

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC359818
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Dimple Ghera
Inspector	Rachel Britten

Inspection date	07/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
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

SC359818

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Warm, caring, well-organised staff create a homely atmosphere and have made nurturing, positive relationships with young people.
- Young people view this as a 'proper home' where they feel settled and safe.
- The home manager is now more careful about matching new young people following a decline in the home's effectiveness earlier in 2015.
- Social workers, personal advisors, police and advocates have high opinions of the contribution the home makes and communicate well with staff so that young people experience an effective team of adults in their lives.
- Young people experience genuinely well-planned, good quality inductions and departures from the home that meet their individual and collective needs.
- Independence programmes are realistically and carefully delivered by staff so that young people gain the necessary skills within a supportive atmosphere.
- Young people are well supported to engage in meaningful activity that develops their social skills and sense of citizenship.
- Risky behaviour is managed sensitively and addressed respectfully, which successfully minimises its likelihood and means that no physical interventions have been used during 2015.
- Some improvements are needed. Staff and managers do not sufficiently use recording tools and meetings as opportunities to reflect on the detail of their practice. They miss opportunities to identify, share and record care styles and responses to young people that work well or less well. This stops them building up best practice that is tailored to each young person.
- The manager and senior staff do not prepare and keep up to date all the planning tools for impact risk assessment and risk management that are available to them and have not kept house rules under regular review.
- Records do not help young people enough because the contents lack evaluation and seem boring and disjointed.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that young people are encouraged by staff to see the home's records as 'living documents' supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards, page 58 paragraph 11.19)
- Ensure that, just as in a family home, young people are able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child's needs. Any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- Ensure that managers proactively implement lessons learned and sustain good practice. Specifically, consider reflective practice as an improvement tool. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is one of a group of homes operated by an independent organisation as part of a tendering contract with the local council. This home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2015	CH - Interim	Declined in effectiveness
17/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
07/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
11/07/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Since the last inspection in March 2015, the overall experience of young people here is once again good. Young people are settled once more and are successfully preparing for moves towards adult life. Deeply caring and committed staff are nurturing, guiding and supporting them on their journeys to maturity. For example, one young person is shortly moving to independence. Whilst waiting for her GCSE results and college placement, she is mentoring other students at the pupil referral unit where she studied. Another young person is enjoying attending a college and workshop setting where she hopes to become an adult resident. She has used her gardening skills to help plant and tend flowers at the front of the home. All young people are engaged in taking care of themselves and their home. They eat, play games, plan events, shop, launder, go out, and stay in together. They enjoy being here with staff helping and supporting them. Young people say that this house is not like other children's homes because it feels like a real home where staff really care. One young person said, 'it's never goodbye – it's see you later.' This is borne out in the 'good luck' and 'thank you' messages posted by young people and staff on canvasses, chalk boards and memories albums. It is also shown in the thought and planning that has gone into arranging a recent leaving party for a young person who continues to ring staff daily to talk. A new young person feels equally welcomed and included here. He had a tea visit and met the other young people before choosing to come here. He likes his bedroom and has already chosen how he would like it decorated. Another young person, who has lived here a few years, is helping him find his way around the kitchen, laundry, and local shops. Positive attachments and careful planning are key strengths in the home, developed by motivated, sensitive staff who spend time alongside young people, encouraging them in all they do. A social worker commented that the home is: 'familial, caring and established – generally one of the most consistent homes in the area - they have been fantastic with my young person.' Young people make good progress in relation to their health, education, emotional, social and psychological well-being. This is because staff know what support young people need and provide it. Staff work well with other professionals to ensure that decisions about young people are appropriate and take good account of their views, wishes and feelings. However, staff are not yet as sophisticated or coordinated about the detail of their care practice as they could be. They do not use daily recordings, handovers, staff and young people's meetings, care plans or key sessions as opportunities to reflect upon their practice; analyse what has gone	

well and less well; and record the responses of young people to their input. This holds the staff group back in methodically sharing and building upon the detail of what they have found works best for each young person. Records are therefore less useful to both staff and young people. Opportunities to capitalise on staff's best practice and young people's progress are sometimes missed. Young people's interest in reading the detail of what is going on for them, and how staff are helping them progress, learn and change, is not so stimulated.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people's risks are clearly identified, understood and managed. Staff and managers now recognise that careful matching and maintaining young people's emotional well-being are key requirements for ensuring that young people are not drawn back into negative behaviours. Staff place support over supervision, advice over rules, and praise before sanctioning. They manage situations wisely, showing empathy and unconditional positive regard. As a result, risk taking behaviour like: going missing; smoking in the house; damage to self and others; bullying and risky use of phones and internet; are rarely occurring. Staff talk with young people about the consequences of their choices and help them understand the impact on themselves and others. They do this in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding. As a result, young people feel secure and settled here. They are confident to talk through their concerns and fears and to ask for help when they are thinking about self-harm or feeling angry and frustrated. However, some house rules, such as locking the kitchen at 9pm, have not been reviewed or challenged. They introduce an institutional feel which is at odds with the otherwise familial, homely atmosphere here.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The home's manager is experienced and well qualified. She has managed here for some years and completed the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. She is very available to young people and staff alike, and enjoys the confidence of both. She creates a supportive environment so that young people are clearly nurtured and make good progress.	

The manager is well organised and understands the consequences of the poor matching of young people that disrupted the quality of outcomes earlier in 2015. She has subsequently worked effectively to ensure that young people living here are only joined by new young people who are compatible with them. As a result, young people are settled and progressing well, and staff feel successful in their practice. However, the manager is still not making intelligent and continuous use of impact risk assessment tools that identify and set out current matching considerations in the light of the home's location and the needs of the young people living in it. This oversight means that the home is less well prepared and informed to accept or reject potential new referrals.

The manager has a good understanding of her responsibilities with respect to ensuring a safe and competent staff team. She ensures that staff are properly vetted, inducted, trained, and professionally developed. Consequently, staff practice warmly, yet safely and appropriately. Allegations about staff are therefore rare, but are effectively and transparently followed up. Staff are well prepared for, and minimise the impact of, unsafe behaviour. They make good use of individual behaviour risk assessments, including missing from home risk assessments. However, the manager has overlooked to prepare the organisation's 16 point protocols for sharing with police if young people go missing. These tools, if kept up to date, help staff be clear when talking to police about the correct level of urgency about searching for young people if they go missing.

Overall, the manager is robust in her monitoring of the home. Most records are kept up to date and hold sufficient information to show each young person's progress, experiences, and continuing needs. Staff work well with the manager to keep under review their behaviour management strategies and to continuously and positively develop their relationships with young people. However, the manager has not identified or addressed the fact that too little time is spent reflecting on the detail of staff practice and recording what works well and less well with each young person. For example, relevant and effective responses to incidents of unsafe behaviours have resulted in no further repeats of that behaviour. The manager has not noted this success or used the opportunity to reward the young person. The manager and staff team have the capacity to develop their reflective practice much further in order to promote even better outcomes for young people.

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 looked after children 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 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 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 who 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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