

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	20/07/2016
Unique reference number	SC373941
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	East Sussex County Council
Registered provider address	County Hall, St. Annes Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE

Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Ian Williams
Inspector	Jan Hunnam

Inspection date	20/07/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved 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

SC373941

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from living in a home where staff are warm and nurturing, and provide them with close, individualised support.
- Young people with complex needs develop trusting relationships with staff, which gives them a sense of safety and stability. They know that they can talk to staff and that staff will listen, respond to their views and opinions and meet their specific needs.
- The registered manager provides strong and committed leadership and effective management of a staff team that is motivated to provide high-quality care and to promote positive outcomes for young people.
- Recent improvements in quality assurance processes allow managers greater oversight and sharper analysis to inform care plans and to ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to provide maximum opportunities for young people to thrive and to make progress.
- Staff's priority in protecting young people is evident throughout their practice. Care plans and risk assessments are current. Effective working with partner agencies results in robust action to safeguard young people.
- Staff have not undertaken training in autism, which would enhance their knowledge and understanding and ensure that young people's specific needs relating to this disorder are met.
- Other shortfalls relate to gaps in weekly fire checks and some irregularity in the supervision of staff.

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 persons 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 persons must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person must: (2)(c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.	30/09/2016
25: The registered person must take adequate precautions against the risk of fire. In particular, ensure that fire safety checks are regular. (Regulation 25(1)(a))	30/09/2016

Recommendation

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

- The registered person must have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. In particular, staff should receive regular supervision in line with the organisation's policy. ('Guide to the children's homes regulation including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides care and accommodation for up to four children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/09/2015	Full	Requires improvement
29/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/08/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people living in the home are making significant progress from their starting points before admission. Social workers commented on how well young people are developing. One said, 'Prior to placement at the home, the young person was very frequently reported as missing, but such incidents have reduced considerably, and there has been no significant incident for quite some time.' Social workers noted how staff provide young people with consistency and stability and particularly reported positively on the excellent quality of relationships between staff and young people. One social worker reported that staff are 'very supportive, provide the young person with guidance but also are warm, fun and balanced.' Staff closely supervise young people and engage them in meaningful dialogue and activities, protecting them and promoting their welfare. Staff place young people's well-being at the centre of their practice. All young people attend education. Staff sensitively support their school placements and liaise closely with school staff to help young people with anxieties about education, so that they begin to engage in classroom activities. Staff demonstrate a commitment to supporting young people's education. They attend parents' and carers' evenings and actively assist young people to complete their homework. Some young people are making good educational progress. Staff recognise the importance of leisure activities in young people's development. Young people have access to a wide range of recreational activities, such as horse riding, bowling, trampolining, cinema and Go Ape. Staff encourage young people to pursue activities according to their personal interests and to join clubs and community activities thus extending their social experiences, building their self-confidence and senses of identity. Young people enjoy being with staff who respond to them with warmth and good humour. As strong, trusting relationships develop, young people become comfortable in talking to staff about their concerns, thoughts and views, knowing that staff will pay attention and respond. Young people are relaxed and happy living at the home. One young person gave a score of 10 out of 10 for the home and another '20 out of 10'. Staff work in partnership with health services to promote young people's well-being. Close monitoring of their physical and psychological health ensures that their specific health needs are identified and met. Young people receive support from specialist health professionals such as sexual health nurses, the substance	

misuse service, a specialist service for young people displaying problematic sexualised behaviour and the looked after children and adolescent mental health service. Young people are receiving the specialist support they need to promote their development. Their physical health is improving, as is their emotional well-being.

Staff support young people to acquire independence and daily living skills as they prepare for their transition to adult life. Independence plans and key-work sessions introduce young people to the notion of taking responsibility for themselves at a pace and level appropriate to their stages of development.

