lives. Placement plans are clearly defined to reflect the unique needs of young people and are closely monitored. This secures and supports change and improvement for young people. Stability of placement, a relaxed atmosphere and homely environment also contribute to young people experiencing good quality care.

The majority of young people live at the home on long term arrangements and will remain here until they reach the age of 18 years. This permanency gives young people the time to establish trust and build up positive relationships with staff. It means that staff get to know young people really well and attune strategies and interventions to their individual needs and responses.

Young people speak positively about the help they receive. They feel that the staff, particularly their key workers, understand their needs, even though young people don't always take on board the advice offered to them. Young people say that they feel listened to on important issues such as care planning, as well as more day-to-day decisions, such as where to go on holiday.

Young people benefit from staff working effectively with health, education, police and youth justice agencies. This helps young people get the resources and support they need. The good work of staff is recognised and appreciated by others. One professional noted the 'great communication and collaboration between the home and school.' This helped a young person make better progress than expected.

Keeping children and young people safe

good

Young people say they feel safe and comfortable in the home. Young people are supported to keep themselves safe and taught to resolve conflicts and frustrations in constructive ways.

For example, where young people may feel slightly uncomfortable with the behaviour of others, the staff do not step in to immediately 'solve' the problem. Instead they help them explore how they might deal with the situation, and give young people tips and advice. This empowers young people and helps them to develop the negotiating skills they will need in later life.

There are the usual challenges that groups of teenagers can present when in high spirits, but no serious behaviour management problems. The need for restraint or repeated sanctions is rare and young people say there is no bullying.

There are occasions where young people continue to put themselves in positions of risk, such as staying out later than agreed. However, for the majority of the time young people return home when requested, and actual 'missing from home' incidents are rare. Risk assessments are kept under review and reflect any significant changes. This helps to protect young people both within the home and wider community. Regular fire drills, checks on food safety and electrical equipment are carried out. When new staff members begin work they are routinely vetted to ensure they

present no risk to young people. All these features mean that young people are kept safe in the home.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post at this home since 2007. He has over 25 years' experience in child care and management. He possesses suitable management qualifications and keeps up to date with his own continuing personal development. The staff are positive about their support and feel that their training needs are well met. They say that team meetings and supervision gives them an opportunity to reflect on their practice and talk in detail about young people. They feel that they work together well as a team. This approach helps them to consistently promote the welfare of young people and help them to achieve good outcomes.

The manager's monitoring of the progress of young people and the overall operation of the home is good. Effective systems are in place, this enables areas of development to be identified and addressed. For example, it has been identified that staff require more specialised training to meet the increasingly complex emotional needs of young people at the home. A specific therapeutic model of intervention has been agreed upon and is in the process of being implemented.

Young people can, and do, have access to their care plans and other documents. This helps young people to understand some of the decisions that have been made about their lives. The 'voice of the child' is clearly evident in these records. This is a recommendation from the last inspection that has been met.

However, some documents, such as key working records and 'the child's journey to success', fail to capture the good work that the staff are undertaking. These documents are not always reflective of the good outcomes that young people are actually achieving. This has no impact on young people's safety and well-being but does not provide them with a clear and accurate picture of events.

The quarterly monitoring report sent to HMCI, Ofsted, does not reflect the large amount of consultation and discussion that the home undertakes with parents and professionals. Similarly the independent visitors reporting format does not fully reflect the recent changes to the regulation. These are procedural matters that have no impact on young people's welfare or safety.

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.