

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC377702
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Holibrook House Limited
Registered person address	Unit 170 Lee Valley Techno Park Ashley Road Tottenham London N17 9LN
Responsible individual	Herman Alexander Allen
Registered manager	Carmel Cindy Willis
Date of last inspection	28/01/2014

Inspection date	24/06/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory 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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The home provides a physically safe and emotionally nurturing environment with clear expectations and boundaries. The service is centred around the individual needs and views of children and young people. Care planning and staff practice are highly personalised. Staff are effective at engaging children and young people and building positive trusting relationships with them. The high quality of these relationships successfully underpins the positive outcomes that children and young people achieve. They make good progress across different aspects of their lives. Good safeguarding practice is fully embedded in the service. Effective partnership working and robust risk management ensure that the safety of children and young people is protected and promoted at all times.

The systems for monitoring of the quality of the service are strong. The areas for improvement identified at this inspection relate to sending the amended Statement of Purpose and the children's guide to Ofsted and to improving the garden. These weaknesses do not impact on the safety of children and young people. With the input from independent consultants, leaders and managers are effective at managing change and securing continual improvement of the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. The organisation has several children's homes in the area and also provides education in two schools. This home is registered to care for six children of either sex with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It provides a therapeutic environment for children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
19/08/2013	Full	good
15/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
12/09/2012	Full	good

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
5 (2001)	notify Ofsted of any revision of the statement of purpose and the children's guide within 28 days. (Regulation 5)	31/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all areas of the home including the garden are maintained to a high

standard. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

When children and young people come to live in this home, they settle well and quickly. As they receive individualised care, their positive relationships with staff members grow into safe attachments. In the emotionally nurturing environment and with specialist psychological support, they become increasingly able to explore, understand and accept the circumstances that brought them to being in care. From the place of increased self-awareness and trust that people are there to help them, they develop emotional resilience, confidence and a positive self-view.

Although some children and young people came with a history of self-harm, they have not self-harmed in this home. Children and young people are positively engaged with the staff members, other professionals and the community in which they live. They are more able to express themselves in a constructive manner. They actively participate in their care planning and in day-to-day and more complex decisions about their lives. Their communication and social skills have improved dramatically. While in the past, they used to avoid social situations, now they thrive when engaged in activities with other people.

They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and of having regular health checks. They enjoy having tasty food of their choice that promotes their health and cultural identity. They lead active lives and exercise regularly. Some young people are highly successful in sports. They understand key health risks. Their risk taking behaviours are decreasing. A young person who was admitted with an established smoking habit, now smokes cigarettes only occasionally.

The educational achievement of children and young people is good, taking into account the progress they have made from their starting point. Their attendance at their educational provision is high; they are motivated to learn and achieve. It has been predicted that a young person will achieve good results across all the GCSE exams that they recently took. Some young people have excelled in vocational studies, sports, crafts and creative ventures. A young person has secured a place in a football academy. She is the first young woman to join this renowned football academy. She also plays for a football club and has contributed to her team's wins in national and international tournaments. The home has lovely pieces of wooden furniture that have been made by the young people who live in the home. One of these young people is also an excellent actor and has played in a widely televised programme. Children and young people have good opportunities to successfully follow their interests and talents and to continue to develop those further.

Some young people are interested in animal care. They derive much pleasure from looking after animals, such as guinea pigs, dogs, snails and lady-birds. This experience provides them with good opportunities to develop caring attitudes and

practical skills.

Young people are prepared well for independent living. Their life-skills are improving. They are confident, as appropriate for their age and understanding about their readiness for independent adult life. They are positive about their future. This is how one young person summarised the experience of living in this home: 'It has changed my life, in a good way. They helped me a hell of a lot with everything, when I needed it. Now I can fight my own battles. Life is about going forward.'

