

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	17/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC392549
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Duty of Care Limited
Responsible individual	David Heartfield
Registered manager	Susan Kells
Inspector	Colin Imrie

Inspection date	17/08/ 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	Outstanding

SC392549

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The leadership and management is outstanding. The registered manager is newly appointed but has made an excellent start to the job. She is well supported by her senior manager and by the responsible individual. She is beginning to shape the service and to add depth and focus to the work and this is clearly benefiting the children and young people. She is enthusiastic and motivated and is leading the staff team by example.
- The registered manager has added a number of new ways of working. An external psychologist has been appointed to offer expert insight and guidance. More external professionals have been brought in to offer various counselling and specialist support services. A number of recording systems have been improved.
- The children and young people are kept safe. There is no missing from home and other concerns are few and far between. When concerns do arise they are dealt with appropriately and quickly, which adds to the safety of the children and young people.
- There is a greater emphasis on helping children and young people to deal with the past and a greater emphasis on working with attachment theory. Both of these developments are positive. More in-depth work around life stories and identity is resulting in further improvements to the service.
- All the children and young people have excellent attendance at school or college. While they have all had difficulties in settling in their education placement they are all being well supported and are starting to achieve well. This demonstrates significant progress.
- The children and young people are well supported to maintain and improve relationships with their families even when these relationships are difficult. Contact with family members is supported and supervised where appropriate.
- The children and young people are closely consulted by staff about planning in their lives. They are also well consulted regarding the day-to-day activities in and out of the home. The children and young people take part in a wide range of activities and trips and the experiences gained from these help to improve confidence as well as skills and knowledge. The children and young people are encouraged to spend time out of the home with friends in the community.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to three children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/06/2015	Full	Good
06/08/2014	Full	Adequate
30/05/2014	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The experience of living in this home is good for all the children and young people. The home is very settled. All the children and young people have been living there for some time. They are all making good progress and for some, their progress is very good. The staff provide a very caring and nurturing environment and balance this with clear expectations and firm boundaries. The children and young people respond to this approach well and are able to grow up and develop very well. There are excellent relationships in place between the staff, children and young people. This is evident from the relaxed homely atmosphere that has been created. Children and young people can approach staff easily and readily share their thoughts and feelings. They clearly feel safe to do this. One young person told the inspector that, 'staff are fantastic'. When asked what staff do to help, the young person replied, 'they motivate me'. Social workers who have placed children and young people at the home also comment on the, 'excellent care' and the dedication of the staff. Staff spoken to are very knowledgeable about the children and young people and have a genuine desire to offer the best care they can. The children and young people are all making progress at the home. They all attend school or college and are supported to overcome difficulties they have all had in settling down to their education. This is allowing them to make good progress and to pass exams when they are taken. One young person has completed a level one vocational qualification and will go on to take higher qualifications. Others have gained appropriate functional skills qualifications and are going on to take higher awards in these basic but vital subjects. School reports reflect this good progress; one report said that the young person was, 'doing brilliantly'. All of the children and young people spend time with external workers who offer specialist support and counselling services in order to address issues with their emotional health and well-being. This area of the work is beginning to be developed. The managers have appointed a clinical psychologist to oversee the therapeutic work that is taking place. A wider range of other professionals has now been employed to offer regular sessional services and staff are starting to do more in-depth key work and life story work with the children and young people. It has taken managers some time to put these additional services in place but it is a significant achievement and this is now starting to have a clear impact on the children and young people's progress. The registered manager has also added to the work by focusing more on work with attachments. The manager and other	

staff have invested in some extended training packages in order to facilitate this approach. The registered manager gave the inspector a clear example of where this approach is working at a practical level that involved not talking to a child about consequences when they were upset and angry.

Care planning is good throughout. There are up to date, clear care plans which are reviewed frequently. They contain clear goals and targets and measure progress well. There is good involvement from all placing authorities and good evidence of joint work.

The home is small and children and young people have plenty of time with staff. They are involved in all aspects of planning their lives and in the running of the home. There is clear evidence that they are able to have a say in the decisions made about their care and in the support and counselling they are able to access. One young person has recently agreed to attend counselling after previously not wanting this. They now feel ready to look at this area of their life and have enjoyed and benefited from doing this when they were ready. Several of the young people were quite withdrawn and lacking in confidence when they arrived at the home but have now become much more confident and are able to socialise much more easily. This demonstrates slow but very significant progress for them.

The staff consult the children and young people over all aspects of the running of the home and this has become a shared experience. All of the children and young people are currently working on having more healthy diets and staff are supporting this well. The registered manager has recently introduced a more organised and comprehensive approach to planning, assessing and practicing independence skills. This is starting to be used and is an excellent tool to help the work at the home and it will better prepare young people for the adult world of independent living.

