

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC378407
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Time-Out Children's Homes Limited
Registered provider address	7 St Petersgate, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 1EB

Responsible individual	Janet Lumb
Registered manager	Karen Houghton
Inspector	Louise Redfern

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC378407

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from individualised care provided by a small and dedicated staff team that is committed to supporting them to achieve their full potential.
- Young people are supported to share their views about the care that they receive at the home and to participate in planning for their futures.
- Young people are supported to reduce their risk-taking behaviour, consequently they have made considerable progress from their individual starting points.
- The staff team says that members are very well supported in their roles by the manager and have regular supervision and team meetings. They participate in regular training. This ensures that they are well equipped to meet the needs of the young people placed in the home.
- The home is managed by a committed and dedicated manager who is passionate about providing high-quality care and strives for continuous improvement in the home. She manages her time effectively across the two homes that she is registered for.
- The manager is effective at recognising when young people are not making progress in the home and supports change to enable young people to move on from the home in a planned and organised manner.
- Areas for the home's development include ensuring that:
 - Damage to the home is repaired quickly and that the home is decorated to provide a homely environment for young people to live in.
 - Young people have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning.
 - Young people who do not have an education placement are engaged in structured activities.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
6: The quality and purpose of care standard In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (2)(c)(i) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each child. This is in direct relation to the decoration and the repairing of any damage to the fabric of the building.	21/11/2016

Recommendations

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

- For the home to be a nurturing and supportive environment which presents as a homely environment. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Where children are not participating in education because they are excluded, the children should be supported to engage in structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.15)
- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good
26/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
11/09/2014	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people, placing social workers and parents all commented positively about the progress that each young person has made since living at the home, given their starting points. According to one social worker, the reduction of missing from home episodes and the engagement with individual staff members are 'massive progress'. Young people develop very good relationships with individual staff members. The staff team is a small team that works together to provide consistency and stability for young people. One young person commented, 'I like it here. I just like the staff. They make me feel safe.' Young people benefit from individual support. This means that they are able to pursue individual interests and spend quality time with individual members of staff. Young people are very well supported to develop their sense of identity and enjoy spending time in the community developing friendships with peers who enjoy engaging in similar activities. For example, one young person, since living at the home, has become particularly skilled at using his scooter. They enjoy exploring new skate parks with staff and have developed strong ties to the local skating community. The manager and staff have harnessed this interest and have linked individual incentives to this activity to support and reward positive behaviour. Young people are at different stages of their journey at the home. Consequently, they are at different stages of their educational progress. The young person who is well established in placement benefits from excellent school attendance and has made considerable progress. The placing social worker commented, 'I am really pleased with how much progress X has made in education.' One young person, recently admitted to the home, does not yet attend an education placement. The manager and staff team are working together with the placing authority to secure a school placement. However, in the interim period, staff have not implemented a clear structure of activities to engage the young person during school time, in preparation for them returning to education. Also, young people do not have access to a computer at the home. This is a missed opportunity to support young people to engage in educational activities within the home. The staff team effectively supports young people to ensure that their individual health needs are addressed and met. Staff engage young people in regular discussions regarding all aspects of their health, including making positive choices and developing and maintaining positive peer relationships. This ensures that they develop emotional resilience and have a support network away from the home. Both young people and staff benefit from clinical support from in-house professionals. This means that staff are supported to understand any known or emerging emotional health needs and young people can be referred for individual	

therapeutic support.

Young people living at the home are of a younger age. However, staff support them to develop independent life skills which are age appropriate, for example making their own drinks and snacks. They are also encouraged to manage their own money. During the inspection, one young person was observed talking with a staff member about budgeting for activities. These skills support young people to be better prepared for when they move on from the home.