Quality of care

good

Staff are skilled at establishing positive relationships with children and young people in their care. They are proactive at finding ways to engage with young people, such as through play, sporting activities, animal care and activities of daily living. They carefully listen to the views of children and young people. They ensure that these views play a central part in the care planning process. The care is highly personalised and consistently of a high quality. Young people told the inspector that the following things were most significant in helping them to make good progress: the therapeutic approach, the atmosphere in the home, the staff and the activities.

Staff have a deep understanding of the needs of children and young people. They also have the skills required to meet these needs. They work in effective collaboration with other professionals to ensure that children and young people receive consistent and good support from everybody involved. The particular strength of this home is the close links with the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. In addition, a consultant psychotherapist visits the home on a weekly basis. This person provides individual support to young people. The psychotherapist also engages with the staff members to review and reflect on the care practice. Each young person is carefully considered to ensure that the support they receive is fine-tuned for the maximum positive impact.

Staff have high aspirations for children and young people. They are prepared to robustly challenge any shortfalls in partner agency's provision to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people. For example, the home has made a complaint to the placing authority about the lack of appropriate educational provision for a particular child. At the same time, the organisation has taken proactive steps to ensure that this child continues to engage with learning. They are fully funding a vocational course in creative woodcraft for this person, while the local authority's educational arrangements are finalised. Staff are effective at encouraging and enabling children and young people to regularly attend their educational provision and continue to learn. Children and young people also benefit from using community resources, such as local libraries, youth clubs, cadets and recreational and sports facilities.

A social worker who spoke to the inspector commented positively about the quality of

support provided by the home to the young people. This has impacted positively on the outcomes for young people and the progress they have made, particularly in relation to their behaviours and the promotion of their cultural identity. This is an extract from another senior social worker who wrote to the home: 'Your input, commitment and hard work has been invaluable. You have been very professional at all times and your reports and input into all professional meetings have been of a very high standard. You have acted as an excellent advocate for the young person. You have worked in a reflective and holistic manner which has been very important when dealing with some very complex issues.' The inspector also saw positive feedback sent to the home by a parent regarding their work with the young person and the interaction with the family.

The physical environment is well maintained, apart from the garden. The garden is left completely bare, without grass and with hardly any plants. In addition to missed opportunities to create a pleasant outdoor space, the state of the garden does not provide a good example to children and young people. The company is seeking planning permission from the local authority to carry out work in the conservatory and to develop the garden.

Children and young people report feeling safe and well looked after. They trust the staff. They feel respected and listened to. They know about the complaints process and trust it. They have good opportunities to discuss any 'grumbles' at the weekly residents meetings with staff that they refer to as 'chats'. They told the inspector that this is a good home and they could not think how it could be made better. They do not mind the state of the garden, as long as it safely houses their pets. They have spacious rooms. They told the inspector that they love the home and have everything they need. Some young people showed their rooms to the inspector; they were highly personalised.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Leaders and managers have created a culture in which protecting and safeguarding children and young people and promoting their welfare are intrinsic to the support given to them. Good safeguarding practice is fully embedded in all aspects of the service provision.

The home has a proactive approach to safeguarding. Staff ensure that safeguarding interventions are identified and implemented at an early stage as potential risks to a young person come to their attention. Based on comprehensive risk assessment, each young person has a written safety plan that has been agreed with them and with their social worker. Those plans are regularly reviewed and are effective at ensuring safety of young people and promoting their welfare. The safeguarding interventions include individual and group discussions with the young people to help them understand the risks better. The recent topics covered include on-line safety, bullying, sexual exploitation and stranger danger. Enabling children and young

people to understand how to protect themselves better and to adopt safer behaviours is central to the staff practice.

The home has strong links with the social workers, the Local Safeguarding Children Boards, the Local Authority Designated Officers, the police and the health services. Proactive relationships and regular communication regarding safeguarding concerns effectively support and promote the safety of children and young people. This includes situations when young people go missing. To ensure that everything possible is done to safeguard them from the risks, the partnership working intensifies when there is any indication of potential sexual exploitation or gang involvement.

