

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	25/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC389781
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Qalb Short Break Services Ltd
Registered person address	35 Beaufort Court, Admirals Way, South Quay Waterside, London, E14 9XL

Responsible individual	Yasmin Choudhry
Registered Manager	Mohammed Rahman
Inspector	Christine Kennet

Inspection date	25/09/2015
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC389781

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- This service offers young people exceptional quality of care where they access opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities and engage in the community while on short breaks.
 - This home gives a warm, friendly welcome. Young people are relaxed and happy during their stays here, and staff are well qualified and experienced to do their jobs. They know the young people they look after well.
 - Risk assessments, partnership working and care planning is extremely thorough and is used carefully to match young people and keep them safe while on short breaks.
 - Young people's and families views are highly valued by this service. Six monthly evaluation reviews occur for all those receiving short breaks. This is an opportunity for parents, young people and other professionals to hear updates and give their views. In addition, staff run a children's committee, which helps young people express their wishes and regularly help young people to complete feedback forms.
 - Young people are making good progress from their starting points and many are starting to learn independence skills. Many have opportunities on short breaks they would not ordinarily access.
 - Young people's safety is at the centre of practice. The Registered Manager has updated all relevant policy and procedures and employs excellent organisation to review health and safety at the home.
 - Communication is another key area of outstanding practice. The Registered Manager sends out a quarterly newsletter to parents, available in Bengali as well as English. Young people can access pictorial communication routinely throughout the home, with Velcro strips and relevant pictures in all rooms.
 - This home uses a communication book between short breaks and home. Mainly this works well but there is potential to improve this system to include schools more routinely.
- Not enough robust support is available for young people approaching 18 to gain adult service placements through transition plans.

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 recommendations:

- Ensure the short break setting seeks to build relationships with others involved in the child's care as far as this is appropriate in relation to their role within the wider system for the child, specifically in relation to improving communication with schools, placing authority and parents. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 12, paragraph 2.11)
- Ensure that as well as longer-term support for children to move on from the home effectively, the home has an important role in supporting each child leaving the home in the period immediately before their departure. The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 57, paragraph 11.9)

Full report

Information about this children's home

A limited company operates this service. It is fully funded by a local authority fully funds the home mainly for the use of families and young people who live in this inner city borough. It also offers two beds to neighbouring boroughs. The home is registered to provide short breaks for up to eight young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory and communication impairment.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
09/01/2015	Full	Good
19/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
07/11/2013	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
This home is providing an outstanding service to young people. The has been judged either good or outstanding since opening, demonstrating its capacity to offer high quality and consistent care. The Registered Manager and staff team are committed to offering this high-level service to the families and community who depend on this valuable resource. High quality assessments begin at the point of referral. They provide a holistic assessment of young people's needs including observations in the home and school and involving parents and key professionals such as physiotherapists and GPs. Young people have a detailed integration plan prior to staying overnight. This allows staff, young people and parents to adapt and understand routines prior to staying, thus making young people more familiar and comfortable when they do stay overnight. This gradual introduction also allows young people the opportunity to have met most staff members before they stay overnight. Careful planning ensures young people gain the best from this service. Staff carefully assess routines, interactions and emotions, allowing the Registered Manager to form groups depending on needs, friendships and ability. This enables good matches and ensures each young person gains the maximum benefit from their time at this home. Detailed care plans and risk assessments provide a profile of young people's likes, dislikes, care and medication needs. These plans are prepared and put out in advance of young people's arrival. Staff have an opportunity to review them and keep them close to hand throughout the weekend, thus ensuring they are familiar with and able to meet complex needs. There is a hive of activity and a sense of anticipation prior to the young people arriving for short breaks on Friday afternoons. The staff are well-prepared and waiting to welcome young people as they arrive. There is a relaxed and friendly atmosphere as young people arrive and settle themselves into their chosen bedrooms for the weekend. Young people are encouraged to keep to the same routine, which helps them to feel safe and settled when they first arrive. Young people look happy and those with verbal skills say they are well looked after at this home. The feedback from parents and carers is that young people look forward to attending and have opportunities here that they would not necessarily experience at home. For example going on a cable car ride, visiting a museum,	

taking a trip to the cinema, or shopping. Staff plan activities and menus with a choice of options available. Young people then choose their menus and activities for the weekend. Trips promote independence, for example, one young person told me they felt supported by the home to travel independently and others helped to pay for a planned activity and learn the value of money.