Staff work proactively with young people's families to promote and maintain positive relationships. A social worker commented that staff are always willing to support contact visits.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
In a homely and nurturing environment, young people develop warm and trusting relationships with staff. These relationships are at the heart of safeguarding practice, providing young people with stability and a sense of protection. They feel safe having adults around them who they know will respond to and meet their needs. Clear boundaries, routines and structures implemented consistently by staff contribute to their senses of security when they have experienced unsafe and unpredictable situations in their past. Detailed assessment of young people's needs results in comprehensive care plans, which staff regularly review to ensure that the highly individualised support strategies meet their current developmental needs. Staff identify and understand the risks associated with each young person. Appropriate measures are in place to protect them from harm. The registered manager regularly reviews all risk assessments, and staff have opportunities to raise and discuss safeguarding concerns in weekly team meetings and individual supervision. These discussions result in action points to amend risk assessments to provide suitable interventions and protective strategies to keep young people safe. Staff record all safeguarding concerns in a safeguarding book, and the registered manager effectively monitors these entries and ensures that staff implement appropriate action to protect young people. There are incidents involving young people leaving the home without permission. Procedures are in place, including return interviews, to protect young people and	

to ensure their safe return. Support strategies for one young person, including incentive schemes and frequent key-work sessions, have resulted in a significant reduction in such behaviour. Currently, two young people are assessed as being at high risk of child sexual exploitation. Concerns relating to suspicion of harm and allegations are promptly shared with partner agencies, resulting in multi-agency strategy meetings and complex case reviews to compile robust action plans to safeguard young people. Young people at risk of child sexual exploitation receive interventions from a specialist therapeutic service for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse or exploitation. Young people also have access to a specific looked-after child worker within the child and adolescent mental health service, who provides direct work with young people and weekly consultation with staff. Such joint working with specialist partner agencies ensures that young people who display problematic sexual behaviour have effective support to meet their individual needs and to reduce the potential of harm.

Staff take a positive approach to behaviour management, using successful incentive schemes to help young people to develop appropriate behaviour. There have been no incidents requiring physical intervention since September 2015. This clearly demonstrates that young people are developing trusting relationships with staff and are able to accept the nurturing support that staff offer in times of distress.

Robust recruitment processes are in place, to safeguard young people from unsuitable adults working with them. All checks on prospective employees are undertaken before they commence working at the home.

Systems and routines are in place to check all health and safety matters. Records demonstrate a gap of two weeks in weekly fire safety checks, which has the potential to compromise the safety of young people and staff in the event of a fire occurring at the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The manager of the home has been in post since May 2015. He is suitably experienced for the role and is registered with Ofsted. He has a level 5 diploma in management and is embarking on a level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. He is providing strong and committed leadership and effective management of the staff team, driving improvement in establishing firm boundaries for young people and clear communication with staff.	

Managers have embedded a recently improved quality assurance system, allowing the registered manager greater oversight and sharper analysis of incidents. Such evaluation ensures that staff implement suitable strategies to provide maximum opportunities for young people to thrive and make progress. Six-monthly monitoring reports present a detailed and comprehensive review with specific action identified, with timescales, to improve standards of care and develop the home. Monthly monitoring reports by an independent person are an effective tool for identifying action to advance improvement.

Staff undertake comprehensive induction and training relevant to their roles. However, staff have not undertaken training in understanding the specific needs of young people with autism. All but one of the core staff team hold an appropriate level 3 qualification. The unqualified member of staff is new to the team and is enrolled on the level 3 course.

The registered manager has introduced a new format for staff supervision with a focus on a reflective approach, a definite emphasis on the individual needs of young people and any safeguarding concerns. Senior managers within the organisation monitor the quality of supervision as part of the overall quality assurance process. The regularity of staff supervision is variable and, for some staff, is not in line with the organisation's policy.

The registered manager takes an active role in reviewing and evaluating young people's care plans to ensure that support strategies promote their progress. Proactive work with other professionals and agencies, such as specialist health professionals, school staff and the child and adolescent mental health service, enhances the support that staff offer young people with complex emotional needs. The registered manager is alert to the effectiveness of other agencies in safeguarding young people and promoting their development, and challenges inappropriate responses that do not promote their welfare.

The statement of purpose sets out the ethos, aims and objectives of the home and the range of services that it provides for young people. Managers and staff are fulfilling the statement of purpose.

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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