The manager and staff team are very aware of how important family contact is for each young person. They work with placing social workers, young people and family members to ensure that contact is facilitated in line with the care planning arrangements. For one young person, it has been very difficult for them to understand a reduction in family contact. However, the social worker commented, 'The staff have been really good managing the change in contact arrangements, despite some challenging behaviour from the young person.' The manager and staff ensure that young people benefit from quality time spent with family members during any planned contact. Young people are, where appropriate, encouraged to spend time with their friends. This has meant that young people have had the opportunity to sleep over at a friend's house and had a friend sleep over at the home. These experiences cement friendships and enable young people to develop support networks away from the staff team.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit from high staffing levels. This means that they have individual support on a daily basis. Young people say that this makes them feel safe because they know that they have staff there for them all the time. One young person commented, 'I do feel safe. I know if I leave the home they will follow me. This is because they care about me.' The manager and staff team consistently provide opportunities for young people to discuss incidents. This provides them with the arena to reflect on their actions and learn from their behaviour. From their individual starting points, young people currently living in the home have made good progress, particularly in reducing their risk-taking behaviour. One social worker commented, 'I can see massive progress, particularly around the reduction of missing from home episodes. The staff are able to engage X in meaningful activities, which is really positive.' As a result of progress made, one young person is enjoying freetime spending time with their friends from the local community away from staff supervision. Consequently, they feel proud of their achievements and the trust that they have built with the staff. The manager ensures that risk assessments are implemented and regularly reviewed. These plans support the staff team with identified strategies to manage the individual needs of the young person safely.	

Young people currently living in the home do show challenging and complex behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans are in place to support staff to safely manage behaviour displayed by young people. As a result of some of the physically aggressive behaviour, there have been some incidents of physical interventions. The staff have a good understanding of the policy regarding physical restraint and identify this action as the last resort after all other behaviour management techniques have been exhausted. The manager effectively monitors each incident and continually seeks to identify triggers and patterns around behaviour to best support young people. The staff work together as a team to ensure that the young people know and understand the boundaries and routines in place at the home. This contributes to young people feeling safe and secure about how the staff team will manage and react to their behaviour.

The manager has investigated and responded appropriately to complaints that have been raised since the last inspection. One safeguarding investigation was raised during the inspection. The manager took action to ensure that all agencies were notified, with the appropriate action taken to ensure that the young person was safe in the home. Individual team members are confident in their understanding of the whistle-blowing procedure.

Organisational recruitment practice remains robust. The manager takes an active part in the recruitment of staff to ensure that she has a good mix of staff on the team in order to meet the individual needs of the young people. Checks are obtained and scrutinised prior to employment and then held securely. This supports young people to be cared for by adults who have been appropriately checked prior to employment.

A range of health and safety checks are routinely carried out to ensure that young people and staff live in a physically safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager is experienced and has been registered since 2014. She is also the registered manager for one other home. The manager has completed the appropriate leadership qualification since being registered. Since the last inspection, the manager has addressed the identified shortfall. She now ensures that young people have the opportunity to speak to an independent person should they go missing from the home. The manager is dedicated to strengthening and developing the staff team. She is committed to succession planning in the home, to ensure stability and consistency within the staff team. The staff team is supported by the manager, who manages her time between the two homes effectively. She regularly undertakes shifts. This means that she is able to build relationships with individual young people and observe staff practice. Individual staff and young people comment that she is always available, either at	

the home or on the telephone. Regular team meetings and supervisions ensure that staff are well supported in their roles. The induction and training programme supports staff to be ready and prepared for the role. The manager is aware that she must prioritise individuals becoming qualified. She has a clear programme in place to support this.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of this home. Monitoring, both of how well the home is performing and of the young people's progress, is in place. Effective monitoring and oversight enable the manager to identify patterns and trends of behaviour and ensure that resources and actions are in place to drive improvement and provide stable and supportive placements for young people. The manager has a home development plan in place. External monitoring continues to take place monthly. The manager has ensured that these reports are regularly received by HMCI.

Young people's individual needs are placed at the centre of the home by the manager and the staff team. Young people benefit from individual staff supporting them daily. Consequently, positive relationships have developed between young people and the staff team. One young person commented, 'I like the staff. I like the one-to-one.' Young people have made progress since coming to live at the home. A view shared by parents and placing social workers. The manager and staff team have developed good working relationships with supporting agencies which centre on the care for the young person.

The home is adequately resourced and delivers the services and support outlined in the statement of purpose. The manager ensures that there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet young people's individual needs. Shortfalls in the rota are covered by the existing staff team and permanent staff from across the organisation, to ensure consistency for young people. The manager is skilled at planning and assessing potential new placements for the home, to ensure that young people are well matched and that the staff team has the skills to meet the individual needs of the young people.

The manager ensures that when damage occurs it is repaired to prevent any danger to young people. However, the house is looking tired and in some areas repairs have not been carried out to a high standard. The house lacks soft furnishings, pictures and photographs which means that it does not have a homely, warm and comfortable environment for young people to live in. The manager acknowledged this shortfall and has secured agreement and funding from senior managers to restore the house to the appropriate standard.

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 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 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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