Photographic memories of various trips and artwork completed by young people during after school club and while on short breaks adorn the walls of the home. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) are available in all rooms, with pictures and symbols stuck on Velcro strips around the walls. The pictures in particular rooms are relevant to the likely activity in order to guide young people, for example, pictures of washing, cleaning teeth and bedtime routines are in the upstairs areas and food choices and activities downstairs.

Young people have choices throughout their short break, choosing their own room, their activity, their menus and picking out which clothes to wear. As most young people are non-verbal, they express their choices and needs through a wide range of other means, for example PECS, Makaton, gestures, body language and sign language. Staff run a children's committee where young people receive information and express their views with support from workers. This facilitates expression of views about their home.

Young people experience a wide range of different cultural and religious festivals; the most recent has been the end of Ramadan with Eid al-Fitr. Posters and pictures on the cultural noticeboard depict current events. Staff say they previously celebrated Chinese New Year and Easter and will later celebrate Diwali and Christmas.

The unit has a service level agreement and works closely in partnership with a London borough. One social worker states, 'The home have consistently demonstrated their ability to deliver short breaks to a high standard, which includes creating a safe, clean and a caring, welcoming environment.' Staff have been described as, 'Consistently helpful,' and 'Responsive in their attitude and approaches.' The home also engages well with other professionals such as the community nursing team, GPs and physiotherapists.

Staff work proactively with parents, this was evident through observations, discussions and feedback. Communication is generally good; there is a book, which goes between the short break centre and home. Following feedback during inspection, the manager is looking at expanding this communication book to include schools more routinely and provide more information for parents. There is a regular newsletter to parents, which is available in English and Bengali. These communication systems ensure parents and professionals gain updates and are aware of any issues for young people while on short breaks.

Young people are making exceptional progress by attending this provision. There is

evidence that professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained improvements in the lives of young people and their families. Young people have a wide range of experiences, good quality care, positive interactions with peers and opportunities to develop their independence and engage in the community. The home does not yet provide robust enough challenge to placing authorities responsible for transition work to adult placements.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
This home continues its exceptional record of keeping young people safe while on short breaks. Informative risk assessments with input from parents, young people and professionals, help to recognise and mitigate risks. Regular reviews of risk assessments take place and offer a good balance between restriction and independence to ensure the safety of this vulnerable group while allowing exploration within the community. Activities are clearly risk assessed and staff ratios and supervision are high. Staff prepare well prior to taking young people out, packing contact cards, PECS, snacks and drinks to assure all needs are met. The home continues its excellent record of no young people going missing. Where there is a history of a young person going missing from their home, there is an additional risk assessment, which clearly identifies potential risks and provides strategies to manage this risk. Staff employ positive boundaries and praise good behaviour. Staff do not ignore issues of non-compliance but use skill and judgement to gain cooperation. For example, giving some latitude but ensuring understanding of the overall objective. Staff provide positive reinforcement for good behaviour, using simple words which are easily understood, for example 'good listening' or 'thank-you'. This supports and encourages positive behaviour and young people enjoy this recognition. Staff receive training in managing difficult behaviour and do not restrain. Young people are not generally isolated from their peers, unless there is a need to protect all, calm certain behaviours and avoid restraint. For example, a mobile young person who was becoming over exuberant is encouraged to move to a different area of the home away from more vulnerable service users. Staff are familiar with the home's safeguarding and whistle blowing policy, and are confident about what to do if they need to make a referral. They understand the vulnerability of the young people in their care and follow processes which keep everyone safe; for example, only female staff give personal care and conduct room checks for female residents. The home has an e-policy, which able young people	

sign if they use computers. Computer use is restricted and is safer with the use of parental settings and passwords. Staff who recognise the potential vulnerability online carefully supervise young people's use.