The majority of young people do not go missing at all. The frequency of some individual young people going missing has been reduced. For example, a young person who went missing on five occasions in May 2014, was missing only on one occasion so far in June.

Staff understand the behaviour of children and young people in a wider context of who they are, what are their life histories and what has happened in their lives recently. They see the behaviour of children and young people as being a symptom of an underlying attachment issue and carrying a meaning. This personalised meaning is considered, heard and addressed within a supportive, healing and restorative framework and the home's therapeutic environment.

At the same time, in collaboration with the qualified psychotherapists, the home provides children and young people with practical tools to manage their behaviours better, such as through dialectic behavioural therapy and an effective reward system. The main aim of the staff interventions and the management plans is to enable young people to take more responsibility for their behaviours.

Sanctions and physical interventions are rarely used and are always appropriately recorded. These records are monitored to ensure that the control measures have been used appropriately; to see if there are any patterns and to identify if there is anything that could be learnt from those situations.

The home favours a positive behaviour management approach and the use of de-escalation strategies. The lives of children and young people are well structured; their behaviours are contained within clear boundaries. However, within the home's structures, rules and boundaries, the support is individualised and flexible to promote a strong sense of identity and ability to make personal choices. The behaviour of children and young people is usually of a good standard. Any deviation of this is well managed within the home. While appropriately sharing information with partner agencies when needed, the home is committed not to criminalise children and young people unnecessarily.

Robust and regular health and safety checks ensure that appropriate control measures are in place to minimise any environmental hazards.

Leadership and management

good

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by an experienced Registered Manager who has been in post since February 2012. As this person is preparing to leave the home, good transitional arrangements have been put in place to promote the stability and consistency of the service. Another person has been appointed and there will be a handover period between the outgoing and incoming managers. A team consultant is providing additional support to the team to help raise awareness of group processes and to facilitate smooth transition and management of change. This is another example of the home's proactive approach and good planning to tackle anticipated weaknesses.

Another and perhaps connected strength is the organisation's drive for continual learning and improvement. Leaders and managers keep up to date with new legislation and practice developments. The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and reorganised to bring it in line with the legislative amendments. However, Ofsted has not been notified of the revisions that took place. Many policies and procedures have also been reviewed to ensure that they are up to date with current best practice. The home's commitment to the relationships-based service is matched by its commitment to having robust procedures, processes, systems and structures in place to support these relationships.

The home's children's written guide to the service is currently under review. The recently admitted young person said that they were pleased with the information provided and the opportunities they had to visit the home before moving in.

Following an unsuccessful placement that ended in a swift move to secure accommodation, the home has significantly tightened its admission procedure. The management has reached an agreement with the particular placing authority to have full access to all the information relating to the child, before agreeing any future placements. The staff duty roster is well and flexibly managed to provide additional support to new placements. The home has a practice of providing one-to-one support to children and young people when they are new to the home until it is no longer needed. The management has also become more proactive at seeking clearer and better planning including the arrangements for leaving care, at an earlier stage of the care planning process.

The home's own records are organised in ways that facilitate easy monitoring and evidencing of the progress of children and young people. Staff are committed to the reflective and evidence-based practice. Even a young person told the inspector how important it was to be able to evidence one's progress, such as through a certificate of attainment.

Leaders and managers have responded appropriately to the requirement and

recommendation raised at the last inspection and have secured improvement. The processes for monitoring health and safety issues, including the effectiveness of the window-restrictors, have been strengthened. The monitoring of the service overall has been improved and made more comprehensive. Immediate actions are taken with any issues identified. Ofsted receives regular monitoring reports.

Staff receive comprehensive training and regular supervision and review of their practice. In addition to the individual meetings with their line managers, they participate in weekly staff meetings and four-weekly meetings with the team consultant. They receive expert support to bring more awareness into the feelings engendered by their work and to develop more constructive coping mechanisms. Staff report feeling well supported to do their job. They look after children and young people with thoughtfulness, genuine care and good professional skills. They are highly complimentary about the management and leadership of the organisation.

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.