Health issues are managed well. All appointments are made and kept and the children and young people are up to date with their health care. One young person is due one inoculation and staff are working hard to persuade them to have this.

Social workers spoken to were full of praise for the work taking place at the home and for the registered manager. They noted that the children and young people they had placed were happy and were making, 'excellent progress'. One social worker talking about the young person she had placed at the home said, 'I couldn't want anything more for him.' One parent spoken to was also very positive saying staff were doing a, 'fantastic job'. They went on to say that their son was, 'a totally different lad' since being at the home.

The children and young people are supported to enjoy a wide range of activities and trips out and had planned a full programme for the summer holidays. One child plays football for a local team at weekends.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The children and young people at this home are kept very safe. Staff are able to assess risks accurately and put good control measures in place to reduce and minimise all risks identified. No child or young person has gone missing from the home in the period since the last inspection. There have been some safeguarding concerns around one young person. These were concerns about child sexual exploitation and about some sexualised behaviours. The sexual exploitation issue arose when a young person was using social media in an indiscriminate way which was both putting them at risk of exploitation and possibly at risk of being accused of exploiting others. Staff have dealt with these issues and the matters have been resolved well. This has involved better control of internet access both in the home and during home leave. Appropriate assessments are now taking place and there has been some good joint work with local police and specialist police teams. Immediate concerns have now been addressed and appropriate long-term work and education is now in place. The home has been subject to two complaints about staff. The complaints were made to Ofsted and these have been investigated. The registered manager has addressed these issues very well and the complaints have been resolved to the person's satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the placing social worker and Ofsted. Some of the children and young people have complex relationships with their families and previous carers that involve safeguarding issues. Staff work hard to ensure that as much contact as possible can take place in a safe and productive way. The staff have used physical interventions on a few occasions to help one child calm down when they have become out of control. These interventions have been appropriate and work to reduce these incidents is ongoing. The staff do understand that children and young people need clear, firm boundaries to be in place. This does happen. Staff will use a sanction from time to time when it is required although they clearly prefer the use of incentives and rewards. Likewise, staff will use a physical intervention on occasion when it is required but again prefer to use discussion and reasoning. Overall, the staff offer a particularly nurturing approach but with clear expectations at all times.	

	Judgement grade
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The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been in post since the beginning of 2016 and was registered in May 2016. She is appropriately qualified. She has had good support from her manager and the responsible individual and has made an excellent start in the job. She clearly has a great passion for the work and is committed and enthusiastic. The children and young people are always at the centre of everything she does and she has added considerably to the development of the home. It is very evident that the registered manager has developed very strong relationships with all the children and young people living in the home. The registered manager has decided to employ a clinical psychologist to give regular support and advice to the staff; this is an excellent new service. The registered manager has placed a greater emphasis on using attachment theory and has attended and completed an extended, in-depth course on the subject and is also about to send other staff on this course. The insights gained and the new ways of working are already having a distinct positive influence on the work with the children and young people. She has, together with another manager, built a comprehensive independent skills recording package which will also help young people and staff to be able to plan independent work more effectively. There are other new recording systems in place and the goals-based outcome system is starting to work well. The registered manager was promoted from being deputy manager and so has had plenty of time to get to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the staff team and has set about addressing these issues in a methodical way. There is a clear change in the work being done with the children and young people. A deeper understanding is allowing more in-depth key work and life story work and a greater emphasis on the importance of counselling. This work is still developing but is clearly adding to the service already. It ensures that the needs of the children and young people are the highest priority and is already adding to the progress that the children and young people make. One young person who finds talking about issues difficult has been encouraged, by the registered manager, to write down their thoughts and feelings and this is working well. Staff speak highly of their manager. Two social workers spoken to commented on how well she was working with the children and young people. Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision and training and appraisals are carried out thoroughly. Training is up to date and is now being tailored to include a more therapeutic attachment-based approach.	

The registered manager clearly values the contribution of external professionals and services and has negotiated additional support for all the children and young people from a number of specialist workers. Two specialist assessments have been started and a number of counselling sessions have started and are proving to be productive and useful for the young people. One young person returned from such a session during the inspection and said that they had enjoyed the discussion and the information given. This represents a significant step forward for this young person. Not all of these services have been easy to put in place and the registered manager has shown some persistence and tenacity in order to reach this position.

The home is meeting its aims and objectives as set out in the statement of purpose.

No requirements or recommendations have been made at this inspection.

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 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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