All staff have safeguarding training, take extra special care to record any minor scratches, bruises or marks on special forms and pass this information to the incoming shift. This helps keep non-verbal young people as safe as possible.

Safe recruitment practices are in place in this home, which ensures thorough vetting prior to staff working here. During a probation period, monitoring of practice takes place through supervision and appraisal.

There is an impressive monitoring system in place for all health and safety aspects of this home. The Registered Manager has a list of all health and safety equipment, which require service or inspection. This helps administration of essential safety equipment and keeps young people safe.

There is careful monitoring of the administration and management of medication. Training for all staff helps them to follow procedures accurately. Two staff are involved in the recording and administration, which ensures young people have the correct medication at regular intervals and minimises errors.

There is a comprehensive risk assessment of the building that looks at the safety of the local area to assess any further risk. There is a careful balance to ensure safety for very vulnerable service users while balancing this with their need for becoming as independent as possible.

Precautions are in place to prevent fires, for example emergency lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers throughout the home. Staff are familiar with the evacuation procedures and regularly practice evacuating non-mobile young people via the stairs. Close supervision of young people in the kitchen minimises risks of accidents and there is a lock on the door to control their access to the kitchen. This is necessary due to the vulnerability of service users when food is being cooked and prevents accidents or interference.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
This is an exceptional service where there are no breaches of regulation. The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers meets the requirements for good.	

Management has successfully addressed requirements made at the last full inspection showing capacity to improve the service provided for young people.

An experienced Registered Manager runs this home with active support from the responsible individual. He has many years of experience in working with children and families and holds a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Effective monitoring of the service by an independent visitor who regularly seeks parental and young people's feedback is in place. The Registered Manager completes his own internal monitoring reports using feedback to inform these. The monitoring reports are of good quality and help support improvements in practice. A development plan is in place, which will help to develop services for young people and the community. All policies and procedures reflect the Quality Standards and regulations.

Experienced staff and adequate resources meet the needs of the young people. Staff remain at this home and there is a core group of very experienced workers. Staff work well together and are very committed to their jobs and the young people. New staff feel supported and learn from the experience and mentoring from their more experienced colleagues. Staff respect the management and leadership of this home and are happy in their work. A parent says, 'Staff are very friendly and helpful, they work from the heart, they all love the young people.'

Staff receive regular training on all aspects of caring for high-level needs, including specialist training for procedures that are more complex. Staff receive a good induction and probationary period; have regular opportunities for development, and updates on training. For example, some staff meetings consider new research and practice and discuss case studies or scenarios. Most staff have completed at level 3 training, with some enrolled to achieve this.

Regular supervision and effective appraisal supports staff to do their jobs confidently. There is an expectation on sessional staff to attend team meetings and supervisions for ongoing development. Regular developmental discussions help ensure young people receive the best and most up to date care possible. Leaders and managers know the young people well; the Registered Manager and responsible individual often speak with and observe the young people to ensure they are making progress and to understand their needs well. There is good oversight of care planning and reviews with evidence of regular audits of files taking place. This allows management to ensure files are up to date and practice is appropriate.

There is good evidence of this home working well with the wider system to ensure effective care planning for young people. The Registered Manager has positive relationships with the placing authority and other local resources such as health and education. He regularly attends the short breaks forum with fifteen other agencies to discuss experiences and development of work. Open dialogue takes place on issues that need changing or improving.

This home integrates well into the community, using the local mosque, churches and leisure facilities. Other groups use the centre during the week, all of which strengthens the links with the local community. There is an opportunity for volunteers to work at this home; they go through the same robust checks as staff. These activities add to the rich quality of experience and integration into the community 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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